



DEVELOPMENT
OF
HUMAN SETTLEMENT
IN QATAR

National Report Submitted to Habitat :
U. N. Conference on Human Settlements
Vancouver : 31 May — 11 June 1976

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**Housing and Human Settlements in the
State of Qatar : National Report submitted
to Habitat : U.N. Conference on Human
Settlements to be held in Vancouver, Canada,
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INTRODUCTION

This report deals with the human settlements in the State of Qatar within the framework of the economic and social development plans, and that is as because the policies concerned with the human settlements were based from the beginning on two fundamental and connected factors. These are the material element necessary for development projects, and the comprehensive perspective for scientific and sound based developments. Material prosperity could be achieved from the relatively high income from oil, but progress as the qualitative and quantitative improvement in human life has been the determinant factor of the attitude of the State towards development. This has been put practically in effect through the diversification of the sources of income and the development of the probable natural resources as much as possible.

Real development could not be achieved through the material aspect alone. It is necessary that this should be tied to general plans for the development of human resources in order to increase skilled manpower in the technical and administrative fields. This manpower should be able to carry out all the necessary plans for development. Vocational training, the establishment of technical institutions, illiteracy programmes, sending students to study abroad and the setting up of a national University are all important steps towards this goal.

This report is composed of three parts and a conclusion. The first part gives a brief introduction to the geographical and historical background of our country. The second part reviews quickly the modern economic and social developments which have resulted from the discovery and production of oil a quarter of a century ago. These developments represent the broad base for the plans and policies carried out or in the process of being carried out in the sphere of what can be called human settlements, because human settlements in the final analysis are the totality of society with all its human and physical dimensions. The third part is concerned with policies and

definite goals for the purpose of the improvement of these human settlements. It also deals with all development plans.

As we are still at the early stages of industrial economic and social development, other policies are an essential part of our development plans. This is simply because our problems and needs with regard to human settlements within our environment are not the result of industrial development, but because they are problems which could disrupt such developments if they continue.

Finally, this report tries to summarize the general results of our short experience in respect of development of human settlements. It also tries to point out our future plans in this respect.

PART I

Historical and Geographical Background

Qatar is a peninsula situated at the extreme east of the Arab peninsula on the western coast of the Gulf. It is about 10,000 sq. km. and its population about 180,000, 80% of which are concentrated in the capital Doha. On the whole, the country is almost a desert with little water and vegetation. Its climate is very hot and humid with the exception of the period between December and March, when it tends to be cool and moderate. Temperature is between 35-47- C. and humidity is between 32-100%.

History of Qatar is part of the history of the Islamic world which began at the turns of the 7th century A.D. However, the excavations conducted by a Danish mission between 1956-1964 had proved that Qatar has had a civilization which goes back to 4000 B.C. These excavations discovered tools that indicate the existence of an organized society which never ceased to progress in its social life.

In spite of the overwhelming Islamic nature of the area, the successive Islamic regimes did not pay enough attention to this area, a factor which made its history rather vague. These after, the history of the area entered what can be called the period of European naval and trade invasion. From the beginning of the 16th century, the area had witnessed a long period of political instability. In 1878 the people of Qatar paid allegiance to Sheikh Jasim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani who is the founding father of Al-Thani in Qatar. The British and the Turks fought over the control of the country until 1916. When the Turkish garrison was driven out, and the British concluded a treaty with Qatar.

On the first of September 1971, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani declared the independence of Qatar and the severance of all treaties and arrangements and obligations to the British government.

Then the new State of Qatar, as an independent, sovereign Arab State, joined the Arab League and the United Nations.

PART II

Modern Economic and Social Developments

Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1930 and production started in 1949. This was the real beginning of the radical economic and social change in the country. Before that the population of the country had never exceeded 30,000 people mostly employed in fishing, pearling, animal husbandry and some initiated agricultural activities.

Since 1950 and with the increasing income from oil, the new prosperity of the country allowed for the achievement of various social and industrial projects. This prosperity showed itself very clearly at the increasingly high standard of living in the country compared with any other part of the world. The per capita income in the State of Qatar is now QR. 60,000 which is equivalent to U.S. \$ 15,000. More than 85% of the gross national income comes from oil, the rest comes from such activities as trade, transportation and agriculture.

With the development of the oil industry and the intention of broadening of the social, educational and health services as well as the tremendous increase in construction and housing, the country began to feel the need for importing the necessary manpower and experience from abroad because of the limited population of the State.

In 1971 the population of Qatar was estimated 150,000 people, half of them did not originate in Qatar. The manpower in the state is estimated to be 45% of the total population. Therefore, the human growth in Qatar is high since between 1950-1970 it grew by an annual rate of 8%, 3% of which is a result of natural growth, and 5% of which is needed for the various increasing activities. It is expected that this high rate of increase in population will continue to meet the needs of the current development projects.

In the last 25 years, the country has witnessed a substantial change in all fields of life. The inhabited area has continued to expand; great buildings were constructed, shops and trade centers

increase day by day and since 1974 approximately 1200 industrial small or medium size outfits have been started. Also big factories were established such as Fertilizer Complex, Cement Plant, Flour mills, Shrimp freezing and packing, Desalination Plant, Power Plants, Oil refinery, Steel factory and factory for turning disposals to fertilizers and Sewage Plant.

The following statistics should give a clear idea about the development of some of the essential services through the previous period.

1. Education	1956	1975/76
Number of boys' Schools	17	61
Number of Girls' Schools	—	59
Number of boy students	1388	15855
Number of Girl Students	—	<u>14087</u>
		29942
Number of men teachers	80	961
Number of women teachers	—	950

To meet the needs of the current and future technical and industrial developments, educational policies should be continually developed and the necessary plans should be set up according to these policies as follows :

- a. Training : In 1969 a regional center was established in cooperation with the U.N.D.P. and I.L.O. to train Qataris and others from the Gulf countries professionally in clerical, mechanical, electrical and engineering etc. Efforts are being made to set up training units in factories.
- b. The establishment in 1973 of specialized institutes and two faculties one for arts and the other for sciences as a nucleus for the university which will be started in 1977. Also sending students abroad to specialize in the fields which are not available at the moment in Qatar.
- c. An illiteracy campaign especially among the workers and its works noting that education at all levels is free for all to the extent that the State supplies books, stationery and transportation for all students.

2. Health :

	1945	1975
Number of hospitals	1	7
Number of Clinics	—	13
Number of hospital beds	30	725
Number of Doctors	1	154
Number of Nurses	2	547

In the near future a new hospital of 606 beds will be opened. In order to secure more of the various health services including mother and child care, health education, environmental protection, supervision over drinking water and food and school health care, the general policy of the State should be directed towards providing more male and female nurses and technicians. In 1969 a regional training institute was established in co-operation with WHO to train male and female nurses and health inspectors from amongst Qatar citizens and other States of the Gulf. The State of Qatar also is establishing health centers in the new settlements and industrial areas in accordance with the health needs of the population and the developments there.

3. Water and Electricity :

To meet the increasing needs for water and electricity for the populations and the various establishments, and also to supply enough of these for the agricultural and industrial developments, the State of Qatar is making all efforts to increase water and electricity sources especially, because of the scarcity of the underground water which amounts now to 3.8 million gallons per day. It is for this reason that a distillation plant was established. Now it produces 7 million gallons daily and it is being expanded to reach the target of 17 million gallons per day in 1977. At the same time work has started to set up a plant for both electricity and water which should be finished also by 1977. The production of this target plant is 300 MGW and 24 million gallons of water a day.

Comparing these figures one could realize the fast developments that have taken place in Qatari society through such a short period.

The population has increased by six folds while the contacts of native population with the various people coming from different societies has certainly resulted in noticeable cultural, social and economic impact. In short, a radical change in the economic and productive activities of the population has taken place, and even the natural environment of the country has changed through expansion in construction, the nature of buildings and establishments, land reclamation, establishment of new settlements and such facilities as wide roads, public gardens etc.. Therefore, it is possible to say that the human settlement in Qatar have witnessed a tremendous change in a very short time span, and that this change and development has been the result of the prosperity of the country and the various development plans based on making the best use of this prosperity in improving conditions in society in all aspects. At the same time it can also be said that efforts have been made to exploit the best advantage of this prosperity to provide for new sources of wealth and the diversification of resources of income so that the country should not continue to depend completely on one depleting source, i.e. oil for its prosperity. The credit for all these developments goes primarily to the wise, judicious leadership of His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar.

PART III

Policies of Human Settlements and Development Plans.

The problem of human settlement in Qatar has been dealt with through certain line that explain the general bases for the national settlement policy as follows :

1. Unbanization Policy.
2. Policy of settlement in modern towns and new complexes.
3. Migration Policy.

The comprehensive development plan already initiated in the country maintains that industrialization is one the basic sectors in the gross national product. This policy of industrialization, coupled with population expansion, has given rise to the phenomenon of urbanization with all effects it may have on urbanization centres, particularly the pressing need for providing housing and essential services. The availability of material resources and modern technology with the skilled working manpower ,mostly imported in cities, has led for the acceleration of the progress of economic activities both in the private and the public sectors and consequently for the aggravation of the housing crisis.

In the light of the goals of the industrial sectors, referred to above, the Qatari Government has accepted the fact that urbanization is inevitable. Accordingly, these has been concentrated in four areas, i.e. Umm Said to the southern east, Doha to eastern center, Khor to the center, and Shamal town to the north. A two-fold policy of urbanization and industrial development has been initiated, especially that these areas are coastal.

In accordance with the above, Doha Umm Said, Khor and Shamal will continue expanding while Doha ,in particular, will remain the capital city in Qatar with some restriction in the rate of its population growth. Qatar passes through situations not unlike other developing countries. In this respect we have been confronted

with certain urgent problems mainly housing crises, the low quality of existing houses below the acceptable standards, and also the decrease of related services. The conditions of housing were not in line with the economic affluence and the high costs of living resulting therefrom. On the contrary, housing conditions in general were not satisfactory and the crises of housing reached its peak in the sector of those with limited income. This has led the Government to issue in 1964 the Law of Popular houses for low-income people, widows and orphans to be able to cope with this problem. At present the government endeavours to strike a balance between supply and demand for average cost houses. The state has adopted a plan with the necessary legislation and related social, economic and entertainment means. This is being done in addition to the setting of the general framework for developing the housing sector through the ten years plan which started in 1973. On the basis of this plan, the qualitative as well as the quantitative goals have been determined, and also a time schedule has been prepared for dealing with these problems. The public Sector guides the activities of the housing private sector through the general framework of the national housing programme and in accordance with the long-range objectives of planning and also through promotion of investment. The government has established a Bank for financing private housing projects.

Electricity is available for all urban centers in the country. To meet the increase in population the State is currently engaged in establishing Hydro electric power stations at Ras Abu Funtas, and in spite of the fact that all urban centers are supplied with drinking water, all efforts are being concentrated for the increase of the supply of drinking water through distillation of sea water and establishing distributions networks for this water. All towns are as well provided with sewarge networks and collecting disposables. In fact authorities concerned have already completed feasibility studies for establishing a unit for turning disposables and sewarge water into fertilizers to be used in agricultural purposes.

Schools have also been established and the govt. assured free education in all stages, and established centres for eliminating illiteracy and promoting, technical, practical, vocational and academic activities.

Health services have developed in the urban centres and population centers. In each centre there is a small emergency hospital and a health centre for preventive and curative health services. The government has also started health education for promoting health care to international standards. Pollution has been studied carefully though it does not constitute an urgent problem at present. However, necessary precautions have already been taken to safeguard citizens from its effects.

Transport and telecommunication network has its special significance to future developments in the country. The efficiency and absorption capacity of this network will put the country at the same footing with advanced countries, especially after the establishment recently of the satellite earth station.

In the field of social welfare, financial aid is being provided to needy families of aged people, children and orphans. Consumer co-operatives were established to forestall the effects of high costs of living. Rehabilitation programmes have been put into effect for all categories of people who need rehabilitation. A law for retired people, both in government and private sectors has been put into practice recently.

In agriculture, the Government is doing its utmost to increase cultivated areas and to reclaim desert land for the purposes of agriculture. It is as well encouraging livestock and fish production. It should also be mentioned that the Government is contributing towards the creation of a balance in the prices of the essential consumer commodities and controlling these prices for the benefit of low income people. This is being done through subsidization of these prices.

Migration Policy

Migration policy is one of the distinguishing features of the modern age at the international, regional and local levels. In our case we do not suffer from immigration, but there is internal small scale migration. To avoid this movement, new towns and population centres have been established. Development plans have provided the citizens with work near these centres in order that they may settle there.

As for immigration, the government relies to a large extent on working manpower coming from sisterly Arab and other States.

Legislations and Execution

As the country is witnessing an overall industrial and agricultural development there is need for reconsidering all legislation and laws to adapt with the existing development plans. In pursuance of this policy many laws have been reconsidered and new laws and legislation are in the process of being adopted to adapt with the needs of the next stage of our development. Local municipal councils provide, as well, various services to the citizens, and the co-ordination of various developmental projects in towns and population centres.

New Settlements

The plan for human settlements is part and parcel of the general developmental plan and the following aspects are considered the most important in planning and implementation.

1. The establishment of a separate department for human settlements at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to undertake the responsibility of building new towns and population centers according to modern methods, and particularly, to improve construction industry for the provision of suitable housing for citizens. In cooperation with other departments and Ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Works Municipalities, Public Health and Industrial Development Technical Centre, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs works for the preparation of plans allocation of financial resources and provision of working people to find out the best possible solutions, designs and implementation practices. Accordingly, these ministries and Departments prepare the bases for the housing policy in the urban sectors, and also the construction of houses to be distributed to citizens.
2. As to services provided in the new population Centers, they can be summerized as follows :
 - a. Schools for different cycles of education,
 - b. Consumer Co-operatives

- c. Police stations
 - d. Open areas and playing grounds for children,
 - e. Mosques;
 - f. Pharmacies,
 - g. Medical clinics, hospitals and health Centres,
 - h. Post, Telegraph and Telephone services,
 - i. Water and electricity networks, and
 - j. Entertainment, cultural and sports clubs.
3. Industrial Complexes : The Industrial Development Technical Center (IDTC) gives much attention to the provisions of houses essential services to those working in the various industrial enterprises. In fact, IDTC has already started in building houses for those working in Umm Said industrial area which includes fertilizer industry, petrochemical industry, steel mill, liquification of natural gas, etc.
4. Activities of private sector in housing :

The construction of private houses is a common tendency among individuals of the middle class in Qatar. These houses are being built on plots obtained from national landlords or from the government. It is financed from personal savings and loans (from the bank established by the government). In view of the high costs of land, citizens have turned to multi-storey buildings instead of one-story buildings.

CONCLUSION

Our experience in the field of human settlements can be summarized as follows :

1. The integration of human settlements policy with the general developmental policy. If certain policies related to settlements appear to be distinguished, such as establishment of new towns or quarters or changing old residence areas, such policies aim in fact to creating productive, agricultural, vocational and industrial residential area, as a means for putting into practice the economic and social aspects of development.
2. In our human settlements policy we were confronted with several problems and needs. To meet these problems and needs we have resorted to comprehensive solutions that link them with general development. One of the most urgent problems faced was the provision of water and fertilizers. We also faced problems related to shortage in employment necessary for construction and new industries, and to the need for technicians and experts. Firstly we have made certain studies and taken certain decisions to increase the scarce underground water, then we have established distillation plants to meet the needs of human settlements for drinking water and irrigation, and at the same time to meet the needs of industry for water and power. A fertilizer plant has been established, then another was established to turn disposable to fertilizers .These plants would help in increasing cultivated areas and decreasing the importation of fertilizers and a large number of agricultural products. The same need impelled us to establish institutes for training of nurses and for vocational and management training. Thus, technicians and managers needed for assuring various services to the settlements would to a certain extent become available. At the same time required numbers will be provided for industry and other activities.

3. The improvement of human settlements and the promotion of the standard of living therein is not a short-term undertaking but a continued responsibility. Settlements are growing and needs are increasing and becoming different. Our own experience has proved that short-term and rushed solutions for meeting urgent problems and needs may lead to the wastage of our potentials, and may even create new problems. So, long-term planning and popular participation in solving our problems coupled with regional and international co-operation as well as the exchange of expertise and experiences and also the provisions of material, technical and scientific element necessary for implementing short and long term policies, all constitute the firm foundation for the required solutions and fruitful policies.

Printed at :
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