# Updating Decentralization Policies and Strategies to Manage Urban Development in Informal Settlements

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## Abstract

Urban development is the target assigned by countries. Under highly centralized systems, the desired development goals may not be achieved. Decentralization of the administration is the best way to manage urbanization services through strengthening the role of municipalities in decisions making, improving their efficiency, and connecting them to societies creating funding through dialogue and solutions reaching mechanisms rather than confrontations. Centrality in Egypt led to unbalanced urban development manifested in lack of services problems

The basic challenge facing decentralization in Egypt is political and physical planning in nature. Although the constitutional and local administration system is not devoid

Of the concept of decision-making and implementation decentralization, it refers to the distribution to multiple entities, including local units. The system was designed in a way that helps and supports Centrally managed development, and the elected councils are seen as auxiliaries to the local branches of the executive organs only. Hence came the idea of research to identify the concepts of centralization and decentralization and the reality of the relationship between them and urban development and to clarify the direct impact on the informal areas in Egypt after the recent variables.

**Keywords:** Decentralization – urban development – decision making- informal settlements

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable urban development [13] is an improvement in the quality of life in the city. This includes the urban, environmental, political, institutional, social and economic aspects of the urban environment. Figure 1, without leaving burdens for future generations, is the result of the depletion of major resources. To a principle based on the balance between resources and energy as well as financial inputs and outputs, which play an important role in all future decisions for the development of urban areas.

Many cities in the world suffer from the phenomenon of slums (especially in large cities). This phenomenon is the result of a number of reasons, most notably rapid urbanization and the accompanying rural-urban migration, and the consequent increase in the need for housing in large numbers what is officially planned by the governments of the states. The phenomenon is linked to cities of developing countries whose economies suffer from low rates of growth in GDP, such as the million cities (Mexico City, Shanghai, Tunis, and Cairo) and other cities.
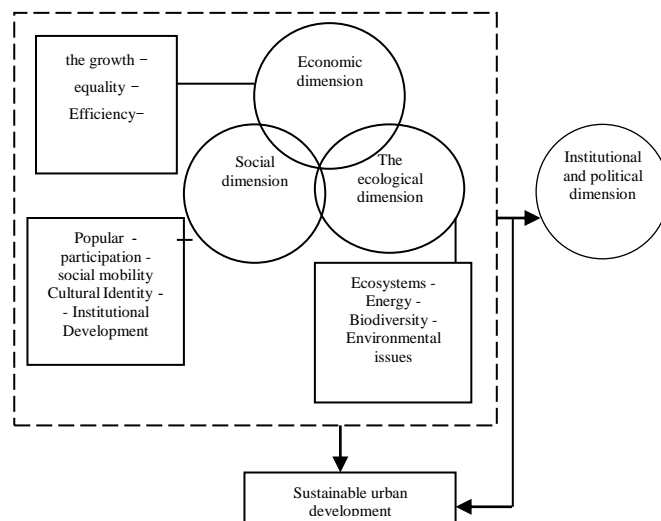


**Figure 1:** overlap of the dimensions of sustainable urban development [19]
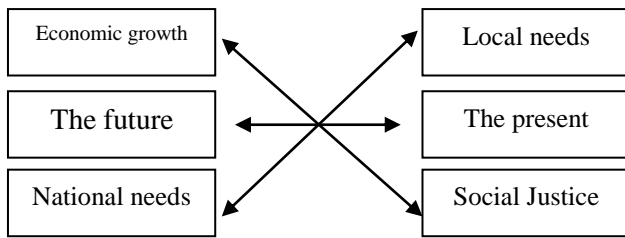
**Figure 2:** Balance between different goals and peaks
[17]

Sustainable urban development [16] aims at achieve balance by formulating and balancing many objectives at the levels of activities. It may vary as shown in Figure 2 where social justice is affected by the economic growth of some economically advantaged areas by another resource-poor area. The local needs of individuals may also conflict with housing, services and extension on agricultural land with national needs to maintain and the achievement of this balance requires management organs and organizational structures that set goals, priorities and decision-making, and work on managing their implementation and follow-up to submit and evaluate them.

Therefore, the importance of this research appears in three aspects:

- The first is to clarify the strengths and weaknesses or the advantages and disadvantages of both centralization and decentralization so that we can judge which is the most viable application in Egypt to achieve the desired development goals

- The second aspect: shed light on the importance of the role of urban management in terms of centralization and decentralization of development management and draw clear mechanisms to modify the path of sustainable urban development, which achieves the target

- The third aspect: Determining the actual effect of decentralization on the management of urban development in slums in Egypt in order to achieve the modernization of policies and strategies that achieve sustainable urban development after the recent changes.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Some governments formulate policies and strategies and then draw plans under a highly centralized system that does not achieve the desired objectives, which negatively affects the sustainability of urban development. Hence, the main problem of the research is that "the lack of activating the role of decentralized management in urban development makes them vulnerable to some decisions and policies Which causes the deterioration of the urban environment, and therefore must work on the need to identify mechanisms to activate its role

when taking policies and strategies of urban development to develop a vision of the future of informal settlements in Egypt after the recent changes.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objective is to identify and evaluate the role of decentralization of management in maximizing the return of urban development policies and strategies eliminating the concept of slums.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

### Centralization and Decentralization in Development

The distinction between centralization and decentralization usually depends on the extent to which the lower responsibilities have the right to make decisions. The greater the ability to make decisions at the lower levels without reference to the presidential levels, the less centralized and decentralized the organization and vice versa

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### *The concept of centralization*

Centralism is defined as the concentration of power in the hands of one main body. In this case, this body could be an individual, a committee [11], or a council. There are advantages and disadvantages of the application of centralization as follows:

*Advantages of Centralization Application*

a) Political advantages (strengthening political unity and strengthening state cohesion, especially at the beginning of its inception, providing a means of supervising national organizations of a central nature, such as the armed forces and external policy).

b) Administrative advantages (providing a more efficient means of carrying out major national projects, helping to unify the administrative direction of the state and standardizing management patterns and procedures, working to provide a minimum of services in the poor and deprived areas by emphasizing the objectivity in providing these services without consideration of local considerations or Regional commissions).

*Cons of central system application [8]*

a) Neglect of the local worker in the provision of services

b) Routine and the many complications that are exposed to citizens dealing with the Department

*The concept of decentralization*

Decentralization is an important phenomenon to include many geographical entities, social sectors and community actors. Geographical entities contain national, regional and local entities and geographical areas, while community entities contain institutions and organizations (government, private sector and civil society). Activities include intellectual content developed in the fields Political, social, cultural and environmental.

Decentralization can also be defined as "limiting and concentrating power in the hands of the government, which, through its administration in the country's capital, will carry out the tasks required of the state in all the fields and activities currently being used by the state." [6], There are advantages and disadvantages of decentralization, as follows:

*Advantages of decentralization*

a) Political advantages (creation of effective and quick channels of communication between citizens and institutions of policy making and implementation, through which the citizens can accept the new policies and directions, strengthen the political system in a way that ensures development and stability by achieving the highest degree of public satisfaction among citizens)

b) Social benefits (improving living standards and achieving social justice, creating effective local leadership)

c) Administrative advantages (maximizing administrative efficiency at the local level by delegating more powers and authorities, eliminating bureaucracy and administrative corruption, facilitating oversight processes from the highest levels to the lowest in government, streamlining accounting processes and raising the level of public accountability; able to hold the administrative responsibility in the future through the use of administrators in the localities and raise the level of practice and reduce the pressure of experts and administrators at the central levels)

d) Economic and financial advantages (Achieving the efficiency of the maintenance and optimal utilization of resources by identifying the needs of the local community and providing mechanisms for rapid response to them. Increase the tax revenues of the state as a result of the ability of the local community to monitor the means of spending its tax resources. Conservation and development.

*The disadvantages of applying decentralization [6]*

a) Loss of control over the macro economy

b) Poor distribution of resources

c) There is a regional variation in the distribution of services

*The relationship of development to the concepts of centralization and decentralization*

One of the reasons that the growth and development rate in developing countries is weak is the government's inability to optimize the use of resources. This is a matter related to the level of efficiency of development management [1], which in turn is affected by the distribution of political, social and economic forces, which impose themselves on political decisions that do not achieve national interest. Therefore, the lack of organization and administrative rigidity is a major reason for hindering development processes and a true measure of social backwardness and economic [3].

Decentralization is the situation or situation in which the right to participate in decision-making is given to the lower administrative levels, without negating the right of the central authority to make a decision. It is therefore a method of action based on the principle of the distribution of decision-making authority and powers between the central authority and other independent bodies and different population groups.

The Department highlights the importance of decentralized planning as compared to sectoral planning. It is the only means by which sectoral goals can be transformed into a general framework that serves as a local development strategy that allows for popular participation and ensures coherence, harmony and complementarity among bodies and institutions involved in the preparation and implementation of local development plans.

**Management in sustainable urban development**

Urban development reflects a set of integrated processes in the community through joint civil and governmental efforts according to a specific social policy and a realistic plan. These processes depend on the resources of society to reach the most exploited in the shortest time possible. It is the embodiment of social and economic objectives in the form of spatial distribution of basic urban activities and proposed plans for different sectors at all levels (national - regional - local). It is the concrete framework for clarifying the development programs and policies in all sectors and activities as they represent the scientific and applied side of these programs and policies.

Management is defined as a social process that involves responsibility for planning a range of activities and effectively organizing multiple operations in order to achieve a specific goal [2].

Urban management is an effective tool to achieve urban sustainability. The dominant forces in urbanization are represented through planning and organizing processes in accordance with the available capabilities and limitations. Urban management includes four basic phases (problem identification, solution preparation, implementation phase, follow-up phase and maintenance) [16].

The Department of Urban Development is linked to all levels of management. It is linked to the political management and direction of the State. It is also linked to public administration in ministries and government departments. It is linked to the management of public and private enterprises. Figure 3 shows the link of urban management to all levels of management.

Urban management is an essential element in development as it plays a key role in benefiting from the human, natural and urban resources which are the most important potential of society. Therefore, urban management is one of the essential elements of economic growth and poverty alleviation. It is also one of the necessary needs for central and local governments and non- Which contribute to improving the urban environment [21].
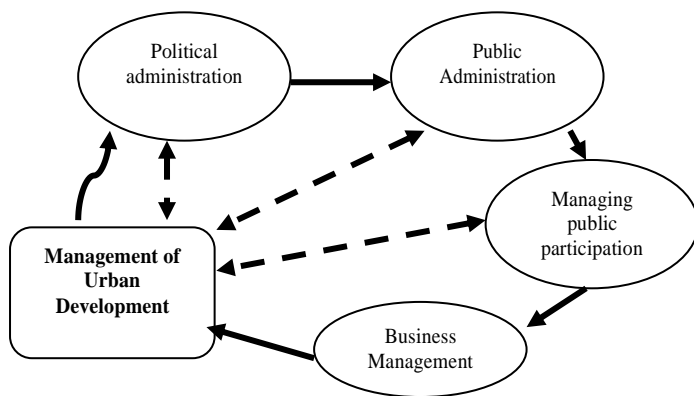


**Figure 3:** Linking the Department of Urban Development to all levels of management

### Role of decentralized management in sustainable urban development

Most countries are currently seeking to decentralize urban management in particular due to several pressures, the most important of which are the pressures faced by some countries exerted by the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, which refuses to finance any development projects except within the framework of High efficiency which is not the case under the centralized systems.

The United Nations Citizenship Agenda (Habitat Agenda) presented a management strategy for sustainability of urban clusters, which is summarized as follows [7]:

- Independence in local and multi-level responsibilities and resources in management.

- Promote popular participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of local priorities.

- Expanding areas of partnership between state representatives and the private sector to achieve common objectives.

- Building cadres of all categories (popular and governmental) capable of decision-making and urban development procedures.

- Facilitate communication and networks at all levels.

- Introducing modern means of information systems and technology to contribute to the development of sustainable urban development management.

- In light of this, many countries have begun to develop new urban policies, which include urbanization as one of the pillars of urban planning, to reconsider the administrative structures of the Department and to develop the mechanisms based on the development of urban plans to cope with the new concept of sustainability.

**The reasons for the impediment to sustainability under the administrative style in Egypt**

### Role of local units in producing development plans

- The role of local units in planning is limited to providing the data and information needed to develop local development plans since local plans are developed on a sectoral basis (education, health, agriculture, etc…), as well as a sector-specific plan

- There is always a tendency and preference to focus investments in favor of ministries and central support units with the potential, capabilities, competencies and skills to implement regional and local development plans

- Inequality among governorates, especially in Upper Egypt and remote and rural areas, due to cultural underdevelopment and low level of available services, leading to migration to urban governorates (Cairo, Alexandria), cities and capitals of some other governorates, The industrial projects are concentrated in some governorates (where infrastructure is available) while the unemployment rate is higher in other governorates

- The disadvantages of the local units' relations with each other. The relations between the local units in terms of the nature of this relationship can be divided into two types[4]:

  A. Vertical relationship: It represents a type of dependency or guardianship of local units at higher levels on local units at lower levels

  B. Horizontal relationship: It is between the local units that are equal in the legal centers of the relations of participation or cooperation or committees to promote the local facilities and services
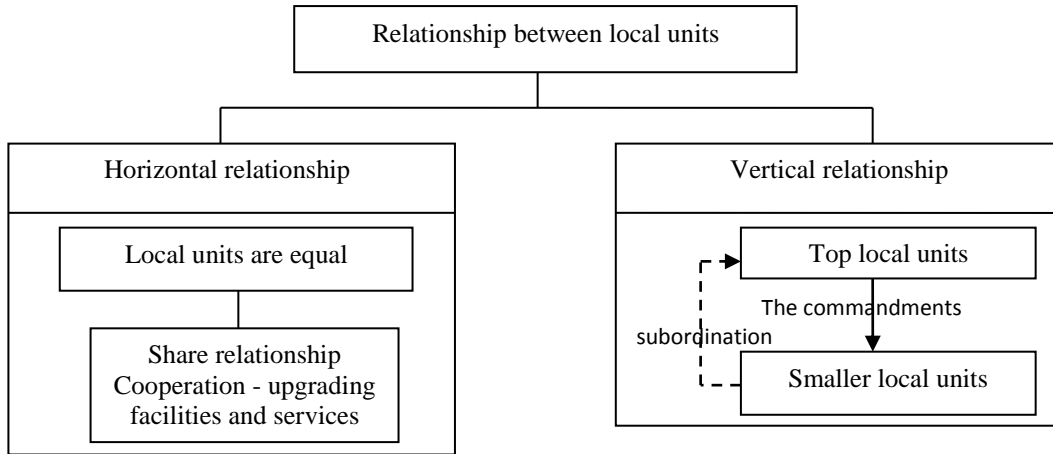
**Figure 3:** Relations between local units [16].

It has a great impact on the implementation of urban development projects or the upgrading of facilities and services depending on these relations and the lack of specific standards are dealt with in the framework of multi-relationship between local units each other, which is caused by the lack of an integrated urban plan in the system of local units.

*Local authorities in decision-making in Egypt*

- The Law provides that the Government shall consult the Governor in the following matters:

  a) Introducing, modifying or stopping a means of transportation operating within the governorat.

  b) Build, demolish or modify the use of a building

  c) Create, transfer or close any source of senior management

  d) Changing the use of a public area

- The Governor shall consult the following:

  a) Modification of administrative boundaries of the district

  b) Construction or demolition of hospitals and government institutes

  c) Construction or demolition of wholesale markets or major markets within the neighborhood

- The neighborhoods have the following responsibilities:

  a) Grant building, land use and building materials licenses

  b) Monitor respect for building regulations

  c) Works for the cleanliness of public places and gardens

  d) Construction and maintenance of roads

  e) Improving the environment and living conditions

While the decision-making role remains the responsibility of senior management. The role of the municipalities remains limited to proposing problems and proposing projects while the decision-making authority oscillates between the governorate and the ministries concerned according to the type of projects.

*Division of administrative units does not achieve administrative efficiency:*

The size, quality and population density should be taken into account when dividing the state into local units in accordance with the conditions of each region. The quality of the population varies in cities and ports in other parts that may be agricultural areas or areas of extraction of raw materials, bearing in mind that the division of the State into units for local administration requires the minimum performance of the various services according to the quality and levels of each service. To achieve the administrative efficiency of the local unit, it must be large enough to achieve its financial strength, as economically as possible.

*Conflict of policies and urban decisions at the local level*

The Egyptian situation has long been characterized by a large number of bodies responsible for the process of urban development and urban planning, and these differ in the methods used, including the following:

- The building and development of the village, where the approach used was the settlement of some projects in the villages without taking into account the comprehensive view of all aspects (economic, social and administrative), which represents the plan to be embodied in urban development

- The Urban Planning Commission has adopted a holistic approach, but not an implementation requirement

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- In addition to the new Urban Communities Authority, this is responsible for planning new communities and cities

Due to the difference of the parties as well as the different methodology used, this leads to the following [12]:

- The gap between planning and implementation, we find most urban plans do not find their way to implementation

- Current planning problems are:

  a) Central agencies alone cannot prepare schemes for this huge size of villages and cities.

  b) Accreditation of local people's devices has stalled

  c) Complete separation between the planning process and the decision-making process

**Negative manifestations of the method of urban management and the emergence of slums**

*The concept of slum phenomenon in Egypt*

The informal settlements in Egypt are the result of years of weak administrative control. Quick solutions to solve the housing problem There are many informal gatherings in Egypt in and around major cities, and often outside of the city; they are built on unplanned and unplanned land plots State authority and official statistics.

*Reasons for growth and inflation of informal settlements in Egypt:*

- The tendency to strengthen the thinking of major cities (Greater Cairo)

  The central administration's thinking, despite being decentralized and under-resourced, reflects attention to the capital, supporting living and administrative services, encouraging migration not only from the countryside to the cities, but from other less fortunate urban communities to Cairo and rural, urban or semi-urban gatherings around Cairo to provide services and employment opportunities and investment This is a social and economic gap between the inhabitants of the capital and the rest of the population of the Republic and the imbalance between the classes of one community within the capital itself.

- Unplanned urban extension

  The rate of residence of informal housing is about 60-80% of the annual rate of housing in Egypt (Central Bureau of Statistics and Statistics 1996). This leads to the rapid growth of semi-urban areas on agricultural land around Cairo, which is the main resource for the population of Egypt On agricultural land around Greater Cairo by about 60 acres per year). This is a strong indicator against achieving sustainability in Egypt, in parallel with the internal migration in Greater Cairo from

centers to parties and the subsequent disruption of the social structure of the city

- The increasing shortage of basic services, especially water

  Despite the strong interest of the state in strengthening the infrastructure networks, the rapid expansion of the urbanization and the numerical development of the population has led to an imbalance in the volume of water supply, in terms of volume of consumption, and this is manifested by the interruption of water in many areas.

- Rapid privatization of basic services management

  Privatization in some areas of services, with the absence of regulated legislation, led to the spread of unemployment (reduced employment in privatized bodies) and the excessive consumption of resources to achieve the highest profit of increasing the prices of services, which has a negative impact on the standard of living of the population.

- Central financial management

  The lack of adequate economic bases in the municipalities, it spends on services with the doubling of the sizes of urban communities and the increasing need for services. The facilities lead to sizes for popular participation.

- Lack of planning, which includes rural urban communities and their urban extensions and the units of these extensions

- Population congestion in some urban areas, with severe shortage of housing units or plots of land planned and equipped with facilities commensurate with the limited purchasing power and low incomes in cities, all of which helps the random extensions in the outskirts of these cities.

- Absence of executive power and complacency with lawbreakers and land usurpers and failure to provide the appropriate alternative.

- The extension of some villages in the direction of the main axes of the city created the incentive to encroach on the agricultural land and the creation of random foci within the cities, which have been inflated by cancer due to its proximity to the city and employment opportunities.

- The establishment of some industries outside the urban scope of cities and the lack of adequate housing for workers encouraged the establishment of informal gatherings near these areas.

**PROPOSED POLICIES FOR DECENTRALIZATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF SLUMS**

**Recommendations in the short term**

- Expanding the application of the concept of community-based institutional decentralization to some pilot models

through delegation from central authority to local authorities, such as decentralized pre-university education experiences in the governorates of Alexandria and Qena.

- Selecting a governorate and enabling it to implement the model of community decentralization by issuing a pilot law for local government that includes optimal limits for the previously mentioned decentralization of the community and enabling it from its financial resources to achieve its sustainable development goals

**Long-term recommendations**

- Abolish the current Local Administration Law No. 43 of 1979 and its amendments and issue new legislation including:

  a) Applying the concept of community-based institutional decentralization correctly.

  b) Separation of directorates of services and their departments from the central ministries and their allocation to the local authorities in the governorates as local administrative and executive departments

  c) Giving governorates greater flexibility in determining their development needs and participating in the preparation of the general budget of the state and its mandate in the management of expenditure from some budget items related to operation, maintenance and services

  d) The financial empowerment of the municipalities independent of the central ministries and the transfer of the surplus in the budgets of the municipalities from year to year.

  e) Activating the role of local people's councils in monitoring and achieving balance between them and the executive councils and giving them greater space to participate in preparing plans and monitoring their implementation

  f) Supporting transparency and accountability systems in local administration organizations and local civil society organizations

  g) The establishment of optimal limits for the decentralization of the community geographically, politically, administratively, technically, financially and legally.

  h) Management of local services in accordance with the concept of institutional decentralization

  i) Establishment of "Ombudsman (People's Commissioner) at the governorate level"

  j) Empower local and popular authorities from corporate governance and civil society organizations working in the local community

- Preparation of the draft "Freedom of Information and Transparency Law in the Department of Public Affairs and Civil Society Organizations" covering the central and local levels as well as all sectors at the central and local levels.

## STRATEGIES, PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONAL MECHANISMS PROPOSED TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PROCESS OF MANAGING URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF SLUMS

The set of policies, procedures and operational mechanisms necessary to ensure that the proposed policies and policies are implemented in the following:

- reorganization of the organizational structures of the executive organs to ensure the openness of these structures to all parties, local entities and the central "branches of central institutions operating in the domestic scale" (People's organs, representatives of parliaments and civil society organizations, and representatives of citizens and public figures, natural leaders, regional universities, Regional environmental planning centers, environmental affairs offices, etc.), and the creation of clear institutional mechanisms / entities to integrate these parties and entities "directly" into all local activities and decision-making processes and processes Urban planning or dealing with current issues and challenges, ensuring benefit from the insights and capabilities, information and expertise of these parties and their relations with the central and local levels in local development "management in general" and make it more realistic and closest to local communities and more responsive to their issues and an expression of their visions and aspirations

- Strengthen organizational relationships and mechanisms of coordination and exchange of information between organizational entities (information centers, citizens' service departments, supervision and follow-up departments), ensuring a institutionalized system abraded and effective monitoring and sensor local issues and determine their size based on field information and accurate digital indicators

- the need to find an institutional entity that is preparing a feasibility study of the projects included in urban development plans studies, and the decisions that are taken to Maajh various issues before they are implemented in the light of the expected results and the size of the investment required by the implementation of these projects and decisions, ensuring that ultimately not wasting the resources available and the adoption of decisions or projects Have little or no relevance in addressing

issues and achieving comprehensive and sustainable development.

- The need to create a neutral institutional entity "outside the executive bodies, including qualified elements from all parties and local entities" to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of urban development plans and various decisions after their implementation in dealing with local issues and achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

- Long-term program adopted (a series of seminars and workshops and training programs) to establish a set of core values and cultures of the leaders of local bodies, ensuring the elimination of and address a number of key weaknesses in the local decision-making process for the management of urban development and local (planning decisions for urban And dealing with the following challenges

- Preparation of guidelines "for the administration of urban development at the local level," describes the methodology and methods and procedures for the formulation of urban development schemes and plans of local labor and industry and decision-making to deal with the current issues and challenges, and the role of all local parties, and distributed to the organs of local entities to ensure that each Party's understanding of the nature of the nature of the And the limits of its role on the one hand, and to ensure the availability of means to assist the local organs in the performance of its functions

- The need for the State to take real and concrete steps and actions (political orientations, legislative measures, etc.) to enable local bodies to manage urban and local development appropriately

- The need to review and scrutinize existing systems for the selection of local leaders (especially governors and mayors).

- Slums should be classified as a comprehensive portal that includes all aspects of urban, economic, social and strategic.

- The development of a systematic framework for the policies of dealing with slums, including the "slum systems package" for land or housing systems, financing systems and building requirements regulations, as well as land and housing registration methods for slums as a basic requirement for urban control of slum growth.

- Encouraging the private sector to participate in the development of slums, which have strong economic fundamentals such as proximity to city centers, roads, main commercial areas, historical or tourist areas? Provided that the development company has the right to carry out the work of integrated development projects on the entire targeted random area.

- To stimulate the investment side and urban improvement in raising the economic returns of some areas of value, and introduce them in the Department of the real estate investment market.

- Participation of municipalities in the improvement and management of services in informal settlements with the private sector through granting concessions to invest in the services and infrastructure sector.

- Encourage community participation of residents of these areas, and that the entrance of the relocation of slum dwellers from their positions to other places must be negotiated and not reparation.

- The need for slum dwellers to participate with local planning bodies in the development process and to make basic decisions in planning.

- The only way to freeze the growth of slums should not be the supply of adequate housing but also the appropriate land and the right to own or secure land use (in case of non-ownership).

- The need for coordination and integration between ministries and some and between them and local authorities to reach a more successful government program.

- Attempt to attract social organizations and create investment opportunities within areas designated for slum development so that development is integrated and not based on the provision of housing only.

- The informal economy is an important contribution to economic development. Focusing on this approach has led to the formulation of wide-ranging livelihood frameworks in the political arena arising from the adoption of anti-poverty strategies as the goal of development intervention, and on the basis that poverty is more than just insufficient income.

- Prepare operational plans for priority random areas as a tool for regulating use and movement and controlling random growth.

- Advance planning of suitable residential areas to accommodate expected urban and residential growth.

## CONCLUSION

A. Deepening decentralization through the promulgation of the expected law of the local administration, which is expected to act as it already has in the Constitution of the gradual transfer of central authority to the localities, the approach of decision-making power and decision of the citizen through the wider powers of local units in

the village and cities and centers, Local authorities elected to guide local development plans and control their implementation and accountability of those involved

B. Determining the basic dimensions of the government role to be:

   - Government support in the sense that they run the rudder and do not blaspheme (guidance and not implemented)

   - Government owned by society, meaning it enables more than service

   - Competitive government, i.e. developing competition in service delivery

   - Government has a message and is constantly moving out of routine

   - Results-based management, i.e. funding results rather than inputs

   - Government seeking to satisfy customers by satisfying their needs

   - Government of business, where it aims to achieve a return and its role is not limited to spending

   - Government that cares about the market and takes its considerations for development

C. That the development policies of the state at the regional and local level in parallel to improve administrative performance and improve the physical environment and eliminate the concept of slums.

D. Paying attention to local councils and providing them with the appropriate cadres to prepare studies, develop local development plans and give them the powers and powers to take and implement the decision within the framework of the policy of the state

E. Build a separate economic base for each local unit or group of units that it manages to support its development projects and achieve financial decentralization

F. Review the administrative boundaries of the localities, taking into account the balanced and integrated distribution of resources and attention to small and medium cities by giving priority to development projects at the national level in order to reduce population growth in the capital

G. Activating the role of non-governmental organizations in social service programs, economic development and environmental protection

H.  -Activating the role of popular participation at the local level and activating awareness programs to take care of national goals and strengthen the spirit of belonging

I. To rely on a decentralized system of management and financing in development processes, where the government cannot continue to support, implement and finance development processes in full for a long time. Therefore, the key element in the success of urban development processes is close cooperation between the Government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and grassroots organizations.

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