



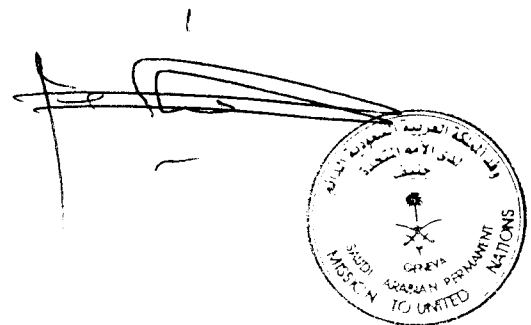
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Geneva, 6th November 2015

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and with reference to your note verbale dated 21 September 2015, requesting views and inputs from Member States by replying to the questionnaire on the issue of “homelessness and the enjoyment of the right to adequate housing”, the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has the honour to attach a copy of the government of Saudi Arabia’s response to the questionnaire.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living the assurances of its highest consideration.

United Nations
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
GENEVA





Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing

Questionnaire

1. Please explain how your government defines homelessness in various contexts, for example, when measuring the extent of homelessness or determining eligibility for programmes and services. Please explain why the definition was chosen, and whether it is formally referred to in laws, policies, or programmes.

It is important to emphasize that homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Instead, a small portion of Saudi citizens may live in inadequate houses according to several criteria. This definition was used by the Eligibility & Prioritization Mechanism for Housing Subsidy Applications "Eskan" programme. "Eskan" is a national project planned and implemented by the Ministry of Housing to develop a mechanism to verify the eligibility conditions and determine priorities of the citizens applying to acquire housing units built by the ministry and other forms of government and private subsidized housing products. The programme aims to serve the most deserving families that do not have adequate housing, taking into account age, income, family size, marital status and special cases such as disabled, widows, divorced women, orphans, elderly and poor, through a clear and transparent scoring system. Inadequate house definition was mentioned and referred to within the Housing Subsidy regulation and its bylaw which considered the house adequate if it meets the following criteria : built area 140 sq m as a minimum, durable building system such as reinforced concrete, structural safety, and habitability. According to the above-mentioned regulation and bylaw, owning no adequate house is a prerequisite for housing subsidy eligibility.

Sometimes, some people may lose their homes because of fire, flood, or any other natural hazards, or because of emigration due to military events nearby their regions of residence.

2. How is homelessness measured in your country? What criteria and indicators are used and how is data collected and systematically updated for this purpose? Please provide available data over a period of time on the extent of homelessness in general and among particular groups (for example: children and youth, women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and others).

As mentioned before, the homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Considering those who own no adequate house, they can be considered as the eligible applicants determined by "Eskan" programme who were almost (755,000) applicant including (40,831) females (29,950 widows & 10,702 divorced). Considering age, youth (age less than 30 years) were almost (147,000) youth.

3. What population groups are most affected by homelessness in your country? How have their experiences been documented and by whom (whether officially by national or subnational governments, National Human Rights Institutions, or by non-governmental or other



organisations, charities, etc)? If studies exist, please indicate or share a link, a reference or a copy.

As mentioned before, the homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

4. Please provide information and details on the primary systemic and structural causes of homelessness in your country and explain how these are being addressed.

As mentioned before, the homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but sometimes, some people may lose their homes because of fire, flood, or any other natural hazards. Article (13) in the Social Assurance Regulation authorized the Minister of Social Affairs to grant subsidies within (30,000) SR to cases he consider eligible. The Ministry of Social Affairs provide subsidies to individual emergency cases that requires urgent help such as those who are affected by fire, flood, or any other natural hazards that may result in losing their homes. In addition, and according to the restrictions and procedures of granting subsidies by the nation to those who are affected by disasters such as fires, floods, ...etc, that were approved by a cabinet decree, compensations should be awarded to affected citizens by Ministry of Finance.

And considering emigrants, such as those from border villages in Jazan region because of military events. units in a development housing project were allocated to them.

5. Please provide any information available about discrimination and stigmatization of people who are homeless, including laws or policies that may be used to remove homeless persons from public spaces or to prohibit activities in public spaces such as sleeping, camping, eating, sitting, or asking for money. Please explain whether such discrimination is prohibited by law as national and/or local levels.

As mentioned before, the homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

6. How homelessness been recognized as a human rights violation by courts or by national human rights institutions in your country, and if so, on the basis of which human rights (for example: right to adequate housing, right to life, etc)?

Homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi, but in general the Kingdom has always taken human rights into consideration. The Rule Basic Law (Constitution) of the Kingdom included several articles related to human rights. For example, article (26) emphasized the State obligation to protect human rights. Article (27) stated that the state guarantees the right of citizens and their families, in case of emergency, sickness, disability and old age, and support the social security system and encourage institutions and individuals to contribute to charity.



This was reflected in the regulation of the Public Authority for Housing - replaced by the Ministry of Housing later - where the first mentioned goal of the Authority was to facilitate citizen access to an affordable house, considering quality, citizen income, and within the appropriate stage of his life. It was also reflected in the proposed National Housing Strategy that summarized the vision for the Kingdom's housing sector as "An effective housing sector that shall contribute to the national development of Saudi Arabia by enabling citizens to access adequate housing, through a sustainable, knowledge and quality based housing market".

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia committed to international legal standards of the right to adequate housing identified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For example, the Ministry of Housing put minimum standards to ensure house quality and adequacy. It also planned and implemented the previously mentioned initiative "Eskan" to provide housing subsidies. This initiative that aimed to target eligible Saudi families without access to adequate housing, was based on non-discrimination and equality, and tends to include different social segments within each housing project to ensure social cohesion. All applicants to get housing subsidized products were given equal opportunities through a transparent environment based on a well-studied scoring system.

The Ministry of Housing implemented a set of minimum standards that should be considered by the developers within (PPP) projects to ensure providing adequate houses to housing subsidy beneficiaries within sustainable and integrated communities.

7. What legal or administrative procedures are available to challenge actions or inaction by governments or private actors on the grounds that they lead to or fail to address homelessness)?

Homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi, but in general the article (12) in the Social Assurance Regulation obligated the Ministry of Social Affairs to monitor the beneficiary eligibility periodically. This guarantee the sustainability of subsidy provision to all eligible beneficiaries including subsidies that are housing relevant.

8. Please provide information about any strategies or legislation in place at the national, subnational, or local levels to reduce or eliminate homelessness, explain any goals or timelines that have been adopted for this purpose, describe how progress is monitored and provide information on results to date.

Homelessness phenomenon does not exist in the Kingdom of Saudi, but as previously mentioned, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia committed to international legal standards of the right to adequate housing identified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Ministry of Housing put minimum standards to ensure house quality and adequacy. It also planned and implemented the previously mentioned initiative "Eskan" to provide housing subsidies targeting eligible Saudi families without access to adequate housing. Accessing adequate housing was included in the vision mentioned in the National Housing Strategy draft.