

INTRODUCTION

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BASICS OF THE LAND USE MASTER PLAN

National land, a collective heritage

The national territory is the collective heritage of the Lebanese people. Every generation has thus the duty to transmit it, in its entire wealth, to future generations, after using it rationally and developing it in a way that would not affect its character or its potential.

It is the duty of the State to define national policies and adopt means to protect the national territory, preserve its fundamental characteristics, secure the permanence of its natural exploited wealth, as well as to promote a harmonious and sustainable economic and social development.

Citizens and local collectivities have the duty to use the territory in a respectful, economic, intelligent and reasonable manner, within a spirit of nationalism and continuously being conscious and accounting for national imperatives and the judgment of future generations.

It is within this spirit that the National Physical Master Plan (NPMP) defines the principles of developments for various regions as well as the basics of the usage of territory for all areas. It also proposes facilities and sites of planned activities, specifying their objectives, dimensions and locations.

Organization of living and working in a small country

In an article dated August 21, 1945, the Lebanese philosopher Michel Chiha had written: *“In our country, with lack of precaution, we risk to be more and more cramped... Here, it is important to remember that all we have is some ten thousand square kilometers... Whether it is the Beqaa valley or the coastal zone, North or South, or even the historical range of our ancient coastal cities, we should get organized so that nothing gets ignored, in order to maintain the land heritage, of which geography and history have given us our share... One of the Lebanese Government concerns should be issues such as population density and land use. We can turn Lebanon not only into a welcoming host country, but also encompassing all its children. This implies then establishing a special section of the political and administrative activity, or even a permanent institution that works continuously on data collection, project planning and project analysis...”*

At the time when these words were written, Lebanon's population was only one million people; today, there are about four million people. Thus, the necessity for the Lebanese people to organize their "*slightly more than ten thousand square kilometers*"¹ is much more vital.

It is always necessary to remember that Lebanon is amongst the ten most densely populated countries in the world. This has a significant impact on the use of its non-renewable resources, whether it is its coastal areas, its landscapes or its natural as well as constructed heritage.

Therefore, issues of civic responsibility and respect of collective rules and regulations become of particular importance, evolving and growing with the growth of the population.

The Lebanese people must take into consideration the change in scale resulting from the transition from a country of one million inhabitants during the independence to a country of four million inhabitants in the year 2000, living in the same area, and expected to exceed a number of five millions in two or three decades.

The conservation of the quality of life specific to Lebanon depends on such consciousness.

A scheme for a greater freedom of choice and action

Freedom in Lebanon has such a distinguished place that some associate it with the air that the Lebanese breath. Freedom probably represents the main component in what constitutes the "quality of life" that distinguishes the Lebanese society. Nevertheless, it is this freedom that is declining in all domains: freedom of belief, opinion, expression, traditions, economics, free enterprise, independence and national sovereignty...

Lebanese land-use management has to encourage all forms of freedom by broadening the choices of housing and investment for all the country, in the frame of a civic rather than constrained project.

The first enemy of freedom is anarchy. Some people's freedom can be diminished by isolated non-civic behaviors and acts. Therefore, a minimum of order and a minimum of directives and regulations are necessary to organize collective life. Such regulations should be as simple as possible, but at the same time very essential, particularly in a small country as densely populated as Lebanon.

¹ It is remarkable that an intellectual with liberal aspirations like Michel Chiha had thought about a planning institution, responsible for "*continuous projects and statistics*", a mission entrusted first to the Ministry of Planning, then to the Council for Development and Reconstruction.

The second enemy of freedom consists of barriers and partitioning. Lebanon has marked in its Constitution its commitment to free economy, but more efforts are necessary in order to achieve it. Effectively, an open economy is free of all kinds of partitions and obstacles to free competition. The National Physical Master Plan should open the regions to one another and promote trade, set up of companies, as well as free movement of all goods in the entire territory.

There was a time when most Lebanese regions were open to Lebanese people of all origins. That was a time where people spent their holidays in any village of their choice; a time when retired persons used to live in a village of their choice, even if they were not originally from that village; a time when employee assignments, in public as well as private sectors, used to have them relocate to any other part of the country, without it being an issue.

It would be beneficial to return to that model of integration, by giving the Lebanese people the freedom to choose their place of residence, as mentioned in the Lebanese Constitution.

This requires voluntary actions to open the regions to one another to revitalize them economically, socially and culturally, in order to serve inhabitants of the most deprived regions, which constitute today's most "closed" regions.

It is also in Lebanon's interest to widen the range of choices offered to national, Arab or foreign productive investments (in terms of setting up companies) on the territory. It is the national, as well as, the economic and social interests that call for this. This diversification of choices is done through the valorization of all cities and regions of the country, in order to de-concentrate investments, and through a series of convergent actions that strive for an "open territory".

Objectives of the Land management policy

There is a strong consensus within the Lebanese society as far as land management policy objectives are concerned. This consensus is developed around common objectives and values, part of which is written in the Constitution.

Thus, this land management policy must reinforce:

- The unity of the country (a constitutional principle);
- Equitable development of regions (a constitutional principle);
- Optimal and sustainable use of natural resources, particularly water resources;
- Decrease of public debts and expenses;
- Improvement of productivity and economic growth;

- A better balance in external exchange (trade);
- Social development and improvement in quality of life;
- Protection of environment;
- Conservation of heritage...

These objectives set the outline of an “ideal” future that is easy to imagine: a prosperous and united Lebanon that respects and properly uses its resources and its heritage, rationalizes its public expenditures and ensures collective services of high quality.

The National Physical Master Plan follows the above-mentioned objectives, taking into consideration the realities of today and the challenges of the future. From this confrontation between hopes and reality emerges 3 basic choices that the plan bases itself on:

- Unity of the country
 - Balanced development
 - Rationalization of uses of resources
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- Land management should effectively promote unity of the country, and should promote the economy for the benefit of society. This promotion is a major necessity in order to deal with economic and social challenges that the country is facing and will face.
 - Land management should lead to alleviate the disparities of development between regions by implementing a modern and objective perception of a fair and equitable development principle.
 - Land management should seek a rational use of the limited resources, specifically natural resources and public funds.

These 3 basic choices govern the entire perspectives adopted on the spatial level, whether it is the specification of soil vocations, the proposed urban structure, the development projects for various regions, the orientations in the field of public transport and facilities, the management of urban planning and urban development, and natural zones or heritage administration.

The current report describes in details the approach that has led to the adopted choices and specifies the emerged orientations. This document is therefore a major component of the National Land Use Master Plan, as are the attached maps.

Table 1: Lebanon: some key data

	Year	
Resident population	1997	4,005,000
Number of buildings	1996	520,000
Number of dwellings	1996	1,000,000
Number of companies	1996	200,000
% of dwellings in the Central Urban Area	1996	42 %
% of dwellings in 9 other large agglomerations	1996	21 %
% of dwellings in the rest of the country	1996	37 %
Road network length	2000	Km: 22,000
Beirut Airport terminal capacity	2003	Millions of passengers / year: 6
Beirut Airport runways capacity	2003	Millions of passengers / year: 16
Number of commercial ports	2003	5
Total merchandise in Port of Beirut	2001	Tons: 5,000,000
Total merchandise in Port of Tripoli	2001	Tons: 700,000
Number of industrial ports	2003	7
Number of fishing harbors and marinas	2003	32
Length of the footprint of the old railway	2003	Km: 400
Number of electric power plants	2003	30
Electric power plants nominal capacity	2003	MW: 2,300
Electric energy need	2002	MW: 1,700
Electric energy production	2001	GWH: 9,437
Installed fix telephone lines	2001	Primary pairs: 1,730,000
Hydraulic structures	2001	29 + 1 dam
Water reservoirs storage capacity	2001	Mm ³ : 251 of which 200 on Litani
Operational domestic water treatment plants	2002	12
Water treated in plants before distribution	2002	Mm ³ / year: 200
Distributed water by simple chlorination	2002	Mm ³ / year: 100 to 200
Number of building wells	1996	45,000
Number of protected sites / monuments (DGA)	2002	500
Number of sites inscribed as UNESCO heritage	2002	6