



**LINKING RELIEF, REHABILITATION AND
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (LRRD)
IN AFGHANISTAN**

KABUL URBAN SURVEY
AFGHANISTAN



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ACRONYMS

AGCHO	Afghanistan Geodesy & Cartographic Head Office
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management Services
AKTC	Aga Khan Trust for Culture
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ARDS	Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
AUWMP	Afghanistan Urban Waste Management Project
CAWSS	Central Authority for Water Supply and Sanitation
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EIRP	Emergency Infrastructure Reconstruction Project
EMG	Emerging Market Group
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IDA	International Development Association
LM	Kabul Urban Land Management
LTERA	Land Titling and Registration in Afghanistan (USAID)
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
MUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NDF	National Development Framework
O&M	Operation & Maintenance
P,D&C	Planning, Design and Contracts Management (Consultant)
PMU	Project Management Unit
KM	Kabul Municipality
KURP	Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project
SDP	Strategic Regional Development Project
SoE	Statement of Expenditure
TSU	Technical support Unit
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
WB	World Bank
WG	Working Group
WS	Water Sanitation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction on the impact of Kabul's international image

"The aftermath of September 11, 2001 precipitated major changes in the political and military situation in Afghanistan". Kabul city became the scene of civil war theatre, an international military intervention and then an unprecedented influx of international aid. This international focus on Afghanistan and specifically on Kabul city was provoked by an urban event. The sudden and rapid destruction of the famous twin towers in New York city is inextricably linked with the long process of reconstruction in Kabul. Two urban societies have to cope with physical and symbolic impacts following destruction. In each city, images of conflict disaster war in urban areas and urban images are at stake. This introduction highlights the need of symbolic level as well multidimensional needs in the reconstruction process and how much image and city are in dissociable in collective representation and collective urban appropriation.

Urban situation, physical approach and analysis of urban management capacity

Although the urban situation at present is highly deteriorated due to both lack of administrative urban management as to the effects of war on urban areas, Kabul has the potential to become the pleasant city that it was a few decades ago. The challenge in urban development is to restore the quality of a regular structured city, located in a particularly beautiful circle of surrounding high mountains, whilst also dealing with the uncontrolled and chaotic development of urban settlements. But this process is hampered by the current disastrous situation. There is a consensus among all urban actors and urban inhabitants that the physical situation in Kabul city is chaotic, dirty, with uncontrolled housing settlements and buildings, severe traffic congestion, poor maintenance of road networks, insufficient power, unsafe water for domestic use and so on: Kabul needs to upgrade its physical context.

Adding to this situation, an inventory of fixtures also includes other inadequacies such as general weakness of urban management, insufficient capacity among urban planners and confusion in institutional roles. The institutional urban sector has taken almost five years after the end of the conflict before becoming a coherent priority. Today an institutional urban framework exists but urban priorities according to the different urban stakeholders are still uncertain and urban policies are in the process of being established.

Context of Kabul's urban reconstruction process

This urban survey was conducted in 2005 and 2006. At the end of 2005, very few reconstruction programmes were being conducted in Kabul city, excluding the private sector. This survey raised different questions about the urban reconstruction process supported by the international community. A draft of understanding has been drawn up covering the difficulties with which Afghan Urban Authorities have to cope with, such as upgrading the physical situation, increasing their urban planning making and management capacities or clarifying the urban institutional roles. The present phase of the survey attempts in the subsequent chapters to provide an overview of Kabul urban situation in 2006, at a critical phase mid-term in the reconstruction process with the support of International Aid. As, again one year later, hardly any new general upgrading of infrastructure is visible in urban areas; this survey attempts to understand the institutional mechanisms that are responsible for these delays.

According to the Ministry of Urban Development

The challenges for Kabul City Rehabilitation, after the destruction of the war, are overwhelming, complex, multidimensional and are characterised by several interlinking factors. But, Kabul shares points in common with many cities undergoing development in terms of different urban issues, due to the urban population growth and a general lack of infrastructure. According to the Deputy Minister Q. Djallazada, the reconstruction process

offers Kabul a dual outlook: on the one hand, urban issues that need to be tackled and, on the other, opportunities that must not be missed. Rehabilitation and the creation of new adapted infrastructure, improving traffic systems and transport network, resolving land tenure issues and supplying new migrants with land are some of the issues that must be dealt with. Alternatively, innovative urban practices, ensuring the sustainable preservation of environmental resources or strengthening institutional urban planning and maintenance capacity can be counted among the different opportunities in this period. Moreover, in the Kabul context, there are some highly important specific activities that need to be taken into account: ensuring land tenure security with regularisation of land property, upgrading infrastructure in informal settlements, establishing clear governance among Kabul urban authorities, providing the necessary conditions for economic recovery, ensuring power supply, development programmes and establishing a system for determining land value.

According to Kabul Municipality

Kabul Municipality is faced with a number of difficulties in urban management of Kabul city. The population has increased dramatically over the past five years without any development of basic urban services nor any building of urban management capacity. The population is estimated at between 3 and 4 million, depending on the different understandings of the city boundaries, with the result that informal settlements now represent 70% of the city's housing. Kabul Municipality is still working with the outdated urban administrative reference, the 1978 Master Plan, and has severely underestimated the size of the urban challenge. The general lack of basic urban infrastructure covers in 2006, about 70% of the city and the need for a coherent global urban policy is urgent in order to provide an urban framework for implementing programmes both within the public and private sector.

Many recommendations have been put forward by advisors for upgrading KM: at the national level, such as revision of Municipal Law, Urban land Policy and Urban Law, and at the local level, with local elections, city development strategy and plans, organisational reform and restructuring, revenue enhancing and financing urban development. The objectives include coping with the main urban issues, such as urban administrative regulation and the need to strengthen urban planning capacity. However the main challenge is to resolve the confusion that reigns over who is responsible for leading urban planning in Kabul city. KM claims its right to leadership, but given its lack of urban capacity, the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) is seeking to become the urban leader in this transitional period with the support of international aid.

According to the World Bank

For the World Bank, there must be no delay in prioritising the activities for improving Kabul. According to their representatives, financial and technical efforts need to be focused urgently on rehabilitating existing urban areas, rather than development programmes. For almost five years, the WB has recommended upgrading infrastructure in existing areas, whether they be legal or illegal in administrative terms. For the WB, the problem lies not in the administrative technicalities but in responding to people's needs where they are currently living. Different technical surveys are ongoing in Water Supply and Sanitation and Solid Waste Collect systems. But the financial support for a wide-reaching rehabilitation programme the "Kabul Urban Rehabilitation Programme" (KURP) has taken almost five years to be accepted by the different Afghan partners. According to the WB, Kabul's development can be analysed at different levels in terms of space and time, in order to satisfy to increasing need for housing for new migrants. For the present urban situation, urgent decisions have to be taken for rehabilitation.

According to UN agencies and international aid

UNDP and UN-HABITAT are in charge of advisory services and coordination for the whole reconstruction process in the sector. On the one hand, UN-HABITAT is supervising pilot

programmes with communities for upgrading areas and on the other, it is analysing urban management and planning capacities at the municipal level with “City Profile Programmes” which have been tested in Kandahar and Herat. Kabul Municipality has not yet benefited from this programme, but UN-HABITAT is present and active both in Kabul Municipality and in the Ministry of Urban Development. UNDP will be participating in the coordination process.

Lack of spatial data on Kabul city and spatial vision in existing urban analysis

One way of understanding an urban situation is to obtain a spatial overview of the city and suburbs. The analysis of reconstruction efforts and needs in this transitional period between rehabilitation and development has constantly been confronted with a critical lack of urban reference maps.

Reticence for producing urban maps

The fact is that Afghanistan is not accustomed to allowing the general public to access maps of its territory. Traditionally, cartography and geodesy data were a military concern. A national administration, the Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO), which works as a Ministry directly under the control of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s President, is in charge of topographical and cartography surveys throughout the country. The maps produced by AGCHO are reserved for strategic matters and gaining access to these maps for civil issues, such as urban development, is difficult. Furthermore, in the past, very few urban maps were made, because urban areas were not so important and strategic in comparison with agricultural areas. Moreover, the different conflicts and resulting population movement over the past few decades have considerably altered urban expansion patterns, urban landscapes and *de facto* the urban knowledge of the real situation. Finally, for several reasons, such as the top-secret use of topographical data, the succession of wars and subsequent destruction, outdated urban planning skills and the risk of land property disputes, few urban maps have been updated and the old ones that exist are completely disconnected from current geographical data. We have observed lots of different background for spatial representation of Kabul city and in consequences lots of different spatial vision of the city.

Lack of spatial references

In this report, we have written at length about the lack of spatial representation, the difficulties encountered in obtaining relevant maps, the inexistence of urban plans, the obsolete administrative spatial references, the absence of cadastral maps, incorrect data on existing plans, lack of scales and the absence of a detailed urban map. The problem is not so much having to cope without the necessary maps of the real urban situation, because satellite images are always available by default. The real problem is what this implies, i.e. urban authorities do not have a coherent spatial vision for urban issues, nor do they have an inventory of projects to implement. A considerable amount of work needs to be done on updating spatial data and establishing an urban planning map.

Lack of coordination and information

There appears to be plans for a coordination mechanism within the MoUD, but in 2006 it is not yet in operation. There is a lack of coordination at all the levels of decision making, planning, assessments, surveys, implementation and works. There is no communication between the institutional actors themselves, but also with civil urban actors and especially urban citizens. The urban population does not understand why the situation has not improved. There is the risk that instead of being urban partners, they might become disruptive components of the urban improvement process.

Urban reconstruction mechanisms

Various urban development mechanisms focusing on different development strategies are currently being put into operation at different levels. The urban sector is so severely affected that the challenges are multiple. For example, at the national level, the priority is to define

urban and land property policy, whereas at the municipal level, urban management expertise requires immediate support. For the city inhabitants, improving physical conditions and basic services in the city is the main challenge. While urban actors are busy prioritising decisions, delays have incurred in programme implementation and improvements are not yet visible in the field. Some pilot programmes which have been conducted effectively by UN advisors by means of a community approach are unfortunately too much limited in scope to provide a response to the major urban issues. The rehabilitation programmes funded by the World Bank (KURP) have not yet been implemented. This programme aims to bring an albeit limited improvement to twenty small areas in the city. Alternatively Afghan authorities would have preferred to solve urban problems by developing a new city in the outskirts of Kabul. The Japanese Cooperation is working on the feasibility of this type of programme but it is a long-term vision and Kabul needs to resolve its existing urban issues before thinking about a new expansion project.

Recommendations for improving urban reconstruction process

Urban authorities need to develop some reference documents in order to establish a better and more coordinated spatial vision amongst all urban actors. Firstly a Synthesis Report should be produced. Based on all the surveys that have already been conducted, this Synthesis Report would provide a clear hierarchy of the relevant recommendations, propositions of studies and activities to be carried out in each field in terms of quality and needs, prioritise these different studies and activities and establish a consensus between all the policy makers and urban stakeholders. Secondly, a General Directory, as a primary planning document, must be flexible and easy to adapt in light of future analysis and rapidly changing contexts. This document must provide an urban framework for the activities that will be conducted in different timeframes: short term, medium term and long term. Several components have to be included in this framework: institutional references, such as administrative maps; urban policies and technical guidelines; and all the findings of the different research studies and surveys.

The General Directory must take in consideration the desire to improve Kabul's image in terms of quality, national identity and international status. Both the Synthesis Report and the General Directory should be validated by all the policy makers under the supervision of Kabul Municipality throughout all phases of production. Then the conditions for rehabilitation and new programmes need to be coordinated effectively in order to accelerate the reconstruction process. In other words, Kabul Municipality could once again take over responsibility for the urban management of Kabul city.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Initial part of the survey

The first phase in the Kabul urban survey was carried out by Groupe URD at the end of 2005¹. The findings were presented at a conference organised by Groupe URD in the Ministry of Agriculture² as part of a general presentation on rural and urban research. This presentation gave a general overview of the urban situation in Kabul, four years after the beginning of the reconstruction process, and the main points are summarised in a short article entitled “From the spreading of the Pakistani architecture to the growing urban expansion of Kabul into the surrounding hills, what will Kabul look like in the near future?”.

The positive aspects mainly concerned the dynamics of the private sector which has seen the emergence of a large number of houses and buildings. Some of these houses are located in informal settlements in the hills and therefore lie outside of the administrative boundaries and other new buildings stray from the traditional Afghan architectural design. Locally they are known as ‘Pakistani houses’. “Yet, it should also be pointed out that the private sector is definitely responsible for speeding things up and invests the most in Kabul’s reconstruction while the KM and the MUDH are unable to provide enough houses³” for the increasing population.

1.2 Problems in Kabul can be identified at different levels

Physical urban fabric. The article highlighted the lack of basic urban services and infrastructure: “urgent issues such as housing for the poor, water and electricity supply, drainage, roads, traffic congestion and general planning issues” and the lack of control over expanding city boundaries with informal settlements and horizontal urban expansion.

On a governance level. It is difficult for urban authorities to make progress in the reconstruction process because of weaknesses in Afghan urban skills and financial capacity, lack of proper urban tools to deal with Kabul’s issues, outdated legal administrative and technical framework and significant shortcomings among the main urban institutional actors, including the Kabul Municipality (KM) and the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). In general, “it appears that the KM is in denial which is causing major problems for development in Kabul”.

In terms of risks and opportunities. On the one hand, there is the risk that the widespread building currently undertaken by the private sector and urban planning will continue without the necessary controls, leading to the increasingly exclusion of the most vulnerable people. On the other hand, following the recommendations for reconstruction priorities put forward on the basis of WB analysis and financial support, there are opportunities for upgrading existing areas under construction instead relocating so many people “...in favour of instigating an upgrading scheme for the informal houses as the government does not have the financial capacity to acquire land and resettle people”.

1.3 Overview of the situation in Kabul in 2006

This survey aims to present an overview of the urban situation in Kabul in 2006, mid-term in the reconstruction process. Twelve months after the research began, there is hardly any new

¹ Mariani C., “From the spreading of the Pakistani architecture to the growing urban expansion of Kabul into the surrounding hills, what will Kabul look like in the near future?”, LRRD Programme, 2005

² Groupe URD conference at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food, Kabul (13 December 2005)

³ Idem note 1

upgraded infrastructure visible in urban areas and this survey tries to understand where the responsibility for these delays lies.

1.4 Method of analysis

To present an overview of Kabul's urban situation and an inventory of Urban Issues, Strategies, Policies, Programmes or Projects that are ongoing in Kabul, different urban areas were visited, the main urban actors met and a large quantity of urban reports and documents were analysed. The urban situation in Kabul is still confused and the actors involved are numerous and highly varied. A lot of literature has been produced on this sector over the last five years. The urban sector is highly complex with many cross-cutting issues which makes it difficult to present a clear analysis on each issue. It is not our objective to carry out a thorough urban technical analysis. As many urban analysts involved in Kabul's issues, we have a fragmented view and there is still a lot of urban data missing. Below we present a general overview of the different urban analysis that has been produced to date.

1.5 Thematic issues

After a presentation of the urban situation by means of a visual analysis, existing urban research helps broaden our understanding the main institutional decision and policy making processes undertaken by Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development. One of the major difficulties encountered by all actors interested in sharing data on urban issues is the lack of a common coherent spatial reference. An inventory is carried out of existing urban mapping for Kabul, with the idea that it could be useful for urban actors to improve their understanding of this information. This survey focuses on the urban data issue because of the lack of adequate spatial documents and, as a result, an absence of coherent spatial visions. Finally, urban reconstruction mechanisms are presented as well as rehabilitation programmes or projects that are in the decision and design process, rather than the implementation phase.

2 IMPACT OF A SYMBOLIC IMAGE

The attacks of 11 September 2001 on New York had a symbolic impact on Kabul and these events must not be overlooked when studying current urban issues in Afghanistan as a whole: “The aftermath of September 11, 2001 precipitated major changes in the political and military situation in Afghanistan”⁴. The cause and effect link between the specific destruction in New York and global reconstruction in Kabul can be assessed by its symbolic impact and lessons in urban development can be learnt.

2.1 The urban theatre becomes the theatre of war

The sudden destruction of the Twin Towers in Manhattan, New York, as two commercial airplanes crashed into them provoked highly emotional reactions throughout the world. If the deaths of many innocent people was seen as a painful and terrible act of violence, it is interesting to study the symbolic impact of the destruction of the building itself. What was the point of this violent and total destruction of the highest and most famous buildings in New York? They lay at the **core of the city and were symbols of Western society, of national pride and the symbolic core of international cities**. Cities are an **urban theatre**, with the symbolic expression of culturally, financially and technically remarkable buildings. This terrorist act used the city as a **theatre of war**, causing a dual impact on society: firstly, physical death and destruction and secondly the symbolic destruction of a “civil pride of the city”.

2.2 Urban war, war of images

Another observation is that the same **sophisticated strategy of destruction** traditionally reserved for official, political or military buildings was used for a famous civilian office building. This spectacular event produced shock waves that were merely heightened with the repeated television broadcasts. Television programmes presented on loop images of the astonishing and terrifying destructive power and the symbol of high technical performance, financial power and proud building construction. The values of urban environment and urban society are as much about urban images as they are the physical situation.

2.3 Urban image, urban identity

As mentioned above, urban images contribute considerably to how an urban society identifies itself. Urban reconstruction, with its multidimensional needs (social, economic, technical) and multi-sector needs (roads, networks, housing, engineering, management) also have to deal with importance of image. Those involved in urban reconstruction need to find a **cultural balance** between the image of Afghan identity, basic material needs and modernisation. Urban images produce a **sense of coherence** for the rebuilding of urban society.

- **Needs at a symbolic level**

A society can be affected by physical destruction but also by symbolic destruction. In the same way, a city’s (re)construction has to take in consideration both the symbolic reconstruction as well as physical rebuilding.

- **Need for multidimensional urban fabric**

The notion of urban theatre is also important and implies that urban planning and (re)construction must necessarily be the product of a sophisticated urbanisation at different levels, including economic, social, technical and symbolic levels.

- **Image and urban appropriation**

The events in New York illustrate to what extent image and city are linked in collective representation and collective urban appropriation.

⁴ IDA, (International Development Association of the World Bank) Afghanistan: Kabul Reconstruction Project; Technical Annex, July 2004

3 VISUAL APPROACH OF PHYSICAL SITUATION

3.1 Overview of Kabul

Figure 1: View from television hill



Kabul city expands over a high plateau: the landscape of the city is shaped by several visual and physical characteristics.

- **High mountains** surround the flat urban area
- **Kabul River** crosses the city from west to east
- **Several hills** are included within the city

Figure 2: Kabul River



3.2 Presence of several hills

Figure 3

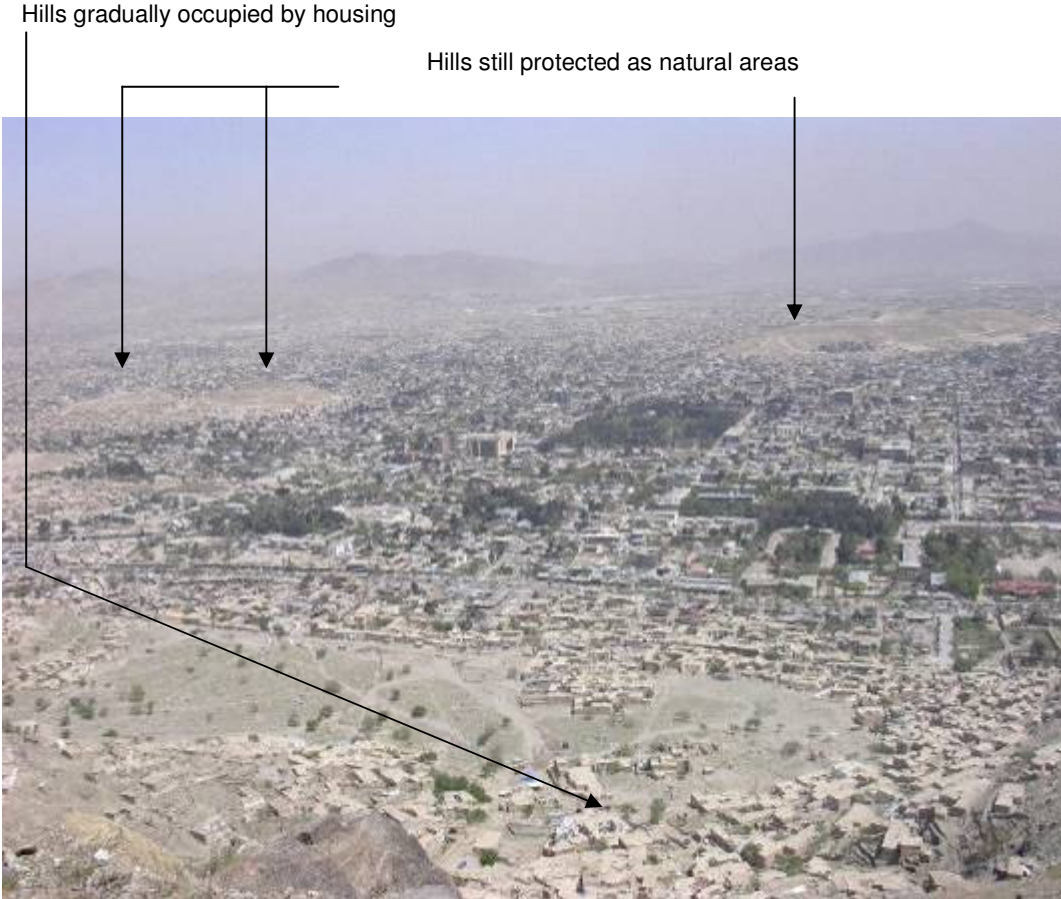


Figure 4



In the past, the hills were protected and reserved for different social and symbolic occupations, such as military camps, religious sites, parks or cemeteries. Due to the last decades of wars and the influx of returnees and refugees, nearly all the hills now are occupied by self built houses. Each day, the increasing expansion of housing gains ground on these hills, gradually making their way to the summit. This urban situation, known as “informal settlements”, is one of the **major problems** that urban authorities have to cope with.

Figure 5: Several hills in urban area



3.3 Urban fabric

1. Traditional historical urban fabric in flat areas, made up of individual plots (houses and private gardens) and regular streets on a grid network.
2. A few scattered high buildings, monuments or modern buildings or some residential blocks of flats grouped together in a neighbourhood, such as in Microrayan area.
3. Informal settlements either expanding around the city or climbing the various hills inside the city "...the city has a population of more than 3.5 million, with impoverished residents filling war-devastated sections of the city and constructing new dwellings higher and higher on the surrounding hillsides"⁵.

Figure 6



Different degrees of density

Figure 7: View with lake



Potential environmental assets to preserve in very short term.

A- Existing Green areas

B- Lake and Kabul River

C -Some hills or at least top of hills already occupied

⁵ Q.Djallalzada.

3.4 Hills views / Informal settlements in hills

Figures 8, 9, 10 & 11



Traditional official settlement
& informal settlement



Urban issues

Negative aspects: Urban areas **do not have basic urban services**, such as water supply, sewage networks, electricity or road access. Problems of pollution, health and insecurity.

Positive aspects: **Considerable financial participation** from inhabitants themselves who build their own houses to compensate for severe housing shortages.

Architectural issues

Negative aspects: **Lack of basic technical equipment** and sustainable energy construction and systems.

Positive aspects: Strong **cultural coherence** of architectural patterns with safeguarding of traditional distribution using both inside and outside space.

3.5 Infrastructure issues & specific solutions

In flat urban areas

Figures 12, 13, 14 & 15



Not enough power for permanent supply everywhere in the city.



With the **lack of basic electricity** for housing, this is an important handicap for **restarting the economy**.

Besides much of the **power supply benefits wealthier families**, so the electricity network and power supply **needs to be extended** to all areas of urban settlement.



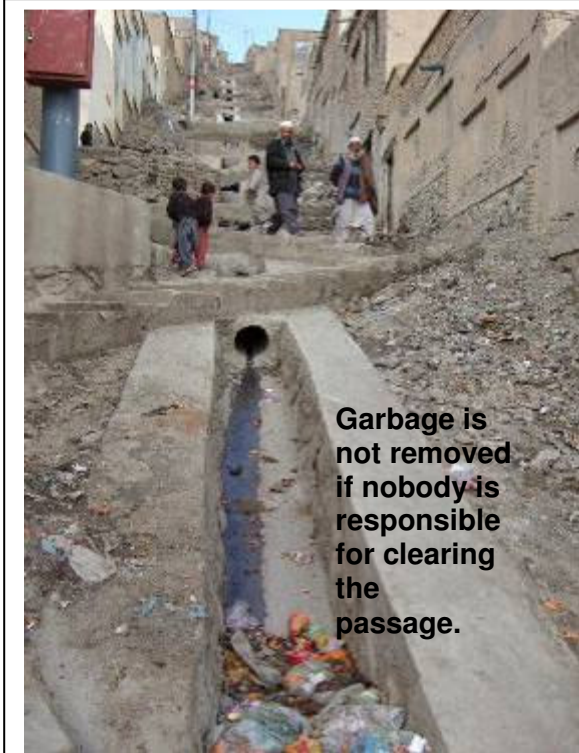
The **lack of clean water** supply is a problem but the **lack of sewage** network is a **major health urban issue**.



Specific rehabilitation needs to be expanded from pilot operations to every neighbourhood. As well as successful community participation, a general **rehabilitation policy** has to be **established** at national level.

3.6 In settlement areas in the hills

Figures 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21



Access & garbage issues

Access to existing settlements in the hills is partly solved by this type of concrete stair but this pilot operation highlights **the limits of the garbage collection system** (only one stair was seen).



3.7 Different typologies of housing

Figure 22, Figure 23, Figure 24 & Figure 25



Traditional houses

Most of this self build housing consists of **traditional mud** buildings with one or two floors, flat roofs and wooden windows.



Blocks of flats

Prefabricated blocks date from Soviet period (concentrated in Microrayan areas).



'Pakistani Houses'

Urban issues

These buildings **take up a lot more space than traditional houses** inside a plot surrounded by walls. This **reduces** the natural ecological equilibrium and traditional outside use. Pakistani houses are grouped together in rich 'ghetto' areas.

Architectural issues

Those new buildings copy a **foreign style** of architecture, either Arab or Pakistani. They are much larger than traditional houses. This **building density** could pose problem of lack of privacy.

Environmental issues

These buildings, with wide windows and powerful generators, are not energy efficient.



Traditional mud houses

Self building with rural techniques need rehabilitation and **permanent maintenance**. Building houses out of mud is energy efficient but can be complemented with other solutions, such as insulation and solar system.

3.8 Housing demolition

Within the urban environment Figures 26 & 27



In some cases, buildings have only been partially destroyed and could be saved with good structural expertise before rehabilitation.

But restoring a building is always a lot more expensive than a new building. In this case, there are several abandoned buildings that will require destruction.



Strategic or symbolic areas Figures 29 & 29

Some urban areas, such as those close to the airport or the King's Palace, have been particularly affected and are in ruins.



3.9 Homeless

Squats

Figures 30 & 31



Ruined houses with no roofs, windows where some of the walls are being used as housing, probably by owners who want to stay in their own property or by the first arrivals.

People living in ruins

Figures 32 & 33



Some **have found walls** or a roof in half destroyed buildings, such as office buildings or other types of building such as the Russian cultural centre (on the right) and use this as housing.

Makeshift tents

Figure 34



In 2005, many people were still living under tents or pieces of cloth next to building sites.

3.10 Symbolic demolition

Figures 35, 36, 37 & 38



The Palace of the King was particularly the subject of attacks. Indeed, there may still be some mines inside. This monument could be restored both for symbolic revival and as a good architectural feature.



3.11 Construction

Figures 39, 40 & 41



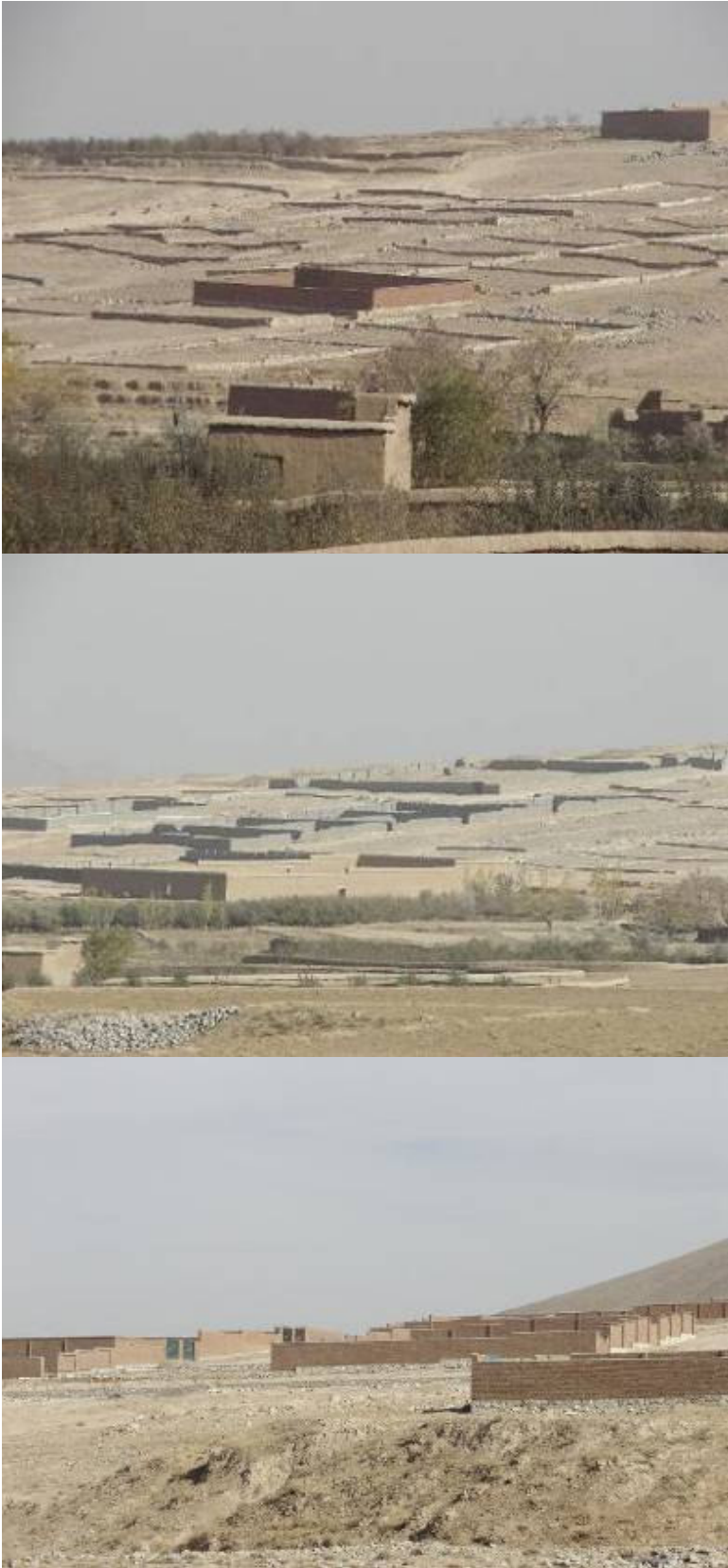
The private construction industry is highly dynamic and requires a technical framework of norms and standards.

Just like any contemporary society, Afghan people want their city to look modern.



3.12 Horizontal urban expansion with informal settlements and self building

Figures 42, 43 & 44



3.13 Urban expansion with 'private town'

Figures 45, 46 & 47



Urban expansion with private funds in the desert area north of Kabul: risk that housing will be built without the necessary public services.



Risk that people will try to build a utopia rather than satisfying needs

4 EXISTING URBAN ANALYSIS

Research on Kabul city and Afghan urban issues in general has generated a lot of literature from different actors involved in the urban sector: at a national level with the Ministry of Urban Development (and Housing); at a local level with the Kabul Municipality; at an international level with donors (World Bank and partners) and operational organisations, such as the PNUD, UN-HABITAT and some international organisations such as AKTC-AKDN or research institutions, such as AREU and Universities, etc. The present inventory of Kabul urban issues takes its source from the points raised by this variety of research and analysis on the sector, and includes urban policy issues, physical reconstruction issues (infrastructure, housing and building materials), urban needs and urban priorities. Below, we present some of the reports, research and recommendations that shed light on the situation in Kabul. The complexity and interdependence of the various issues are presented as they in the original text. Similarly, the different authors are not necessary in agreement as how the different needs and solutions should be prioritised. A difference of views between the two major institutional actors, the MUD and KM, is at the centre of the debate.

4.1 Kabul urban issues according to the MoUD

Kabul's urban population is estimated at around 50-60% of the urban population in Afghanistan as a whole. In this way, the urban issues affecting Afghanistan and Kabul in particular are entirely dependent on the MoUD's expertise, decisions and management. The understanding of how the Ministry of Urban Development functions was the subject of a previous report written by Groupe URD in April 2006, "Urban Sector Review". Therefore, in this report, we shall present an overview of the urban situation as seen by the MoUD's Deputy Minister.

4.1.1 Multiple issues & challenges but also multiple opportunities

Qiamuddin Djallazada is the Deputy Minister, within the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). In order to convey the official point of view of the Afghan government on the development of Kabul, we present the main components of Mr Q. Djallazada's presentation on the situation entitled "*Planning the future development of Kabul*"⁶ which was given at a colloquium organised in Lausanne in 2005. Mr Djallazada believes that the urban situation of Kabul will be shaped by global urbanisation trends: ..."*one of the critical global trends shaping the future*". He explains that the reversal from a predominantly rural population towards an urban population over the next decades is a fact. Afghanistan cannot escape this global urban phenomenon. Just like other less developed regions, the urban population is increasing particularly rapidly and the urban authorities are not sufficiently prepared to manage the "*most complex, dynamic and powerful systems*" that cities represent today. "*Cities are intrinsically multidimensional in character*". The challenges are multiple with interdependence of several factors. As well as the urgent need for reconstruction after the destruction of the war, there appear to be two opportunities in this type of forced urbanisation.

- **Urban issues to tackle**

On the one hand, extensive rehabilitation has to take place to ensure the significant need of development:

"...Rapid urbanization is also resulting in dangerous pressures on antiquated infrastructure that can not meet the water, electricity and other requirements of large portions of the population, while problems of health and hygiene associated with high density settlements are common. Infrastructure such as roads, traffic system, telephone system, electricity, water

⁶ Djallazada Q., "Planning the future development of Kabul," in *Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues*, issued from the Section entitled "*Past and future of Kabul*" for the colloquium organised by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K) , Kabul, 2004

and sanitation, renovation of buildings, is in shambles and the need for reconstruction is very necessary to bring back the city of Kabul to a better place for living.”

- **Urban opportunities**

On the other hand, Q. Djallazada opens the debate by suggesting that what is need is not so much a rehabilitation of the situation as it was before but a better urban situation for Kabul. This could be an opportunity for the Afghan urban sector and particularly for Kabul city to move forward with modernisation and secondly to try to avoid the urban problems of the old cities, such as environmental pollution, reduction of green space in the city, lack of respect for traditional use of urban space and architecture, poor energy management and democratic participation in urban decisions: *“... adoption and adaptation in the urban context of a reinforcing system of innovative practices, including the building of institutional capacities to implement and maintain them. There are a multiplicity of initiatives that are currently advancing performance in areas ranging from poverty reduction, social capital formation, employment generation, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, through to good governance processes and partnerships, effective planning and management, and the socially just and equitable distribution of resources to those who need them most.”*

4.1.2 Priorities for Kabul

“...In recent years, more than three million refugees returned to the country, with the majority settling in the country’s urban centres and primarily in the capital city, Kabul. Kabul is a powerful magnet for Afghans looking for security and a better life after decades of civil war, particularly for refugees returning from abroad and IDPs throughout the country”.

According to Q. Djallazada, there is a substantial amount of work that needs to be done in order to ensure secure land properties, basic services, a proper road network, better traffic and transport. None of this is possible without support in urban planning capacity building for all urban institutions (MoUD, KM, etc.) and an improved financial situation with the Kabul tax system and land market, as summarised in the following extract.

Extract from *“Past and future of Kabul”*, Q. Djallazada

1. *“Systematic rebuilding of Kabul city that has been destroyed, with shelter and housing*
2. *being critical areas of support for the returning population. This means rebuilding houses, including informal housing, and providing infrastructure and services to the city residents.*
3. *Finalization of an Action/ Reconstruction plan.*
4. *A number of quick start projects to provide serviced land for housing, facilitating self-build and other housing, with proper coordination and planning for maximum impact.*
5. *A project to regularize unplanned areas and facilitate improvements to Services, in these areas.*
6. *A project to improve land registration, property valuation, land survey and demarcation and to develop land dispute resolution mechanisms.*
7. *Capacity building support for the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Kabul*
8. *Municipality and other stakeholders.*
9. *Provision of a proper Traffic and Transportation plan.*
10. *A project to mobilize the financial sector with respect to property, to ensure that the*
11. *Government expenditure is targeted, to develop a mortgage market and to review the potential for property taxation.”*

4.2 Kabul urban policy issues according to Kabul Municipality

According to Kabul Municipality, Kabul city is above all the responsibility of Kabul Municipality rather than the responsibility of the MoUD. Below, we provide details of the issues, priorities and recommendations formulated by KM through Pushpa Pathak’s analysis.

P. Pathak is the Urban Planning and Policy Advisor in Kabul Municipality, formerly the Senior Urban advisor in UN-HABITAT. She has been working on urban issues since 2004 and has produced several drafts for discussions amongst urban stakeholders, analysis and recommendations about the urban situation in Kabul, Municipal Law, Urban Policies and Urban Priorities. In 2004, she produced a draft for the reform of *“Municipal Law of Afghanistan”*; in 2005 a text on *“KM-Planning Institutions, Roles and Recommendations for Kabul City”*; and in 2006 a draft for discussion on *“KM-Urban Policy Issues, Priorities and Recommendations for Kabul”*. We present below the main components of her analysis, most of the time in her words in order to remain true to the complexity of the situation. Kabul urban issues encompass a variety of different aspects, such as urban population and settlements, urban institutional context, issues and priorities.

4.2.1 Kabul urban issues at present

The population has increased dramatically over the last five years without any development of basic urban services. The population is estimated at between 3 and 4 million, depending the different stakeholders' understanding of where the city boundaries lie. No recent census has been carried out and *“large urban areas continue to attract migrants as places with better livelihood opportunities, urban services amenities and grater security”*. KM has to cope with a permanent population growth. Among the various urban problems, it is possible to highlight the following issues as being critical in this transitional period toward reconstruction.

- **Informal urban population**

Most of the new inhabitants (returnees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)) have settled anywhere they could find available land. In consequence, *“...Rapid population growth has resulted in large-scale informal land and housing development. About 70 per cent of the city is informally developed.”* This means that more than 70% of Kabul population needs to regularise their administrative rights to occupy the land on which they have settled and to secure their own land property.

- **Lack of basic urban infrastructure and services**

The majority of Kabul inhabitants, in both informal and formal settlements, suffer from poor living conditions and lack of basic urban services such as: insufficient access *“... to safe piped water supply (30%) ...no sewerage network system (10%)... any solid waste collect organisation ... acute shortage of power and communication facilities...damaged and no asphalted roads (60%) ...traffic jams and air pollution”*.

- **Need for a globally coherent urban policy for rehabilitation and development**

The physical urban issues are challenging and require a coherent policy but the most important challenge lies in the KM's urban planning ability. *“...damaged and destruction of numerous buildings and streets are added to those lacks issues. The bad urban situation is due as much to the consequences of the last decades of war for a part, as to the inability of urban responsibilities to manage the city. Urban situation in Kabul needs an urgent but coherent reconstruction programme. According to huge financial need, and to the very few ability of Kabul Municipality's income, a think about prioritising was necessary.”*

4.2.2 Urban policy issues

- **Institutional actors slow to develop urban policy**

In 2006, no clear national urban policy has yet been formulated, as highlighted in the Groupe URD survey *“Urban Sector Review”*⁷. Urban issues were at first not seen as a priority within the reconstruction process nor as a coherent domain, but were nonetheless present at each step of the rebuilding of national institutions. Pathak confirms below in the short synthesis about urban issues the long process for urban sector to establish itself in the national reconstruction process.

⁷ Groupe URD, *“Urban Sector Review”* for LRRD programme, 2006

Extract from Pathak, Kabul 2006, "Urban Policy Issues, Priorities and Recommendations for Kabul" Draft for discussion

- "In 2002, national visions, priorities and strategies are developed within the **"National Development Framework"**: Some urban issues were drafted for different afghan cities :*"The key national urban management goals articulating government's vision for this sector, included: (i) Investment in a balanced urban development program across the country; (ii) Municipal infrastructure development in twelve cities; (iii) Opening up energy and infrastructure sectors to private investment; (iv) Reconstruction and rehabilitation of the power system; (v) Systematic rebuilding of Kabul and other cities that have been destroyed.*
- In 2004, the **"Securing Afghanistan's Future"** recognizes the range of post-conflict urban development challenges facing Afghanistan with the issues *"of land allocation, uncertain properties rights, critical provision of urban services."*[...] This document also estimated urban development and investment needs of major cities in the country, with a purpose of attracting donor funding for urban development priorities."
- In 2004, a **"National Urban Program"** was launched as one of the 12 National Priority Programs, which is an indication of recognition of the urban sector in the national development. The National Urban Program was designed to provide a cohesive long term framework for urban development in the country. The Program had a budget of US \$1,085 million for the next 15 Years.
- In 2005 **Urban Development and Housing Strategy**. The Strategy recognizes that special attention will be needed to address policy issues facing Kabul City." The Strategy also realizes that the urban sector has remained acutely under-funded during the past four years, while a major proportion of the emergency relief and reconstruction effort was directed to rural areas. "
- In 2005, the Government of Afghanistan initiated the process of preparing a comprehensive **Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)** with the twin objective of economic development and poverty reduction. As a part of this initiative, an **Urban Development and Housing Strategy** has also been prepared that builds on the past efforts to develop an urban development strategy and program for the country. The Strategy includes a number of fundable projects for Kabul, other major cities as well as provincial cities."⁸

- **Importance of strengthening Municipal Law**

As explained above, a national urban framework is being drawn up at the national level but at the municipal level there are many gaps and weaknesses. This is the case for all municipalities in Afghanistan. But Kabul is the Afghan capital and for Kabul Municipality, the main issue consists in clarifying its role and urban responsibilities on the city within the institutional game. This implies having a clear institutional statute and looking precisely at the terms of Municipal Law. Some of the components of Municipal Law need to be revised but some just need to be applied in order to establish the KM's capacity and rights to manage its own city. In 2004, when acting as an advisor for UN-HABITAT, Pathak participated in discussions on Municipal Law evolution with urban stakeholders, Afghan engineers and foreign advisors, mayors and senior officials of Kabul, but also from Kandahar, Herat and Bamiyan municipalities. She summarised the main issues in a draft for discussion *"Municipal Law of Afghanistan"*⁹ in December 2004. On the basis of this survey, Mac Auslan, a consultant, prepared a draft on Municipal law in August 2005 in order *"to look at the definition, the structures and functions of and manner of exercising powers by*

⁸ Pathak P., "Urban Policy Issues, Priorities and Recommendations for Kabul, Draft for discussion Kabul 2006

⁹ Pathak P., "Municipal Law of Afghanistan". Draft for discussion, Kabul, 2004

*municipalities.*¹⁰: A new Municipal law which is currently being prepared, needs to take into account the new urban institutional context as well the old prerogatives.

- **Urban policy issue at Municipal level**

Pathak gives a detailed analyse of Kabul urban issues, component by component, highlighting the lack of clear distribution of different urban responsibilities and deficiencies in urban planning capacity.

Need for a clearer definition of the role of Kabul Municipality

One of the major difficulties for the Municipality of Kabul is ensuring that it is recognised as the main decision maker for Kabul city, in contrast with other Afghan cities where the MoUD has the ultimate say. “... *Kabul Municipality governing the capital city has special status, which is equivalent to a ministry.*”

Lack of clarity on Institutional roles and responsibilities and weak coordination

“[...] For instance, there is conflict over urban planning and control function between KM and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH) [...] there are few and week organizational coordination mechanisms to facilitate inter-ministerial policy dialogue and investment decision making... Lack of coordination is also partially a result of the national and local governments not having the skills or capacity to consult each”

Gap between pilot rehabilitation projects and scale of informal development issues

“ ...According to the latest estimates, about 2.8 million people are living in informally developed areas in Kabul. Dealing with the informally developed areas, for providing legal status as wells as infrastructure and services, is a major problem especially since a planning framework is not available to guide the formalization process in the city. Suspension of the Kabul Master Plan-1978 and unavailability of an updated Development Plan has created a vacuum for future legal development of the city. The institutional confusion between KM and MUDH over who should plan for Kabul City is one of the major unresolved issues, which is preventing a revised development plan preparation for the city.[...] A few informal settlement upgrading pilots in Kabul, including the completed EC-III/UNHABITAT project, and currently being implemented EC-V/UNHABITAT project, WB-KURP, USAID-EMG/LTERA projects, are not adequate to respond to the scale of the problem of informal settlements.”

Absence of urban land policy and outdated urban land management

“...There are several problems associated with outdated urban land management system in Afghanistan, and in Kabul : Outdated land Information system; lack of fund in KM for land acquisition for public us; roads and other public utilities; efficient land dispute resolution system is not operational; the rules and regulations, such as the Land Acquisition Law, are outdated in regard with the present urban contexts.”

Lack of appropriate service delivery standards

This is the most urgent problem for 80% of the urban population: *“...The poor conditions of road, chaotic traffic, inadequate water supply, appalling sanitation conditions and high levels of air pollution have adverse impact on the health and quality of life of the people...”*

High levels of poverty and vulnerability

“...Going by the extent of informally developed areas and high number of returnees and IDPs it can be stated that poverty and vulnerability levels are very high in Kabul city.”

Pathak highlights the weaknesses and insufficient capacity and transparency in funding, planning and management in the Municipality with the following problems:

¹⁰ Mac Ausland P., “Municipal Law in Islamic Republic of Afghanistan An Issues and Options Paper Draft, August 2005

- Inadequate Municipal revenues and financing for Urban Development
- Inadequate capacity for Urban Development planning and management
- Inadequate transparency and accountability measures
- Weak interface between local government and community and citizens

4.2.3 Urban Development priorities

Below are some of the key issues and problems identified by Pathak on the basis of two viewpoints: on the one hand, KM staff and on the other, Kabul inhabitants.

- **Keys issues and priorities according to Kabul Municipality**

- *“Lack of coordination, both within KM and with other agencies*
- *Lack of sewerage system*
- *No waste water management*
- *Too few job opportunities*
- *Poor water supply*
- *Population increase*
- *Outdated municipal law*
- *Problem in land acquisition*
- *Damaged and poorly maintained roads*
- *High traffic congestion*
- *Poor environmental sanitation*
- *Pollution of Kabul River and other water resources*
- *Illegal occupation of land*
- *Unplanned development of the city”*
- *Planned areas also lack services like schools, clinics, roads and power etc.*
- *Lack of adequate shelter and housing*
- *Equipments owned by KM are old and inadequate*
- *Lack of comprehensive urban policy*
- *No good plans to solve these problems*
- *Too old Master Plan*
- *All areas do not have Detail Plans*
- *Expansion of Kabul city and no control over new areas”*

Further three top institutional development priorities are specified

- *“Clarification on the authority and autonomy of KM and its relationship with MUDH, other concerned Ministries and government agencies.*
- *Preparing a revised development plan for Kabul that should also address the problem of informally developed areas.*
- *Securing more finance for Kabul’s infrastructure development, including enhanced revenue generation, central transfers and donor funding.”*

Three service delivery priorities

- *“Construction of new roads and repairing and upgrading of the existing roads, including roadside drainage.*
- *Solid waste management.*
- *Protection and expansion of green areas.*
- *The KM leadership also considers improved water supply and sewerage a high priority for the city”*

- **People’s priorities at a local level**

The key priorities summarised below were gathered in different urban areas, with different income groups.

Table 1: Key issues according to Kabul inhabitants

Project name	EC-III Project	LTERA	Urban livelihood	Informal discussions
Project objective	To provide only physical infrastructure and services	Land tenure regularisation, plus rehabilitation	Survey	With relatively high income groups
Kabul localisation	District 6,7 and 8	District 7, CDC 1 and 2	In three cities: Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat	Microrayan, Wazir Akbar, Taimane Khair Khana
Urban actor	UN-HABITAT	EMG	AREU	Pathak
Priorities	1) Drainage and access roads 2) Water Supply 3) Household sanitation 4) Vocational training	1) Health services 2) Water supply 3) Vocational training	1) Employment and income generating opportunities 2) Tenure security 3) Access to basic services	1) Roads and traffic management 2) Cleanliness of the city, including drainage 3) Regular power supply

Source: Author with the P. Pathak's data.

Access to basic services with health services (cleaning, drainage, household sanitation) are required by all city inhabitants but even more important is the need for vocational training, employment and income generating opportunities. Afghan people do not necessarily want to be assisted but require support to manage the works themselves.

4.2.4 Policy recommendations from KM urban advisor

Pathak proposes recommendations in policy terms: *"The problems and issues faced by Kabul, and recommendations to address them, have been highlight in various publications as well as in a number of seminars and conferences. But, policy and institutional changes that are critical to the implementation of many of these recommendations have not been made as yet."*

- **At a national level**

Besides the strategies developed at the national level: *"The urban policy should pay attention to the special needs of Kabul as the capital and the largest city in the country."*

Revision of Municipal Law

"Existing law should be revised with adding

- *city Service Tax Law, Greenery and Sanitation Rules and Safai Tax Law.*
- *new processes for good urban governance principles and growth oriented strategies.*
- *redefinition the authority and mandate of KM*
- *municipal taxation allowing periodic reassessment of revenue generation potential of the existing charges, taxes and fees as well as implementation of innovative revenue generation mechanisms.*
- *a provision (as revenues taxes) for central transfer including core fund allocation and more tax sharing, at least in the short run.*
- *Institutionalisation of public participation in local governance and management... as with ...citizen's initiative, citizen's assembly and referendum."*

Ensuring coherency between urban land policy and urban law

"...Urban land policy, should address the issue of informal settlement to facilitate providing tenure security and access to services in the unplanned areas.."

Need for Land Law

Mac Auslan prepared a thorough analysis and a series of recommendations in his publication *Urban Land Law*¹¹. He explains the need for change in the legal apparatus: laws on tenure, laws on master planning, laws on dispute settlement: "...During the last two years and especially in the last few months a veritable cornucopia of books and reports on land law in Afghanistan has been published.... The laws on tenure will be considered first, followed by the laws on master planning and then the laws on dispute settlement."¹²

National Urban Poverty Reduction Program

"An urban poverty reduction program needs to be developed to address the needs of the increasing numbers of the urban poor and vulnerable in Afghanistan... In urban areas, it is important that any community based program has strong linkages with the city wide systems of service delivery and governance structures to ensure long term sustainability."

Strengthening the secondary database

"... Baseline surveys and benchmark also have to be developed for various urban services to assess the progress made against specified service standards."

• **At a local level**

The responsibility for managing Kabul's development needs to lie first and foremost in the hands of Kabul Municipality with the following:

Local elections

"Election should be conducted in KM, including in the main office and 22 districts, to install a truly representative and responsive local government..."

City development strategy and plans

"KM needs to formulate a city development strategy and revised development plan KM should be the lead agency for development planning for Kabul city ...and should be endorsed by appropriate legal provision. KM should set up a city development plan, should consider the possibility of physical expansion and satellite towns' development:

- an inclusive and participatory planning process
- a land and infrastructure development, but also on social dimensions
- an effective coordination mechanism"

Organisational reform and restructuring

"...challenge is building up human resources of KM in a sustainable manner through the acquisition and application of new skills, knowledge and attitudes....Need of reform process with the PRR, ... judicious recruitment of limited number of personnel with specific skills should be taken up... A 3-5 year capacity development plan with performance linked incentives"

Revenue enhancement and financing urban development

"... a revaluation and rationalization of taxes and user charges is necessary that is linked to the current, market value of properties and cost of providing services..; It should concern :trade licenses, market fees, garbage collection fees property tax, rental tax updating land titling tax...." need ...to start a financial management project with WB-KURP support."

• **Need for a specific approach to informal settlements and poverty reduction**

"KM needs to develop its approach to dealing with informal settlements and poverty reduction within the relevant national policy perspectives and its own city planning

¹¹ Mac Auslan P, "Urban Land Law" in the Republic of Afghanistan, Issues and Options, 2005

¹² Idem note 25.

framework. Upgrading of informal settlements is proven to be an effective tool for improving the quality life of large numbers of the poor....

1. City specific urban poverty reduction programs also need to be developed, which link skill development, employment and income generation opportunities to local economic development. Dealing with the informally developed areas, for providing legal status as well as
2. Protection and expansion of green areas.

The KM leadership also considers improved water supply and sewerage a high priority for the city.”

4.2.5 Clarifying planning institutions and the role of Kabul city

One of the major reasons for all the difficulties and delays encountered in the urban rehabilitation process are the different roles of the two major institutions, the Ministry of Urban Development and the Municipality for Kabul, and the non clarification of institutional issues. In a document presented in November 2005¹³, Pathak gave a precise analysis of the institutional situation within the existing legal framework. The question remains as to who is responsible for revising the Master Plan: “Therefore, the institutional issue pertaining to planning for Kabul needs to be resolved urgently without further delay”.

Legal provisions giving Kabul a leading role in its planning

- According to **Presidential Decree** Number 919, 20-05-1381 (2002), Pathak confirms that the design and amendment of “the General Master Plan is carried out by Central Office of Architecture and Planning (now the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing or MUDH) in collaboration with its sub-offices in consultation with municipalities”, but she highlights that the “control and supervision of implementation of Master Plans is the responsibility of the Master Plan designer and municipalities.”
- Pathak also details how the **Joint Resolution of the Leadership** of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing and Municipality of Kabul, 4-4-1383 (July, 2004) has evolved where it is stated that for Kabul Municipality “the department of design and implementation of city planning should work under the organizational structure of Kabul Municipality....., and Ministry of Urban Development and Housing will set up a commission of experts and specialists in its organizational structure for approval of city plans.”
- The **Presidential Decree Number 1673 (July 2004)** states that “the City Planning Department of Kabul Municipality should be under the control of Kabul Municipality.... In response, the President referred the KM request to the High Commission for Urban Development to solve the problem of Kabul Municipality according to the law.”
- “The **High Commission for Urban Development recommended** that (Number 48, dated 8-5-1383), in accordance with the Protocol between MUDH and KM, the City Planning Department should work under the authority of Kabul Municipality, specify their jobs and should implement it as before. The commission’s recommendation clearly made the City Planning Department an integral part of the KM institutional structure. However, it did not specifically recommend any legal action to re-confirm the Master Planning responsibility of Kabul city as before. Therefore, Commission’s recommendation offered only a partial solution to the confusion over city planning responsibility between KM and MUDH.”

The confusion over responsibilities in terms of the development process in Kabul does not appear to become any clearer with the High Commission recommendations.

¹³ Pathak P, *Planning, Roles and Recommendations for Kabul City*, Kabul, 2005

- **Application for the PRR Stage 2¹⁴**

Another highly pertinent recommendation put forward by Pathak concerns the development role and capacity in urban planning:

- *“the decision on master planning and detail planning might ultimately be transferred to the KM.*
- *... updating the master plans requires resources that are beyond the capacity of either MUDH or KM alone, therefore, the task of updating the Master Plan (at present) be taken up by a joint group ... reporting directly to the Office of the President for final approval.*
- *MUDH and KM shall each appoint five technicians to serve as a **National Capital Master Plan Task Group**, which with external experts,...*
- *Government of Afghanistan should oversee a phased transfer of planning function from MUDH to KM.*
- *The two parties should sign a Memorandum of Understanding with new lines of responsibilities.”*

Details are provided as to how the urban responsibilities on Kabul City Development should be shared and amongst whom, with the old historic district of Kabul remaining under MUDH responsibilities.

- **Difficulties for planning institutions and the role of Kabul city**

The following information helps explain why Kabul’s rehabilitation and reconstruction process has encountered such important delays in starting. Pathak has deduced that until now institutional complexity represented a barrier for Kabul management and planning. *“As per this legislation, KM is clearly responsible for revising the City Master Plan, and hence planning for Kabul city.”* but as the following different decrees were unclear, *“it has certainly added to the institutional confusion regarding the roles and responsibilities for planning for Kabul city... **Therefore, the issue of a legally endorsed institutional arrangement for planning for Kabul that is accepted both by KM and MUDH remains unresolved.** This is a major barrier in planning and development for Kabul city.”*

Confusion and disagreements between KM and MoUD

“Since passing of the Presidential Decree in 2002, MUDH has not been able to take up revision of Master Plans due to lack of required basic data and resources” ... A Strategic Plan for Kabul was also formulated by MUDH in 2003.” with recommended development actions for 2003-04: ... The Development Plan 2003 is basically a land-use plan with some suggested actions for development of Kabul¹⁵. It seems that this was a quick planning exercise of emergency nature responding to the rebuilding needs of a war torn city. It was undertaken without in-depth situational analysis and background studies....But, the fact that this plan could not be enacted for implementation confirms that the planning process and recommendations were not owned and accepted by KM....

In spite of the protocol signed by MUDH and KM assigning the responsibility of detail planning to KM, it is important to note that MUDH did not abide by their own agreement and continued to prepare Detail Plans for some sections of Kabul city. There is also considerable debate over the quality and feasibility of these plans between KM and MUDH. So much so that KM refuses to implement some of these plans. ... Detailed plans have been made for Kabul by MUDH since July 2004...” but the Commission of Experts and Specialists for approval of city plans has not yet been set up.

¹⁴ Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission: Kabul Municipality Application for the PRR Stage 2, August 2005 – Assad 1384

¹⁵ MUDH: Development Plan for Kabul, 2003

MUDH has proposed planning initiatives which concern Kabul city

1. **MUDH:** Strategic Development plan for Kabul and 6 cities. Budget \$750,000 from discretionary funds of the Ministry of Finance, GoA. Minister Pahstoon would like this fund to be used for preparing Strategic Regional Development Plan for major cities, including the National Capital Region. At present, there is no legislation for preparing Regional Plans in Afghanistan, including a relevant law as well as institutional mechanism like an inter-ministerial Regional Planning Board and a fully equipped Regional Planning Team at MUDH.
2. **UN-HABITAT:** City profile of 6 largest cities including Kabul, to assess the development needs and priorities, which would help in drafting of a city development strategy.
3. **World Bank funded KURP:** \$600,000 allocated as a part of the cost for Kabul Master Plan. The World Bank has estimated the total cost of a Master Plan for Kabul to be about \$3 million and hopes to get co-funding from other agencies. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) for a Structure Plan/Development Plan for Kabul are being drafted by the World Bank team and KURP Program Management Unit in consultation with other partners. The ToRs have yet to be discussed and agreed with the KM leadership and planning professionals.

Position of KM on MoUD's initiatives

Pathak explains that for these projects, it is clear that "Kabul municipality has not been involved much discussion in these initiatives"

"Kabul Municipality has been in existence since 1912. The municipality was responsible for leading a major city planning exercise in the early 1970s. In 1973, a planning team consisting of a large number of national staff and 35 international experts was set up to prepare a Master Plan for the city. It took 5 years to develop the Master Plan 1978. The 25-year plan was designed for a city of 2 million inhabitants. About 60 per cent of this plan has been implemented. The plan is due for revision, especially in view of the unexpected rapid population growth and physical expansion of the city in the aftermath of two decades of war.

In recent years, the City Planning Department of Kabul Municipality has prepared Detail Plans for some parts of the city. Some of these plans are for new extensions to be included in the planned area. The following Detail Plans have been made by the City Planning Department of Kabul Municipality since July 2004".

• **Issues**

Confusion still reigns over who is leading urban planning in Kabul City

There is "considerable institutional confusion over the planning responsibility for Kabul. ...The Commission also did not recommend any legal action to re-confirm the Master Planning responsibility of Kabul city as before. The PRR recommendation to sign a Memorandum of Understanding and set up a Joint Planning Team for Kabul Master Planning between MUDH and KM is not acceptable to KM. The main reason for KM not accepting the PRR proposal is that it does not clearly assign the leadership for city in Planning to KM to be taken up through a joint planning team".

The emergency phase is over: what is needed now is a development vision and tools

"Now that the political-economic situation has improved the country is moving from emergency reconstruction to development stage."

Problems include:

- clarifying the roles of the MoUD and KM but not necessarily by means of Presidential decree. A "protocol with legal basis for division of planning and plan approval responsibilities between MUDH and KM" could suffice.
- Establishing a legal framework for the question of "Who should approve city plans of Kabul? A Commission of Experts and Specialists led by MUDH as proposed in the

Protocol between MUDH and KM, Office of the President, Elected Council of the KM or an Inter-ministerial Planning Board?"

- *Defining what type of urban plan should be devised "A Structure Plan, Strategic Development Plan, or a revised Master Plan? Which groups of people should participate? How can we strengthen the planning capacity of different urban actors?"*

Recommendations put forward by Pathak in 2006

1. **Institutional issue:** *Institutional clarity on planning responsibility, funding and capacity.*
2. **Local governance for Kabul city,** not at a national level. *Therefore, KM should be the lead agency for master planning and development planning for Kabul city. This should be endorsed by appropriate legal provision.*
3. **Need for joint decisions on national infrastructure in Kabul.** *Planning decisions on issues of national interest, such as airports, highways, international, national buildings and international missions, should be taken jointly by the national government, concerned ministries and KM.*
4. **Participatory process** *"engage with the key partners and stakeholders, including the citizens and civil society"*
5. *The capacity of KM staff could be strengthened by external technical assistance*
6. **Need to strengthen KM engineer and architect's planning capacity.** *... More Afghan professionals trained as urban and town planners need to be recruited to strengthen these departments.*
7. *A Regional Development Plan has to be established with "... an Inter-ministerial Regional Planning Board and a fully equipped Regional Planning Team at MUDH.*
8. **"An ideal planning process would be to prepare a City Development Strategy followed by a Master Plan or a number of Detail Urban Plans as considered possible given the available resources and priority of Kabul city."**
9. *It should be approved by An Inter-ministerial Committee or Board.*

4.3 Kabul urban policy issues according to the WB

The differing points of view between the international aid community and Afghan urban authorities, and also within the various Afghan urban institutions with regards to where the priorities lie, have caused major delays in starting the aid process. The World Bank (WB) is playing a major role in bringing together funds for the reconstruction process. Several funding mechanisms are still ongoing for reconstruction needs, but the Afghan urban institutions have not yet succeeded in absorbing a large proportion of these budgets under the conditions stipulated by donors. The complexity of the situation and the difficulties involved in achieving a consensus on priorities between the different urban stakeholders, have prompted WB to launch a series of economic and technical analysis with external expertise. The WB has produced a number of documents measuring the requirements in terms of budget. Here we try to understand some of the difficulties and challenges of urban issues in term of programmes, rather than in financial terms. We also look at WB's observations and the arguments and recommendations put forward with a view to prioritising urban decisions within the present financial context. In January 2006, the WB presented the results of their analysis, their recommendations, and what they see as being the priorities in a series of "Kabul Urban Policy Notes"¹⁶. They highlight the following recommendations:

- *"Kabul Urban land crisis : A summary of issues and recommendations"*
- *"Why and how should Kabul upgrade its informal settlements"?*
- *"Should Kabul grow by expanding to a new town or by building up its existing suburbs"*
- *"What are the sources of conflict in urban land tenure?"*
- *"Will formal documents of title and the courts resolve all land disputes?"*
- *"Conflicts over property rights and resolution of disputes in Kabul Conclusions";*

¹⁶ World Bank (Author: wb297073), 2006, Kabul Urban Policy Notes

- **WB recommendations**

Different steps for providing housing over the coming years

In response to the following question “*Should Kabul grow by expanding to a new town or by building up its existing suburbs*”, the WB proposes different steps of urban expansion after having identified the different needs in terms of population for the next decade.

- Density in existing built-up areas “*In the short term, infill of the existing built up area for accommodating 300,000 people*”
- Extension of areas adjacent to the city “*In the medium term, development on the eastern plateau for accommodating 1 million people*” could be facilitated by developing existing suburbs and available flat land
- Creation of a new town for New Kabul city much further out “*And in the long term, development of the plateau in the north, to benefit from water sources identified in those areas*”.

Improving infrastructure to alleviate congestion in the city centre

Kabul development plan should be a priority

“*Development plans with an updated Master Plan through a more flexible development plan and well-grounded analysis including of its real assets and its liabilities*”. WB identifies several conditions for designing an appropriate urban development plan for Kabul, including:

- Spatial approach: spatial articulation between objectives and zoning map
- Set of land development regulations
- Speeding up the building permit procedure
- Programme for progressive upgrading of infrastructure, with definition of the roles of government, community and private building enterprises
- Programme for primary infrastructure network for medium-term expansion in adjacent areas
- Demographic and spatial data framework
- Resource mobilisation programme

Speed up land development process

It is important that the land settlement of the estimated additional 20,000 new households p.a. is controlled. The solution is to firstly build road and street networks to ensure that the new houses are built nearby this infrastructure, in order to slow down illegal expansion and settlements, particularly on the hills. Some standards need to be set up for preserving traditional land use with gardens and open spaces.

To cope with the increasing population of migrants flooding into Kabul, the WB encourages Afghan urban authorities to adopt a rehabilitation process rather than alternative solutions.

“*Kabul’s main problem is not housing, but access to land and provision of infrastructure*”¹⁷.

Strategic projects underway

Several top priority projects have already secured funding and are being implemented. The World Bank, Germany, Japan, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and CARE, for example, are funding or implementing urban water supply and sanitation projects. The European Union is funding several projects aimed at building municipal capacity to address issues such as solid waste, drainage and sanitation.

¹⁷ World Bank, “Kabul urban land crisis. A summary of issues and recommendations”, Kabul Urban Policy Note Series n1, 2006

4.4 Kabul urban policy issues according to UN agencies and international aid

- **Inclusive urban management**

UN-HABITAT is working with civil society, local authorities and the government to make urban development broad-based and inclusive.

At the national level

UN-HABITAT has supported the government in preparing an urban housing policy and continues to serve as the secretariat to the Urban Management Consultative Group. UN-HABITAT is working on a city governance assessment with a “City profile” survey, which has been piloted in Kandahar. Subsequently a similar initiative has been launched in Kabul.

At the local level

UN-HABITAT has been working with the Kabul Municipality (as it has done previously with the municipalities of Kandahar, Jalalabad, Herat, and Mazar-e Sharif) with a view to strengthening their management and implementation capacity.

4.5 Kabul urban social and vulnerability analysis

The main objective of the international presence in Afghanistan is to bring aid to the affected population. These actors require a variety of different social research assessments in order to design programmes, specific projects or strategic programmes for urban rehabilitation, or to define a system for supplying basic services. Several international organisations have contributed to shedding light on the urban vulnerability situation.

- The independent research institute, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) has carried out research on livelihoods, including a study on Kabul, “Urban livelihoods and community based needs”¹⁸.
- In 2006, the UNHCR conducted a case study on Kabul¹⁹ and MEDAIR launched a similar initiative for ECHO²⁰.
- In 2006, ACF is updating its 2003 “Kabul Vulnerability Mapping”.

¹⁸ Schutte S., “Urban livelihoods and community based needs”, AREU survey & publication: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

¹⁹ Levron E., *Modes de subsistance des réfugiés en milieu urbain*, Kabul Field case, Afghanistan-EPAU/2006/03-2 for UNHCR

²⁰ ECHO/MEDIAIR, “Kabul vulnerable programme” as a 2006 evaluation

5 URBAN DATA IN KABUL AND SPATIAL ISSUES

In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the urban situation, we need to look at spatial representations. This chapter focuses on urban mapping issues within the wider context of the current urban situation and urban development mechanisms. The absence of an urban map of Kabul is felt especially keenly by international urban actors. Indeed, the various urban stakeholders all appear to be working with different urban maps. A website inventory was quickly set up in view of the lack of coherence in data and resources. Some maps exist and are available on different websites but the search engine on the Kabul map website (Webmaster@afghan_network.net) responds with the following request: “If you have any new maps of Afghanistan, please send them to Afghan Specialist Coordinator”. The results of a prolonged search for maps via different websites, reports, visits to Afghan and international urban actors can be summarised as follows:

- Historical maps of Kabul from the previous century
- Existing administrative maps and plans of Kabul
- Urban plans produced by internal organisations
- Aerial spatial data

A draft of the main urban mapping process is followed by a presentation of maps and a short spatial analysis in order to shed light on some of the different spatial issues. Different **cartography websites** were visited to obtain historical maps and satellite maps.

5.1 Existing data for spatial vision

5.1.1 Historical maps of Kabul

Some of the historical maps of Kabul, available on the Internet, give an overview of the boundaries of the city from 1892 to 1992.

- **Military maps**

The oldest maps identified, dating from 1892, show the location of an initial city “Cabul”, linked with the military strategic position of the “*Sherpur cantonment camp*”. The northwest – southeast hill range is clearly used as protection both for the small city and the military camp.

Figure 48: 1892 Cabul map



Source: Internet

Figure 49: 1892 Cabul, the Cantonment camp, The Second Afghan War 1878-1880

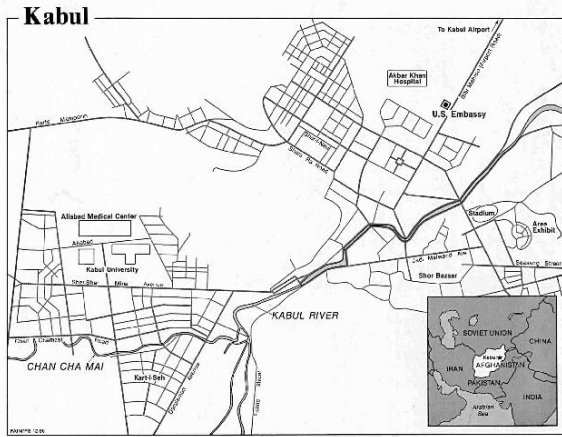


Source: Internet

- **Strategic maps**

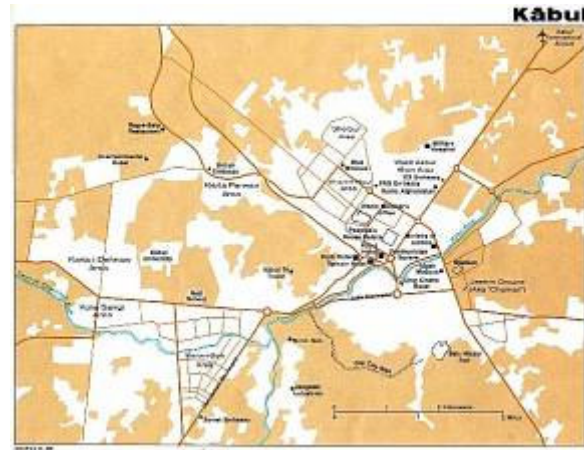
On the strategic maps are highlighted some components of the city according to the strategic objectives but no more data. On the left, only the streets are drawn, on the right only areas and main roads.

Figure 50: 1942(?) CIA Kabul area map



Source: Internet

Figure 51: 1980 Kabul map



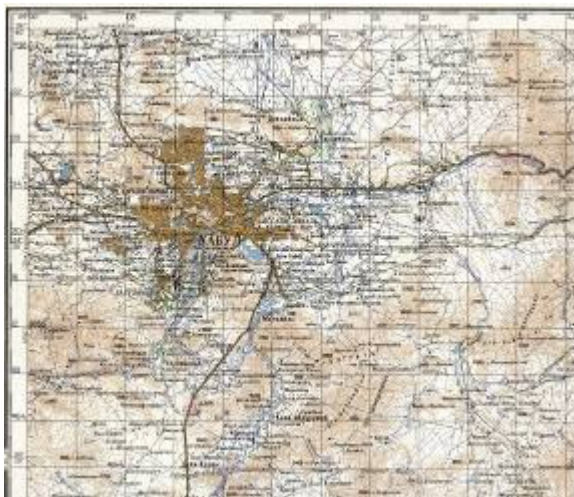
Source: Internet

“Portion of sheet I-42 J Kabul. Original scale 1:253,440 Compiled and published originally under the direction of the Surveyor-General of India 1916 and Revised to 1940. Published by the War Office, 1942 and reprinted by the U.S. Army Map Service October 1942.”

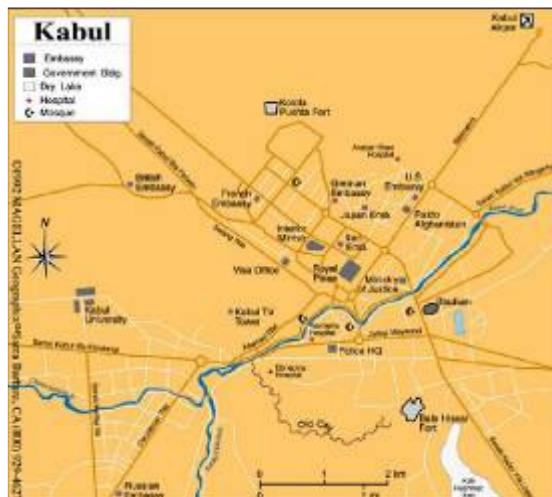
- **Inadequate urban maps**

Whether the source be Russian, American or Arabic, the data, scale or landscape information provided by these maps are not of much use for urban issues. Either the maps are too complicated or too simple

Figure 52: 1985 Russian Kabul map, scale: 1/50 000 Figure 53: 1992 US Kabul map



Source: Internet



Source: Internet

Comments

The military objectives or international political stakes are clearly the origin of the majority of maps in Afghanistan. The study of historical maps allows us to identify some of Kabul’s urban characteristics and urban actors that must be taken into consideration in the urban reconstruction process, including:

Urban military presence which is still the case today with an important military base situated in the middle of the city. This military presence is central to a general sense of social uneasiness illustrated by the 2006 riots.

Specific behaviour of Kabul's institutional urban actors, particularly Afghan cartography administration who are reticent to supply urban actors with spatial maps.

Difficulties in analysing existing maps, with a variety of foreign names for different locations.

Predominance of the hills which have geographical, **symbolic and social role to play**.

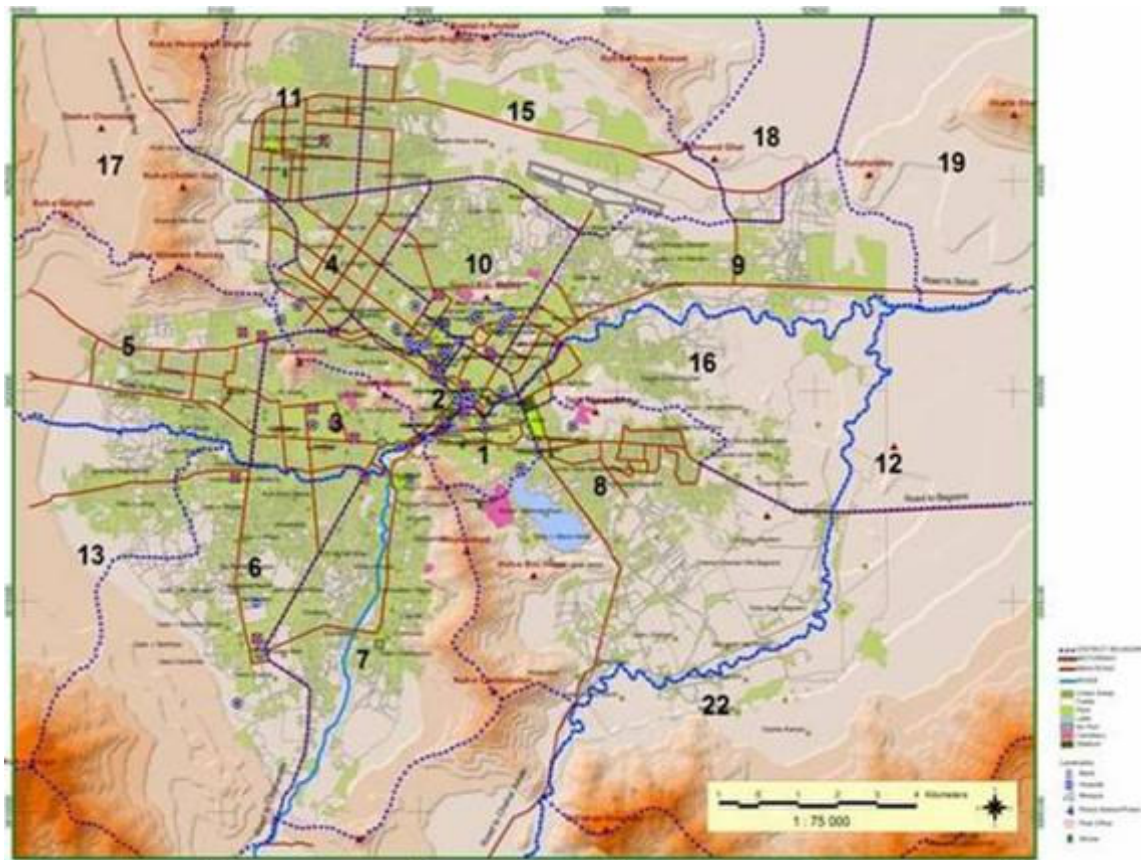
5.1.2 Existing administrative maps and plans of Kabul

- **Urban maps of Kabul are inappropriate**

The urban map of Kabul which can be considered as the main administrative spatial reference, consists of a paper map fixed on the wall of the Kabul Municipality administration office. This map is the only one on which urban information is identified but a wealth of urban administrative data is absent. It is possible to identify:

- The old city centre, composed of the districts 1, 2 and 3.
- Surrounding this centre, districts 10, 15, 9, 16, 8, 7, 6 and 4, reading clockwise, are apparent with the district limits.
- But the scale of the map is too small to include all the external district boundaries (i.e. districts 18, 19, 12, 22, 13, 5, 17 and 11 do not appear on this map).

Figure 54



Source: KM (participation of "Australian Transvers Mercator")

Comments

The study of an up-to-date administrative map is very important for understanding the link between administrative location and urban issues such as urban vulnerability, lack of basic services or public infrastructure.

This map is too imprecise. This map cannot be used for an urban survey as it is too imprecise for localising the administrative boundaries of different districts.

It is also **too incomplete**, given that much of the data is missing, such as the location of districts 20 and 21, the road network and hilly landscape.

It is **not apparently used** by international urban actors

Details on this map need to be verified to check whether they represent the exact urban location.

- **An obsolete administrative town planning map: 1978 Master Plan (MP)**

The second administrative urban plan is an out-of-date Master Plan (MP) of Kabul 1978. For Kabul Municipality and other main Afghan municipalities, the Master Plans are the only accepted administrative references on which urban responsibilities, implementation and urban planning development policy should be based.

It is difficult to have access to this Master Plan. One example is fixed on a wall in Kabul Municipality office. This photo was taken from another paper copy with hand colouring which is situated in EMG/USAID²¹ office. No paper copy is available and it is not digitalised.

Figure 55: Master Plan of Kabul 1978



Source: Photo by the author

The Master Plan was established for Kabul during the 1970s during the Soviet period, as for all major cities in Afghanistan, such as Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, Jalalabad, Kundunz and

²¹ Emerging Market Group, American land tenure survey company funded by United States Aid

Herat. The use of this map represents a major urban management and development problem.

Historical context of the Master Plan

The Kabul Master Plan was established more than thirty years ago. Marcus Shadl, an architect working for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), an international organisation who has been heavily involved in the physical rehabilitation of Kabul, presents some aspects of the historical context in which the Master Plan was drawn up. *"In 1964 the first Master Plan for Kabul was developed with the help of the Soviet Union. Later, in 1971, the original plan was slightly revised. Simultaneously, the first Soviet-style apartment blocks with prefabricated elements were raised in Mikrorayan. By the mid 1970s the city was inhabited by approximately 750,000 people. According to the Master Plan, Kabul should have been adequately remodelled and enlarged for an estimated population of 1.4 million people between 1978 and 2003, less than half of today's estimated. Soon after the implementation of the plan had started, the shadow of war and destruction fell on Kabul and the rest of the country for the next 22 years"*²²

General consensus for the need to update this 1978 Master Plan

All urban actors in Kabul are in agreement that a new Master Plan needs to be drawn up for the next twenty years. Pathak, as urban planner and policy advisor to the Kabul Municipality, highlights the need to review the now obsolete 1978 Master Plan. *"A Master Plan for Kabul was prepared in 1978. This Plan was based on the projected population of the city to be 2 million in 2003. The present population of Kabul is estimated between 3.5 million to 4.0 million. There is a general consensus on the fact that this Master Plan is outdated as the city's population is already double of what was projected. Therefore, the Plan needs to be revised taking into account the present reality and projected needs of the city for the next 15-20 years"*²³.

Master Plan as an obsolete administrative reference for spatial boundaries

The expansion of Kabul city today is far removed from this outdated spatial administrative reference. Kabul was initially composed of sixteen administrative districts. Even if today the extra six new districts are supposed to be linked to administrative urban areas, they do not cover all of the existing urban settlements that can be considered to be part of Kabul. There is no consensus on the boundaries of the city. *"As per the Kabul Master Plan-1978, Kabul city with an area of 33,240 hectares was designed for a population of 2 million to be reached in 2003. [...] The boundary of Kabul city has increased to include 22 Districts spread over an area of about 95,000 hectares. The current population of the city is estimated to be about 4.00 million, which accounts for about half of the country's total urban population"*²⁴, (an estimated 61% by the Strategy Development Team within the MoUDH).

Comments

This administrative overview on spatial representation references is important with respect to the impact that it has on the urban living conditions.

Whole sectors of the urban population are excluded from urban administrative responsibilities

In Kabul, like the other main Afghan cities, the problem is that urban administration does not tally with the urban physical reality. There is no link between urban administrative authorities, which work with administrative decisions made seventy years ago, and the physical urban territory, which is the urban reality of today. As a

²² Shadl M., "Historic notes on Kabul" in *Development of Kabul - Reconstruction and planning issues*, issued from the colloquium organised by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K), Lausanne, 2004

²³ Pathak P., *"Planning Institutions, Roles and Recommendations for Kabul City"*, Kabul, 2005

²⁴ Pathak P., *"Urban Policy, priorities and Recommendations for Kabul"*, Kabul, 2006

consequence, a large proportion of the urban population, estimated at 70% of Kabul population, is not covered by urban authorities. This means that urban authorities do not feel that they are responsible for ensuring basic public services for these people, such as water supply, power, sewage collection or social infrastructure. Furthermore, in administrative terms, they are not obliged to do so, and even more absurdly, they do not have the administrative rights to provide for this 70% of the urban population. In April 2006, Groupe URD presented its analysis on this issue in a review based on a multi and cross-sector approach²⁵, as a global issue in urban areas in Afghanistan.

Lack of or imprecise administrative boundaries is a cause of confusion, delays in rehabilitation programmes, misunderstandings

There is no spatial representation of the MP boundaries on updated maps of Kabul and the districts limits presented in new administrative references are imprecise. This problem presents a number of difficulties for urban actors, including:

- coping with land tenure insecurity
- establishing limits, regulating land tenure
- improving living conditions for most city inhabitants
- coordination between urban stakeholders, implementation of urban programmes, rehabilitation
- prioritisation for supply of municipal services such as water, electricity
- decision making and launching urban programmes.

This lack of spatial representation is one of the reasons for two or three years delay in implementing the main Kabul Urban Rehabilitation Programme²⁶, funded by the World Bank.

There is a general need for spatial surveys on the existing situation with regard to old administrative guidelines.

It is necessary to develop a more thorough spatial assessment for localising settlements in relation to urban administrative management. Eberhard Knapp formulates an approach in this way with his text entitled "The need for one "Urban vision" and many "Master plans"²⁷, as does A. Viaro with this question "What is the use of a Master Plan for Kabul?"²⁸ for the colloquium on "Development of Kabul - Reconstruction and planning issues".

• **An incomplete legal map for Kabul with the cadastral plans**

It is possible to find some information on cadastral plans within the Administrative Cadastral Department of AGCHO. However the Cadastral Department Office is not readily forthcoming with their data, when they exist, which is not the case for every area in Kabul. A lot of properties have changed since they were registered (succession, division of plots, land taken illegally, construction without permits, blurring of building and property limits during the conflict, etc.). This data is not digitalised and is therefore not of much use for urban surveys.

²⁵ Groupe URD, "A review based on a Multi and Cross Sector Approach", in LRRD, Chp2, Urban development sector, 2006

²⁶ Called "KURP"

²⁷ Knapp E., "The need for one "Urban vision" and many "Master plans" in *Development of Kabul – Reconstruction and planning issues*, from the "Lessons from Kabul" colloquium organised by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K), KFW, Frankfurt and Kabul

²⁸ Viaro A., "What is the use of a Master Plan for Kabul", in *Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues*, from the "Guidance for Planning" colloquium organised by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K)

Comments

Almost inexistent data

Establishing a detailed and up-to-date urban cadastral register is a major land issue and a long process.

- **An imprecise 2006 tourist map of Kabul city**

In view of the lack of urban maps, we studied with interest a 2006 “tourist map”, the only official one available on Kabul city. This map was updated and produced by the Afghan Geodesic and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO), the national administration in charge of Afghan mapping, but this map is deliberately approximate.

Comments

Approximate data

There is no mention of scale on this simplified paper tourist map of Kabul, nor are there any details or accurate positioning of the streets. This map is deliberately approximate and slightly distorted due an old Afghan reflex which attributes a certain military value to spatial data. It is available in paper form but we do not have any information on whether a digital format exists.

5.1.3 Aerial spatial data

Besides the maps of the city, and global or detailed urban plans, other spatial data exist.

- **Aerial photographs**

AGCHO along with the Afghan army have produced numerous **aerial photos of Kabul between 1962 and 1970**, which are compiled in a database containing roughly 600,000 units. However this database is not being used directly and the photos are not classified in such a way that they could be useful for understanding different regional areas. According to EMG, they would be of interest for spatial research but could not be exploited for implementation or development surveys in order to address urban issues today. They are completely obsolete in terms of using them as a current spatial urban reference. In view of the most recent period of conflict in Afghanistan, a National Decree prohibits flying above territory and taking new pictures.

In conclusion, the cadastral urban updating process would benefit from **updated aerial photos**. According to a special agreement between EMG/USAID and the Afghan Government, new aerial photos of Afghanistan could be taken for a specific cadastral survey within the “Land Titling, Registration & Economic Restructuring Project” funded by USAID²⁹. As EMG was granted specific authorisation to fly over Ghazni city for a pilot land survey programme, similar work needs to be done on Kabul city urban area and other land areas in order to update aerial spatial data and thus establish a precise cadastral plan as a background for urban plans and urban planning.

Figure 47 is an aerial photo of Ghazni taken in 2006 by EMG with AGCHO and the collaboration of the Afghan army’s helicopter as an example of data precision for a current urban survey. In Figure 48, the AGCHO, Afghan Army, EMG team and the Afghan army helicopter.

²⁹.LTERA

Figure 47: Up-to-date aerial photos **Figure 48: Cadastral team with army helicopter used exceptionally for taking aerial photos**



Source: EMG/USAID pictures

Comments

Aerial photos cannot be used directly for urban planning

Afghan aerial photos are outdated and there is a need for new updated aerial photos. Aerial photos are a part of a complex process for establishing spatial urban data. This requires time, sophisticated technology, equipment and budget. It is an important step in the development of the urbanisation process, but it is also necessary to use other *available data in the transitional phase of urban reconstruction.*

- **Satellite maps as temporary background support**

Figure 56: Satellite map of the northwestern part of Kabul



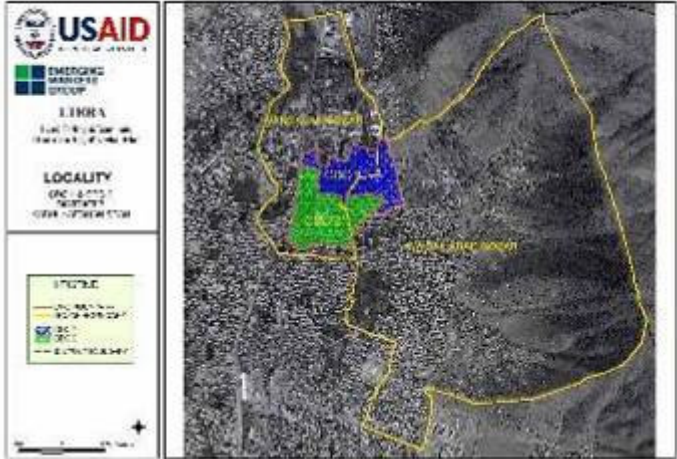
Previously, the satellite map system was reserved for military use. This type of spatial representation is now benefiting numerous civil activities, of which the urban sector is one. Different sources of satellite map are available and can be used for certain types of data, although using them for urban issues is not so apparent. Given the lack of existing urban plans with the right scale and that show the correct position of buildings and streets, and given the time involved in establishing precise cadastral plans, urban planning organisations often design their own spatial urban background for implementing programmes and projects. The satellite map is one of these supports. This is the case for the majority of actors such as urban institutional actors, international organisations or private operators design their own spatial data. All urban actors, including some institutional urban survey teams have access to satellite maps and use them as a background such as for regularising land tenure issues, for urban development, for reorganising existing urban areas, or for implementing rehabilitation programmes, etc. In this transitional period, with an absence of urban plans, satellite maps allow urban planners to: identify where to carry out their assessment, decide the limits of their programmes, design their projects, communicate and coordinate their activities, improve their decision making. International access to this database is useful to allow international aid organisations to plan their activities and to ensure that the different urban actors have a shared understanding of the spatial situation.

This is the case for urban administrations such as the **MoUD** for the Kabul Urban Rehabilitation Programme (KURP) or for the Rehabilitation of Kabul Old Town survey programme. The **Central Administration of Water Supply and Sewerage (CAWSS)** also uses this background information for monitoring the water supply networks drawn by international organisations on satellite maps by the ICRC, Care International or NGOs. **Different urban actors** use them.

Land surveys

The map below entitled “Locality” was established by EMG urban officers for identifying where to implement a pilot programme LTERA and is used as a background document for research and plans.

Figure 57

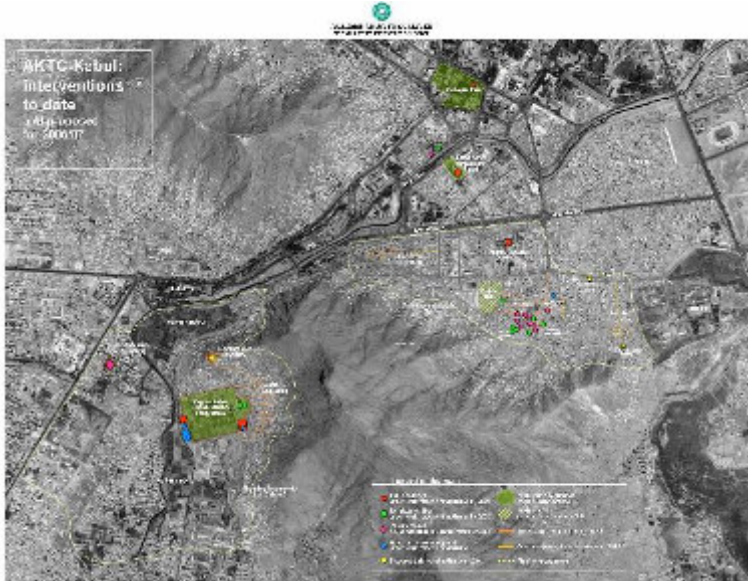


Source: EMG/USAID

Urban rehabilitation programmes

Satellite maps are very important for integrating rehabilitation programmes into the existing urban fabric, i.e. Aga Khan foundation’s programmes with AKTC. All their programmes are located on satellite map. AKTC is working in the old centre with housing and street rehabilitation and Babur park (in green below). The satellite map is detailed enough for them to plan where to carry out their activities.

Figure 58: Project in Kabul 2003-07

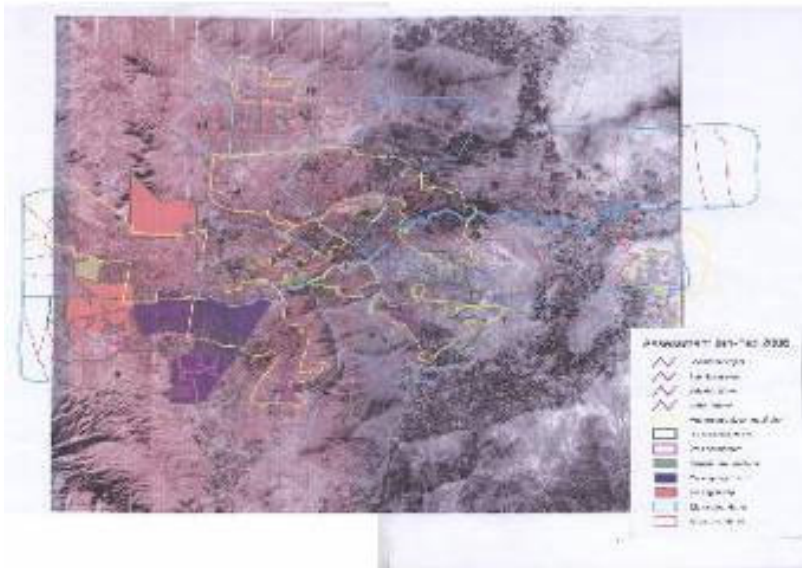


Source: AKTC

As for technical networks programmes

With this example the zoning definition for implementing water supply network is just an information and needs a lot more urban plan

Figure 59: Kabul map assessment (January-February 2006)



Source: ICRC

Comments on satellite maps
Not topographic map

As mentioned above, satellite maps are not urban maps, nor are they topographic maps. The precision of spatial data depends on the location of the satellite information system (images that are at a distance from the city centre are generally blurred, e.g. Google). There is no three-dimensional information. These maps require specific

technical tools in order to situate certain areas on them. The urban process requires more precision and coordination with physical and administrative contexts.

Not administrative reference

They cannot be used as an administrative reference. The urban process requires more precision and coordination with physical and administrative contexts.

Not coordination tool

The majority of international organisations and NGOs who are working in the urban or building sector have to establish a GIS service in their own offices. One of the main problems is that there are no links made between the different types of information drawn on the various satellite maps.

5.1.4 Urban maps produced by or with the aid of international organisations

As explained above, there is a general lack of available updated data and administrative urban plans. Afghan urban actors are accustomed to working with their own knowledge of the city. However this results in much confusion and disagreements in the field and additionally, the international community, who is funding the major urban rehabilitation programmes, does not have sufficient information on the localisation of landmarks and district boundaries in the city. To cope with this lack of spatial understanding, a number of basic maps have been developed since 2002 by international organisations with a view to developing a range of urban coordination spatial tools. Below is a list of the urban maps made available by all the urban stakeholders (ranging from small to large scale).

- **City map on a regional scale**

Spatial data at the regional level is presented in the “Kabul City, Municipalities and Police Districts”³⁰ map. This regional Kabul geographic plan, dating from 12 January, 2005, is available in digital format. This map was produced both by the Afghan cartography military department HQ KMNB G2-GEO and the International Security Assistance Force ISAF, and has been approved by all the Afghan institutional authorities: the Minister of Interior Affairs, the Mayor of Kabul City and the Governor of Kabul Province. The scale of this map is 1/75,000 and it covers an area of roughly 100km from west to east, and 45km from north to south around Kabul city.

- It gives a technical geographical background for regional strategy development within the MoUDH.

Comments

Urban regional reference

It is important to underline that this map is a good urban reference for strategic planning.

- Designed on the basis of scientifically objective spatial data.
- Represents an institutional reference that has been approved both by the major Afghan institutions and Afghan and International Military.
- Represents a common spatial reference for urban management and urban surveys, as it was drawn up with the participation of engineers and managers from Municipality - Office, Kabul City Office and KMNB within a working Group.
- Available for urban actors.
- Gives a wide geographical overview of Kabul city in relation to a regional area.

But it is not suitable for urban rehabilitation or implementation surveys

The map is too large for urban development (i.e. the scale is too small).

³⁰ Annexe map n°1

- **City map on an urban scale**

Spatial data at city level is available on the “2005 Kabul City Map”, “Kabul City Centre” and “Kabul Districts Maps”³¹: These maps have been drawn up as “*Kabul city maps*” by AIMS, (Afghanistan Information Management Services), an international organisation created by UNDP and also supported by European Commission and USAID. AIMS has developed different global spatial data on Afghanistan and some specific urban maps for the five main Afghan cities. AIMS maps are based on different sources³²:

- Superimposition of 2000 and 2002 satellite maps, one metre resolution from Ikonos Satellite Imagery.
- Data collection and ground truthing done in collaboration with AGCHO and Kabul Municipality.
- Municipality district boundaries were derived from the 2005 YSAF Kabul Map.
- Map projection: Geographic Geodetic Datum: WGS 84.

Comments

AIMS is one of the key actors for urban data coordination with different urban actors, international and Afghan, even though the accuracy of these is contested (cf. section 5.3 for further information on AIMS).

Maps have a certain value in that they exist and are accessible

AIMS has carried out considerable work in the urban sector and has filled a gap in terms of providing urban maps and plans. They plan to continue providing more data of this type.

But information is inaccurate and outdated

AIMS’s different urban maps which focus on different aspects, such as the whole city, the city centre or specific districts, are drawn up on the same scale. No matter how large or small an area the map covers, each map presents exactly the same details, with many a few more area names added.

- This type of map is like a diagram or an urban image rather than a map for urban planning.
- No street names are provided and not all the streets are represented.
- The satellite image on which the maps are based dates from 2000 and 2002 but the urban situation has changed radically since then.
- In general, Afghan urban officers do not use these maps.

- **Detailed city map**

Spatial data at a more detailed level: It is possible to obtain some simple maps from the Internet but many of them do not specify a date, a source or other relevant information. Some of them only indicate a few place names. Others only present information in Arabic, which means that the major international urban actors cannot use them. Another problem is that most of them present only a small area of the city, i.e. the city centre or the northeastern area. It was not possible to find a corresponding map of the whole city.

³¹ Annexe map n°2

³² Electronic copies can be downloaded at www.aims.org.af

Figure 60

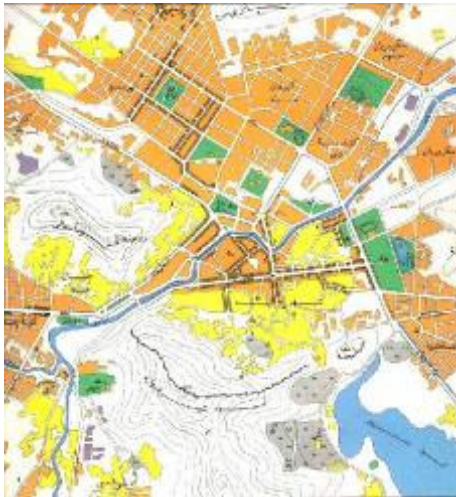
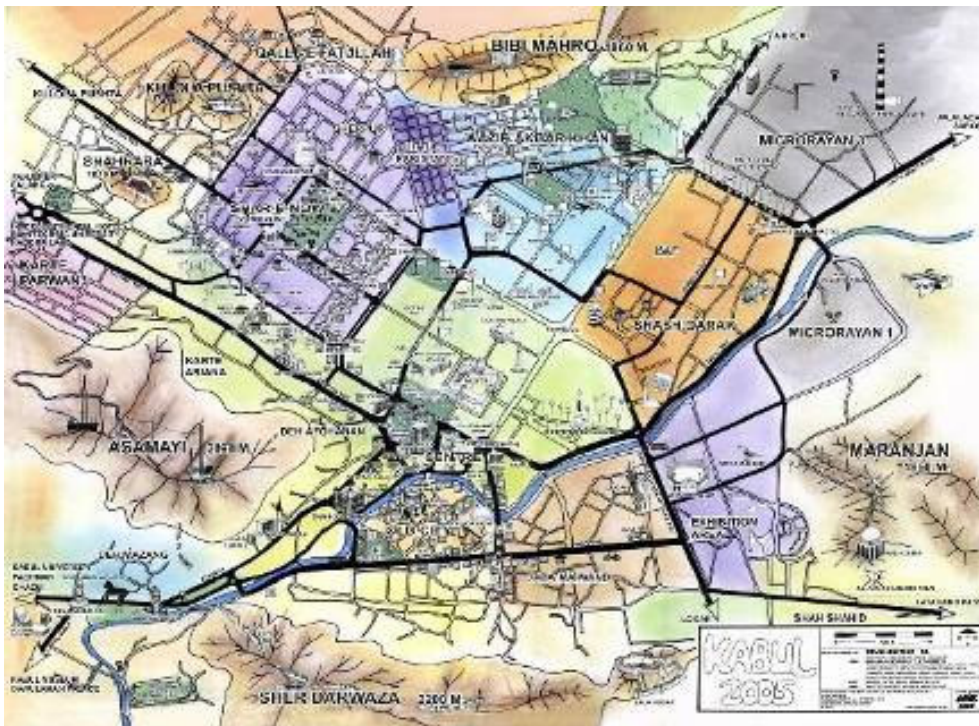


Figure 61



Figure 62: Kabul 2005, Drawing by a private Dutch architectural agency, AFIR



Source: www.aisk.org (American International School of Kabul website)

The above example of a new simplified map, established in 2005 by architect students under the supervision of a foreign architecture teacher, Anne Feenstra, is a relevant response to the need for urban maps, although this one could benefit from more data.

Comments

Map for general use, not an urban map

The Kabul 2005 map (Map 11) is the first map to use different colours to define different areas and is practical for getting around in the city. However, in general, it is too simplified an image and does not present technical urban locations. Many of the streets are not included and many of the street names have been missed out. It is an attractive guide which gives a simple spatial idea of a part of the city.

Map does not cover the whole city

The city has expanded significantly and on no account do these maps represent the whole city of Kabul. The image is limited to the northeastern areas used by the international community as its international headquarters. It therefore gives a view of international Kabul, not the Kabul used by the majority of the Kabuli population.

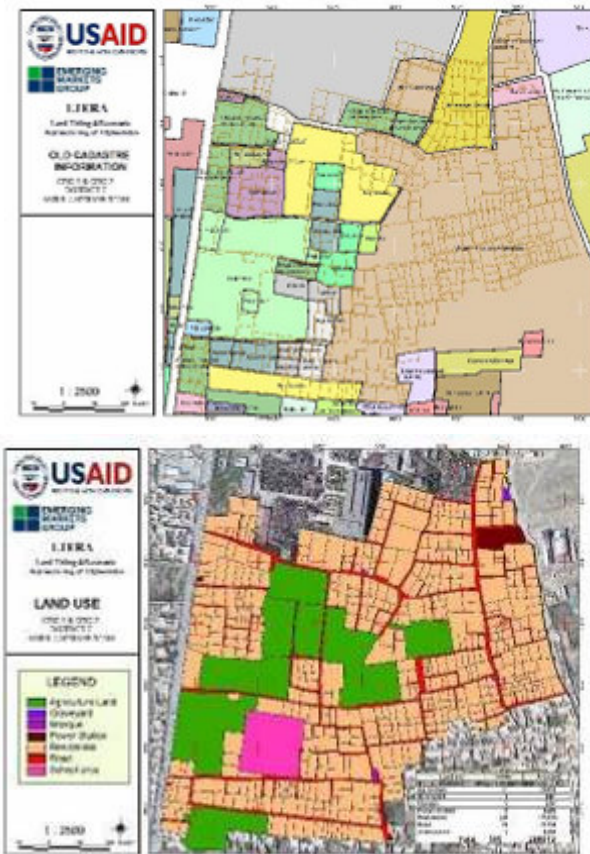
These maps are not “urban plans”

This type of image cannot be used to plan urban issues.

- **City map with cadastral data**

The following maps below are a type of detailed urban plan, as they show some land property details. They were established in 2005 by Emerging Market Group (EMG) with USAID funds. This detailed urban plan covers a very small area in district 7. They were drawn up as part of a specific land tenure survey which aims to provide a spatial overview of the different land tenure data. These urban plans produced on a small urban area with an updated and highly precise land occupation and properties plans constitute rigorous urban plan.

Figure 63: Old Cadastral information Plan and Land Use Plan



Source: EMG/LETRA

Comments

Detailed urban cadastral plans need to be made for all urban areas

This type of urban map is useful for managing all urban issues and should be used as urban background data for all urban actors. All the urban areas need to be drawn like this small area in order to establish a good understanding of the existing urban situation. However given the time it takes to compile land data, the process is complex and long, with legal implications and high technology is required for representing the data appropriately. EMG has tested this process on this small area with the approval of

the Government of Afghanistan. The aim is to extend this work on a national scale but it will take a considerable amount of time to complete this.

5.2 Observations on spatial data

5.2.1 Outdated spatial reference

In conclusion, for analysing, working, programming, tackling urban issues and implementing urban programmes, the different urban actors do not have many maps of Kabul city at their disposal.

- Two out-of-date plans used as administrative references by Kabul Municipality: the Master Plan of Kabul 1978 and the Kabul Map with 22 districts which is currently in use.
- Different departments in the MoUD use different data.
- The international community involved in the urban sector use satellite maps or AIMS 2005 plans.

5.2.2 Steps in providing training on spatial representation

The different administrative departments have received some computer training but a lot of time is required before they are operational with computers. For example, AGCHO received its first computer only three or four years ago and one was reserved for administration. Participants attending GIS training need to be computer literate. So different approaches could be adopted to improve efficiency in GIS:

- **Various levels of training.** This process has already begun with AIMS and EMG/USAID training sessions which provide various levels of training programmes. This will take longer than with a normal training session because many of the engineers are middle-aged and were trained in the 1970s under the Soviet occupation. Learning new techniques will take time.
- **Mixed classes of professional engineers and students in the medium term.** Providing training to both AGCHO engineers and students from technologic engineering university departments could be a means of accelerating the exchange of practical experience and training the new generation in GIS. The time required to master these skills is estimated at between two and four years.
- **Budget to pay competent engineers in the present term.** In order to benefit from international and modern technical assistance with Afghan or foreign engineers, it is important that all engineers in the GIS map departments are capable of working with computer software.

5.2.3 Accelerate spatial expertise in parallel

Updating existing city maps and creating new spatial graphic information at different levels is urgently required in order to build a database of the real urban situation and to be able to coordinate forthcoming rehabilitation or extension programmes. Establishing a consensus between all the different urban stakeholders on urban maps is necessary in order to resolve urban issue collectively. An acceleration in the process with the support of external expertise could allow international aid organisms to target programmes more quickly towards locally affected populations and needs.

5.3 Actors involved in urban planning: process & problems

5.3.1 Multiplicity of actors and data sources

In the period of institutional reconstruction, the roles of local traditional institutions, international aid organisations, funding partners, UN advisors and NGOs are unclear. Each actor has its own objectives and ideas on the subject of rehabilitation but coordination needs to be established between:

Institutional authorities

- MoUDH (now MoUD): the Ministry of Urban and Housing (MoUDH) changed its name in 2006 to the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD)
- KM: Kabul Municipality
- CAWSS: Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage
- AGCHO: Administration Geodesy and Cartography Head Office with the Cadastral Department
- And all other ministries involved in urban issues.

International urban actors

- UN agencies: AIMS, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, ISAF
- Banks: World Bank, ADB
- Bilateral cooperation: JICA, GTZ...
- International organisations: Agar Khan foundation (AKTC), ICRC
- Different NGOs: CARE International, Solidarités, etc.

Private organisations

- USAID/EMG
- All international and Afghan construction companies.

As we have seen above, urban data comes from different actors

- **Kabul Municipality:** KM administration
- **Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS):** The website and Kabul office were visited to get maps.
- **AGCHO Office** “Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office”: The AGCHO office was visited but no data was provided apart from a tourist map of Kabul. Very little information and no documents were obtained from the **Kabul Cadastral Department**.

The history of relations between the Afghan national cartography administration AGCHO and AIMS are described below in an extract from a 2004 UNDP study carried out by S. Heghland: *Afghanistan Management Information is mapping Kabul and Progress Towards Development*.

5.3.2 Fragmented spatial urban vision

The global lack of spatial urban vision, spatial urban references, updated spatial urban plans continue to pose a major problem. The existing urban plans and ongoing administrative plans, such as the Master Plan and strategic or project plans, are not based on the same background information and no attempt has been made to bring these plans together in order to identify possible gaps or problems linked to spatial understanding. So requirements, questions and recommendations concerning spatial issues are subject to several misunderstandings. Several surveys have been conducted on the subject of spatial strategies and spatial representation: “*The need for one "Urban vision" and many "Master plans"*³³, “*What is the use of a Master Plan for Kabul?*”³⁴, or “*The role of spatial strategies in planning Kabul's future*”³⁵ highlight the need to rethink urban issues with a spatial vision.

³³ Knapp E., KFW, Frankfurt and Kabul, “The need for one "Urban vision" and many "Master plans" in “*Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues*”, issued from the Section three titled “*Lessons from Kabul*” of the colloquium organized by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K)

³⁴ Viaro A., “What is the use of a Master Plan for Kabul?”, in “*Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues*”, issued from the Section five titled “*Guidance for Planning*” of the colloquium organized by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K)

³⁵ Gosh P., Lausanne 2004, “The role of spatial strategies in planning Kabul's future” in “*Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues*”, issued from the Section five titled “*Guidance for planning*” of the colloquium organized by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K)

Comments

Spatial dysfunctioning

In certain areas, there is a proliferation of documents produced with no links between them and in other areas there are not enough updated spatial references. This has resulted in significant dysfunctions:

- Spatial confusion.
- Poor coordination between different actors
- Delays in financing, technical expertise and implementing projects
- Poor urban drawing skills and spatial analysis
- Insufficient analysis of data sources

5.3.3 Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) as mapping developer

The different administrations in charge of urban planning are not working with the same spatial background. Even within the MoUDH, surveys carried out in different departments of associated programme offices are based on different urban plans. For example:

Satellite maps

are being used for Rehabilitation Programmes in some MoUD departments:

- The “Rehabilitation of Kabul Old Town & City Centre Development Plan Programme” is drawn up by the Department for Safeguarding of Afghanistan’s Urban Heritage
- The KURP “Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project” designed by the PMU team KURP/MUD, is managed within the Project Management Unit Team of the Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project

1978 Old Master Plan

is still the reference for

- Technical Departments who are in charge of supplying building permits, designing public buildings, and codes and standards
- The CAWSS has limited the planning and implementation of water networks to areas included in the Master Plan.

Kabul City, Municipalities and Police Districts map³⁶

They have come to an agreement on the map used:

- The SDP/NCR team, the Strategic Development Plan Team for the National Capital Region Kabul Programme 2005-2030 is working with this map , with the 2002 AIMS map for “Data Population Density”, with the USAID 2005 map for “Population Density in NCR”
- A GIS office was visited in the MoUD which produces a number of maps. It was not clear which type of graphic background they are working with and to what extent their maps are used by other departments. This GIS is not mentioned as such in the new 2006 MUD organisational chart.

Comments

Confused reference even within the MUD

The Ministry of Urban Development who should be the reference for all other urban actors is working with multiple references.

Having the right urban reference

All clarification with regard to urban references has to come from the MUD who is faced with a number of challenges:

- Increasing urban skills
- Ensuring that actors have the right urban plans
- Communicating about urban plans.

³⁶ cf. Annexe 1

Need for flexible urban plans

The other challenge for urban plan designers is to produce flexible plans which allow for potential consultation and evolution.

5.3.4 Kabul Municipality mapping

Pathak considers that the KM urban planning office has a significant potential of architects and engineers that would be capable of establishing urban plans, after appropriate training. They need to update their knowledge. For now, the map drawing office and skills are too weak in KM office. They “are working from the foundation of the 1978 Soviet Master Plan. Muhammad Ali, one of the staff members trained at AIMS, is still hand-drawing plans for a new residential zoning area in a neighbourhood in west Kabul.”³⁷ “There are some ongoing attempts of capacity building of the existing KM staff. Regular English, computers and GIS courses are organized by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and UNDP/AIMS program. Trainings sessions are also being conducted by national and international advisors on strategic city planning and financial management. But, the current knowledge and skill base is so low that it will take several years for the prerequisite capacity to be built.”³⁸

Comments

The absence of a consensus on spatial vision is one of the main problems facing all institutional, international and private urban actors. This issue is linked to:

- lack of global urban data (demography, social, poverty, economic),
- lack of urban plans, or outdated graphic administrative documents,
- weak capacities in urban planning and in generating digital plans with insufficient computer equipment,
- difficulties of cooperation between the two main urban actors, the Ministry of Urban Development and Kabul Municipality
- Weak communication within the MUD

5.3.5 AGCHO & AIMS as mapping offices

Before all urban skills within MoUD and KM can be updated, an international organisation has been trying to fill the gap. This initiative is contested, by afghan cartography office (AGCHO).

AIMS, as international UN actor, and AGCHO, as Afghan mapping institution

AGCHO is an institution that lies within central government, like a ministry. Its role is to provide “every kind of land survey, map and mapping activities in Afghanistan... It is also involved in surveying for the future gas pipeline linking Turkmenistan to the Arabian Sea.”³⁹ To cope the lack of urban plans, AIMS was set up by the UN to provide and share spatial information products and services within the international community as well as to share spatial vision with Afghan institutions. Their work consists of elaborating a wide range of map products, database design and distributing of documents. “The UNDP programme Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) has worked closely with Kabul Municipality and the Afghanistan Geodesic and Cartographic Head Office (AGCHO) to digitalize, reform and refine Kabul’s map⁴⁰. The process of urban mapping, as an unavoidable base for any programme, is sufficiently important and complex, as explained by S. Hegland (UNDP) below.

³⁷ Hegland S., UNDP, *Afghanistan Management Information is mapping Kabul and Progress Towards Development*, 2004

³⁸ Pathak P., Kabul, February 2006, “Urban Policy, priorities and Recommendations for Kabul”, in chapter: “Inadequate Capacity for Urban Development Planning and Management” p 10.

³⁹ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

⁴⁰ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

- **Outdated Kabul mapping process**

“It is a long-overdue process. Every map of Kabul until now has been based on aerial photographs taken in 1986 that were hand-plotted on drafting tables by the government-based AGCHO and then digitised by the international community. The coordinate system was based on manual geometric techniques that have been used for nearly five hundred years, and countless roads, settlements and landmarks have gone unmapped since the original version.” AIMS is updating a forty year-old process which consisted of drawing maps by hand on transparent paper placed over AGCHO aerial photographs. *“AGCHO workers would hand-trace the lines and contours, using different thickness of pens to delineate altitude. [...]*

- *A 1978 city Master plan produced by Kabul Municipality is written in Cyrillic letters. The Soviets used the Kabul map to present grand plans for zoning and road planning.*
- *In 1986, AGCHO updated the city map based on new aerial photographs and ground-truthing.*
- *In 1994, the NGO ACTED updated the map yet again. It still had numerous problems, among them its inclusion of buildings that had been destroyed and its exclusion of new roads that had been built. However the map had been used since then for town planning and security issues.”⁴¹*

Since the launch of the reconstruction process in 2001, there is a high demand for new updated maps for coordination of physical building works and infrastructure, and upstream for coordination between the different stakeholders, surveys and programmes and projects in a number of fields, such as *“historical conservation, road clearing, water systems and tourist sites”*.

- **Outdated spatial background data**

Two satellite databases have been used by AIMS to establish maps of Kabul

- One source is a 2000 satellite photo of Kabul produced by Spaceimaging.com. This image shows only the north side of the city with several landmarks such as the airport, Akbar Khan Hospital, Pashtun Square, Royal Palace and Blue Mosque.
- The other source is a satellite image produced by Ikonos Image from 2002.

“The first limitation that AIMS faced in addressing these new demands was the lack of updated aerial photographs of Kabul. The bombing of the city in the early nineties destroyed AGCHO’s camera-equipped plane, along with its entire storehouse of map negatives and prints. Through the European Commission, AIMS was finally able to secure the rights to use satellite photographs of Kabul taken in 2002, and has negotiated for the right of the Government to own these images.”⁴²

- **Need for modern topographic tools**

“...The Government ... travelled the city with the AIMS team, gathering Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite coordinates and verifying the presence of new buildings and settlements. The GPS coordinates were overlaid onto the digitised satellite images, and then the district boundaries outlined using the 1978 city master Plan”⁴³

- **Standardisation of different languages**

In the quality control process, the names of every road, neighbourhood and park had to be verified. *“... AIMS had to request the participation of Afghan government employers who knew well Kabul city to for standardize the spellings of the English names on the map. It was*

⁴¹ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

⁴² idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

⁴³ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

*the case of” Ghulam Jelani, now an AIMS Government Liaison who has 35 years of experience with AGCHO and was a quality control expert employed within AIMS.*⁴⁴

- **Computer training a necessity for KM and AGCHO staff**

AIMS has worked with AGCHO, training employees in the process of computerised information and mapping systems: Geographic Information System (GIS). It is a long process.

“Both satellite photographs as well as the satellite-coordinate Global Positioning System (GPS), once purely privileges of the military, can now be accessed commercially, and at rapidly diminishing costs. “The problem now is building capacity—it’s critical to build upon a solid foundation of human resources to continue this system.”

- **AIMS’s mandate**

*AIMS has a mandate, firstly, to build “information management capacity” in the government of Afghanistan, and, secondly, to provide “information management services” to the government and the broader humanitarian community. The programme promotes common data and technology standards and the free flow of information, through focused customer service, product delivery, capacity building and supporting information policy development. Currently, AIMS is directly serving over ten government departments, and has regional offices in five cities and a main office in Kabul.*⁴⁵

- **Very weak skills**

Eng. Abdul Raouf, General President of AGCHO said to AIMS: *“We urgently need new and modern equipment to respond to the demand for maps in Afghanistan. ...”* But as AIMS highlights *“ ...a hundred workers (in AGCHO offices) hunched over the same Swiss machines used for the last forty years, meticulously recreating the destroyed maps of cities across Afghanistan from the same photographs they were working on before the war.”...*

*So “AIMS is gradually trying to nudge mapmaking in AGCHO into the digital era. It considered government training a critical component of its Kabul mapmaking process, and involved AGCHO and Municipality employees extensively in digital mapping techniques and the use of the GPS to plot precise, satellite-verified coordinates.”*⁴⁶

5.4 Spatial analysis of Kabul city

Further to our analysis of institutional roles and policy issues, in this section we aim to present a spatial vision of Kabul, despite the confusion due to all the different types of maps and plans. Below some diagrams are presented in order to understand some of the most urban characteristics of Kabul today.

5.4.1 A short analysis of Kabul’s urban structure

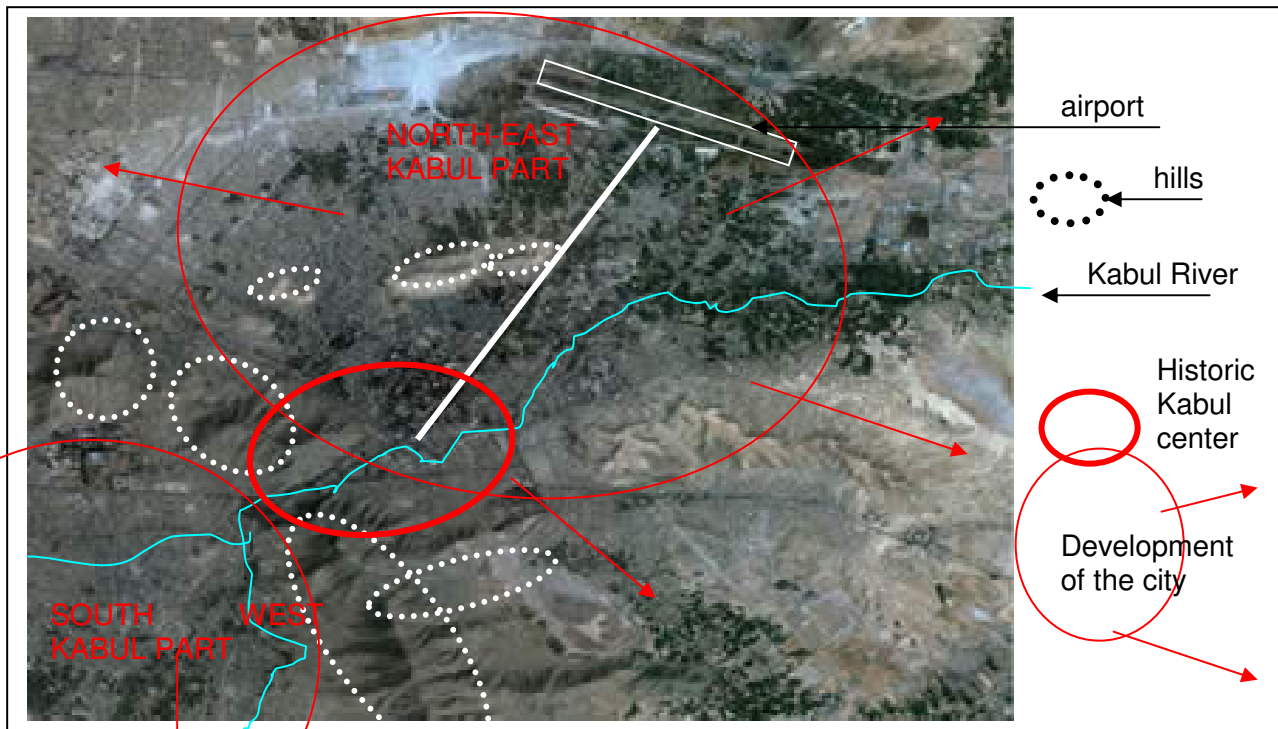
Satellite maps are used as background data for analysing and explaining the geographical situation. Kabul city has expanded from an old centre, which was protected by hills and the Kabul river, towards the northeast and the southwest. The presence of numerous hills, is one of the most important topographical characteristics of this city and is linked to its past, strategic considerations, vulnerability and defence. The airport in the north is linked by a straight road which is in the process of being repaired by the international community since 2005.

⁴⁴ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

⁴⁵ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

⁴⁶ idem note HEGLAND, UNDP

Figure 64

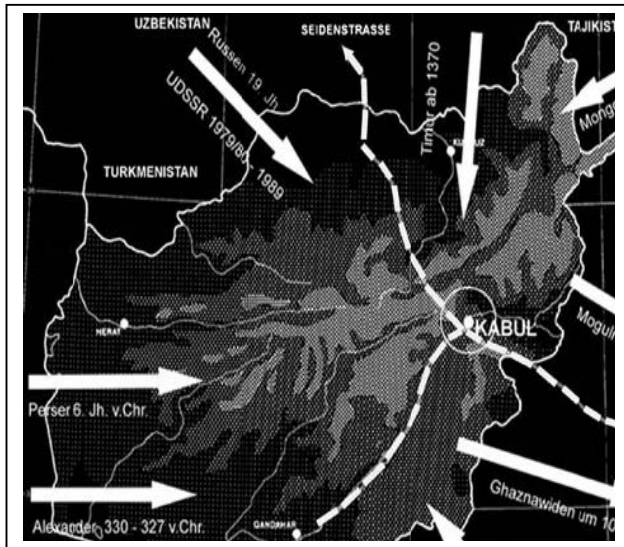


Comments

This satellite map presents primarily the northeastern area of the city, as do most available maps of Kabul. It is important to bear in mind that the city has expanded out into a large area in the southwest. The reason for this imbalance can be accounted for by the presence of a line of hills running through the middle of the city. A narrow passage between two hills provides access between the west and east of the city through which the river and the main road pass. This satellite image highlights how the narrow passage acts as a bottleneck in the centre of the Kabul urban layout.

5.4.2 A geographical and cultural crossing

Figure 65: Zahra Breshna's illustration on the basis of a topographical plan



Kabul is symbolic in its role as a crossing in terms of history, culture and trade at regional and international levels. Zahra Breshna, architect and urban planner in charge of the Department for the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's urban Heritage in the MoUDH from 2003 to 2006, introduces her analysis of the "Program for Rehabilitation and development of Kabul's Historic Centre" with the diagram presented below. Kabul can be seen "as a geographical and cultural crossing", with "a pivotal position between the fables Silk Route and India".

Source: Zahra Breshna's illustration on the basis of a topographical plan from Albert Szabo / Thomas J. Barfield

Comments

Strategic crossroads

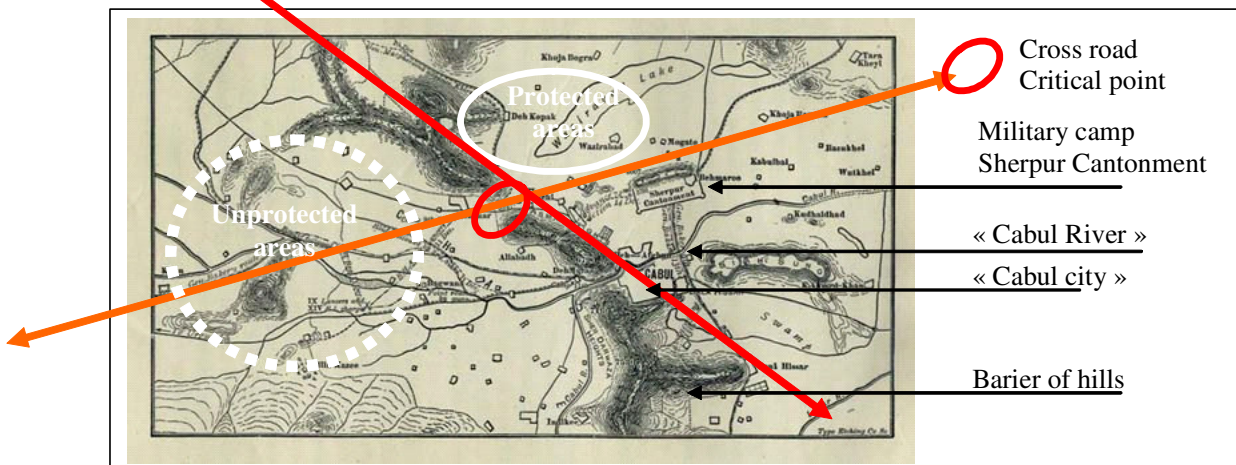
Kabul is situated on a strategic international crossroads and presents a stake for the country itself, for the region with bilateral interests (Pakistan, Iran, India, Tajikistan, etc.) and on an international level.

5.4.3 Strategic position: protection and vulnerability

• **A historical crossroads**

The characteristics of Kabul's situation is accentuated by an important physical aspect which is highlighted on the "1892 Cabul map" below. The crossroads composed of the main roads, the Kabul river and hills is shaped by **a very narrow passage between the western and eastern areas** through which runs the Kabul river and the west to east main road.

Figure 66: Author's geographical issues diagram on an old 1892 Cabul Map



Source: Internet

- **Protected areas and unprotected areas**

The hills constitute a natural north(west)-south(east) boundary between the western area and the eastern area where the future development of Kabul is planned. Kabul city first developed on the eastern side, which is well protected by high hills, leaving all the western area as agriculture land without protection.

- **Military territory**

The old maps are not exact but give some cultural data, such as the large military camp that can be seen to the northeast of Figure 9. The 1892 map “Cabul cantonment and the surrounding country” shows the Sherpur Camp in the same area. It illustrates both the importance of the military presence, the amount of land occupied by the army, which probably remains the case even today. All of these aspects remain the reality to this day.

- **Different urban structures**

Another observation that can be made on the same Figure 9 is the spatial organisation with the contrast between the “City of Cabul” which was concentrated close to the defensive position of the hills and the large expanse of area occupied by the military camp, forts and orchards.

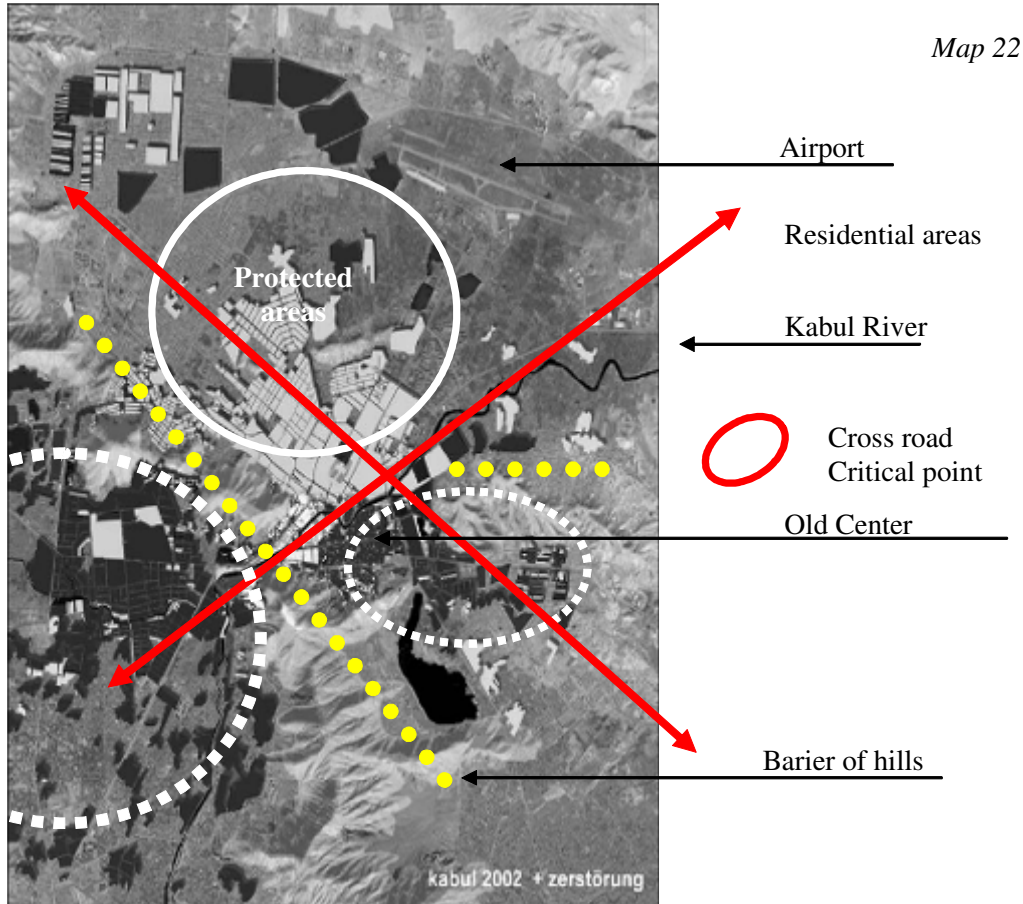
Comments

Certain urban characteristics that were present two centuries ago can still be observed in some of Kabul’s neighbourhoods today: density in the centre with no space to expand and large, green areas with residential housing in the north where the military camp was situated.

5.4.4 Past and present spatial stakes

This map explains where the major destruction has occurred in the city (in black in Breshna’s diagram). The defensive position of the hills have a dual effect: on the one hand, they provided protection for the creation of an initial city settlement on the eastern side; on the other, due to the strategic position of the hills, they have been the scene of conflict and danger over the last decades.

Figure 10



Source: Z. Breshna

“At the moment, the chief characteristics of the historic centre are, primarily, poverty, misery and ruin; about 80% of the structural fabric of the old town (450 ha) has been destroyed”.

Comments

The beginnings of a spatial analysis

Looking at maps of Kabul from the past and the present gives us some clues for understanding the present urban situation, such as:

- Specific physical position
- History linked to this position
- Current situation
- Spatial location of different type of urban needs
- Strategic development of the city firstly in the protected areas in the east and then informal expansion on the west side in agricultural areas.

Strategic and vulnerable

The strategic defensive position with the hills meant that the city enjoyed a certain amount of natural protection for its development. However, over the past few decades, this position has also led to the city's destruction, as represented by the black areas in Breshna's diagram.

Crux of the city

This strategic point is today at the origin of a huge traffic problems and severe constraints. This problem has reached such a critical level that it could serve as a pretext for putting in place a public transport system as mentioned in some reports. It is

interesting to see how a negative point can also have potential of stimulating new infrastructure.

Need for spatial urban expertise

Kabul city with its multiple urban issues could be understood more easily with more widespread spatial analysis.

6 URBAN MECHANISMS

Various urban development mechanisms are being operated in parallel at different levels of decision making and at different levels of spatial strategy.

6.1 Different decision-making levels

All urban actors need to provide an answer to the following question: Who is in charge of each step of programming decision making and project implementation? The question remains open in Kabul with a lot of discussions as related above this document. “*Who builds a city?*”⁴⁷ is another way of looking at the question of urban governance as Tom Sacher⁴⁸ writes in his report of Kabul issues.

6.1.1 At a national level and international control

In this period of institutional reconstruction, international assistance plays a major role in supporting policy decisions and the different stakeholders involved in Afghan urban reconstruction. The Kabul Municipality, the Government of Afghanistan, the MoUD and all the other ministries concerned have held several consultative working groups and meetings since 2001 with the international community, advisors and financial partners, such as UN-HABITAT, UNDP, AKTC, and different donors, such as the European Commission, WB, GTZ and ADB. After five years, the MoUD is starting to introduce reforms in its staffing policy and its processes, but at present, financial issues are still the responsibility of international stakeholders. Plans made at a political level must then be aligned with the available budget and international conditions. Moreover, the capacity for urban governance has been strengthened with urban institutions but in Kabul, the operational capacity of the MoUD differs from that of other cities, give the specific independent status of the capital.

6.1.2 At the city level

As mentioned before, one of the major difficulties is the lack of urban planning capacity within the KM. To understand and to cope with this absence of city governance, UN-HABITAT is currently assessing urban planning skills with its **City Profile Programmes**. This analysis process is being piloted in Kandahar, Herat and Jalalabad before it is introduced to Kabul Municipality. Its objective is to provide an inventory of fixtures in order to assess the Municipality’s capacity in implementation, decision making, design and collecting taxes and where the priorities lie for improving the situation.

6.1.3 At the community level

• Community-based capacity building

Stakeholders are currently considering the possibility of developing community capacity building with a view to implementing a part of the rehabilitation process directly at the affected population’s level. “*Community-based urban development programme for Kabul: Building on rural experience*” was one of the subjects presented by Mohamad Sharif from UN-HABITAT at the colloquium on Development of Kabul - Reconstruction and Planning issues in Lausanne. The success of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), managed by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) for rural sector, has prompted the idea of adapting this initiative for the urban sector. But, according to UN-HABITAT, there are two specific problems with this approach:

- The urban population is not so much of a coherent social and cultural group as it tends to be in villages. Some pilots are being carried out for small programmes in which a selected group of families are brought together to form Community Development Councils (CDC).

⁴⁷ Schacher T., SDC, “Who builds a city?” in “Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues”, issued from the Section two titled “ Social Challenges for Kabul” of the colloquium organized by MUNTAZ (B)-NOSHIS (K)

⁴⁸ Tom Sacher works for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

- Establishing which area rehabilitation projects will be implemented, i.e. Area Development Plans (ADP), is a major problem. The different administrative boundaries have not been clearly identified at the different levels. The lack of consensus over city, district and gozar boundaries has not yet been resolved. Additionally, the gozar, the smallest administrative division, is still too big for managing a rehabilitation project at the community level, in terms of cost, time and social issues.

- **Community-based urban development**

Some pilot programmes have been launched by UN-HABITAT, with EC support, covering roughly 300 families. Two projects have been conducted in Districts 6 and 7. The choice of beneficiaries was made on the basis of families that need to regularise their land tenure in administrative terms. Some people have lived in this area for several decades although legal land occupation was rural thirty years ago. Given that this area is relatively flat, it was also considered simpler to test the process in this district, rather than in the hill settlements.

The upgrading of informal settlements has been the subject of the “*Urban upgrading Project – Kabul funding*”, a pilot operation with the complex process detailed below:

Target population⁴⁹

- *Settlements where the inhabitants are without secure tenure and limited access to essential urban infrastructure services.*
- *Settlements where a significant portion of inhabitants will be returnees and IDPs.*
- *Partners of the project*
- *MUD, KM, UN-Habitat EC and community.*

Outcomes of the project:

- *“ Increase access to essential urban services*
- *Increase Security of tenure*
- *Strengthened capacity of communities*
- *Broader-based representation inside community’s decision making*
- *Establishment of transparent process*

The social objectives:

- *To enable household to address their immediate and pressing needs for infrastructure, shelter and basic services*
- *Establishing or strengthening local governance institutions that support their integration into the city fabric*
- *To create opportunities and remove obstacles which impede the flow of people’s investment in housing and related services (as insecurity of tenure)*

Different phases

- *Phase 1: Identification of boundaries and establishment of groups (key contact)*
- *Phase 2: Establishment of Development Council*
- *Phase 3: Preparation of CAP (Community Initiative project)*
- *Phase 4: Design and Proposal preparation (with help of engineers from MUDH, KM, submitting, and contracting for implantation.*
- *Phase 5: Implementation of the projects (using local resources)*

Comments

A coordination process is required

With so many actors, issues and the complications of spatial management, it is essential that roles and responsibilities are allocated appropriately and that good coordination mechanisms are set up. Managing an urban vision, urban strategies, urban planning, urban programmes and urban projects requires multiple efforts of information, consultation, participation and coordination.

⁴⁹ *Urban Upgrading project –Kabul*, EC Funding 2004, taken from a powerpoint presentation

6.2 Different level of spatial reconstruction strategies

6.2.1 Rehabilitation projects

- **Rehabilitation and historical issues (guidelines)**

The history of the city is one of the main components for understanding present urban issues and should be the first step in any assessment. Kabul is an old city. The buildings, even illegal or informal housing are built relatively well with a general sense of coherence as local materials are used which are adapted to the climate and most houses have been built in a traditional way. The lack of development over several decades has to a certain extent preserved a Kabuli identity in terms of the urban structure and buildings. Knowledge about patterns and historical urban development plays an important role in preserving the traditional Afghan way of life besides the obvious need for modernisation. After the trauma that the Afghan population has suffered, it is important that some traditional aspects are preserved in their new urban life. The issue of identity is of great importance and deserves some thorough investigation, such as:

- Within the MoUDH, a widespread survey has been conducted by Zahra Breshna. The “*Program for the Safeguarding & Development of Historical Kabul*” aimed to propose an urban framework for preserving Kabul city centre from anarchic development by private investors and businesses⁵⁰.
- Architectural issues and cultural identity have been the subject of study programmes in 1975 with Nancy Dupree⁵¹, in 1986 by Kazimee Bashir with “*Traditional Housing Patterns: The old City of Kabul Afghanistan*”⁵², and some of the architects⁵³ from the Aga Khan Foundation, who have been very much involved in preserving architectural heritage within the “Agar Khan Trust for Culture” AKTC in Kabul (and Herat).

- **Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project (KURP)**

The needs for rehabilitation in the city are so huge and funds limited, that a lot of analysis, workshops, meetings and surveys have been necessary to help in the decision-making process regarding priorities and spatial implementation. Since 2004, the Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project has been monitoring a long process of negotiation between the different stakeholders, mainly the Ministry of Urban Development and Kabul Municipality, in presence of the main donor: the World Bank. UN-HABITAT holds a permanent advisory role. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) are also directly involved. Different surveys have been conducted by World Bank technical staff and consultants, by the KURP Unit Team within the MUDH and by Kabul Municipality before the last accord of July 2006. Among the documents available for this survey:

- The Energy and Infrastructure Unit within the South Asia Region Department of the **World Group Bank** prepared in June 2004 a financial proposal for Kabul’s urban reconstruction issues with “*Technical Annex for a proposed credit of SDR 17,1 million to Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for a Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project*”.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Breshna Z., MoUDH, *Program for the Safeguarding & Development of Historical Kabul*, Proposal for phase 1 of Implementation May 2005-October 2005, Kabul, 2005. Presented by HE.Eng.M. Yousuf Pashtun, Minister of Urban development & Housing.

⁵¹ Dupree N.H., “*Kabul City*” - The Asia Society -The Afghanistan Council, New York, 1975

⁵² Bashir A. Kazimee, “*Traditional Housing Patterns: The old City of Kabul Afghanistan*”, in Open House International Vol.11 N°1, 1986

⁵³ Najimi A. W., AKTC, “Preservation and revival of cultural identity”, Shadl M., AKTC, “Historic notes on Kabul” and Soave A., AKTC, “*The historical neighbourhoods of Kabul: Planning efforts and negotiation processes*”, all texts produced **in Development of Kabul –Reconstruction and planning issues**, issued for the colloquium organised by MUNTAZ & NOSHIS, Lausanne 2004

⁵⁴ World Bank, June 2004, “*Technical Annex for a proposed credit of SDR 17,1 million to Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for a Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project*”. Energy and Infrastructure Unit, South Asia Region

- This analysis was used for the “*Afghanistan: Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project*”⁵⁵, a Technical Annex document of the **International Development Association (IDA)** in July 2004.
- On 13-15 August 2005, a meeting was held for the “KURP Project launch program” with the MoF, the MUDH, KM, the MOI, the World Bank, and with the participation of UN-HABITAT and the Agar Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC).
- Several technical programmes are included in the KURP: *Afghanistan Urban Waste Management Project, Afghanistan Urban Land Management and Kabul University Urban Learning Program*.
- The “Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project” was presented by the PMU Team, and Eng. ABDUL AHAD (W), Leader KURP/MUDH in November 2005.

Rehabilitation issues

Need for rehabilitation guidelines

Further to this rehabilitation programme, there is a need for guidelines for all types of programme being implemented in the city: rehabilitation of the old centre with preservation of urban and architectural heritage, as well as any restoration in the city.

6.2.2 Development vision, programmes and risks

*“Kabul has grown at a rate of approximately 15% per year since 1999 and its projected growth is 5% (3 migrants, 3% natural growth), representing 150 000 new people per year. This burgeoning growth has raised debates on how accommodate the city’ expansion and how to develop the existing city.”*⁵⁶ In order to resolve some urban issues, especially housing needs over the next few years due to population growth, there are two strategies:

- Afghan authorities would like to expand the city through the creation of a new Kabul city outside the existing urban area;
- The main international urban actors with the World Bank recommend an approach based on various phases that will be implemented on different timescales and in different areas.

• Point of view of international organisations

Existing settlements cannot be displaced without provoking riots. The “informal settlements” have the financial advantage that they have already been built and the building has been funded by their inhabitants. The population participates in Kabul’s economy: not everyone in illegal or informal situations is poor.

To a certain extent, international aid and international funds for the reconstruction of the country can be understood as aid for the rehabilitation of an existing situation. In 2006, the World Bank raised the question “*Should Kabul grow by expanding to a new town or by building up its existing suburbs*” and put forward the following response: “*the answer lies in its existing spatial and built-up environment*”⁵⁷.

• The Afghan point of view

The initial reasoning of Afghan stakeholders was simple: the 1978 Master Plan laid down plans for Kabul city for 2 million inhabitants. Today, the population is estimated at around 4 million and is increasing every day so therefore it was deemed necessary to build a new city for 2 million people. Another strategy put forward by the Afghan government was to give the private sector the necessary space, with the idea that private investment, via entrepreneurs or private companies, could be found for the new town, with an adequate road network and infrastructure, plus the possibility of developing different types of buildings, such as markets, resorts, etc.

⁵⁵ IDA, International Development Association, July 2004 “*Afghanistan: Kabul Urban Reconstruction Project*”, Technical Annex

⁵⁶ World Bank, January 2006 Kabul Urban Policy notes Series n°3

⁵⁷ World Bank, idem note n 51

Development issues

Alternatively, Kabul city needs to be able to supply new houses and urban activities; it needs to modernise its image as an international capital and develop technical networks, roads, build its economy and set up cultural programmes that are all characteristic of modern cities in order to attract private investment. Besides the significant amount of aid that has been provided for rehabilitation programmes, some international aid has supported more thorough feasibility studies on the issue of Kabul's urban expansion.

- One survey, the **Strategic Development Plan for National Capital Region Kabul 2005-2030**, was conducted by the MoUD.
- Another survey, the **Kabul Metropolitan Area Urban Development Project**, was conducted by the Japanese cooperation, following a request from the Government of Afghanistan.

- **Strategic Development Plan for National Capital Region Kabul 2005-2030**

پلان انكشافى ستراتيجيكي منطقوى كابل

The survey

Below are the main issues taken from the "Strategic Development Plan for National Capital Region Kabul 2005-2030" presented by the Strategic Development Plan team.

"Why regional planning?"

1. *Disintegration of development in the region. (it is more point development instead of area development).*
2. *Unbalanced urban and rural development.*
3. *Organic growth of urban settlements in the region***Balanced development in the region with enhanced productivity and better quality of life.**

Goals:

4. *Economic development through using all relevant resources.*
5. *Poverty reduction.*
6. *Environmental sustainability.*
7. *Providing better quality of life.*

Objectives

8. *Maximizing the development potential of the region.*
9. *To reduce the urban poverty through Urban Development*
10. *To promote the urbanization process in national level*
11. *To formulate Urban policy for the region.*
12. *To promote planned urban development in the region.*
13. *To balance the urban rural development in regional level through integrated developing of urban settlements.*

Needs of establishing priorities

14. *The priorities should come from the people*
15. *The priorities should be adopted to the possibilities*
16. *The adopted priorities should be planned.*

Output

in terms of planning

17. *A leading information for preparing the city Master plans and sector plan for Kabul region.*
18. *Estimation and data analyze not only for urban planning but also for the planning of other economic sectors.*
19. *A practical understanding of urban problem and proposed solution for that.*
20. *Finding the direction of urban development and making actual strategy for the future expansion of the towns and cities in the region.*
21. *Integration of all urban development in regional and national level*

in term of socio economic bases

22. Enabling environment for economic development and poverty reduction **in term of legalization**

23. Prevention of informal housing through offering an appropriate planned solution and policy for meeting the demand for housing.

in term of capacity building

24. A trained group of engineers and planners, who would be ready to make strategic plans for other regions in the country.

25. Public awareness of urban living; (rights and responsibilities)

26. Exchange of knowledge and experiences and consciences building amongst various partners.

27. Developing of urban planning standards for the whole nation in urban sector

Some urban data is given

Total urban population of Afghanistan

4,629,000

Total population in Kabul

61%

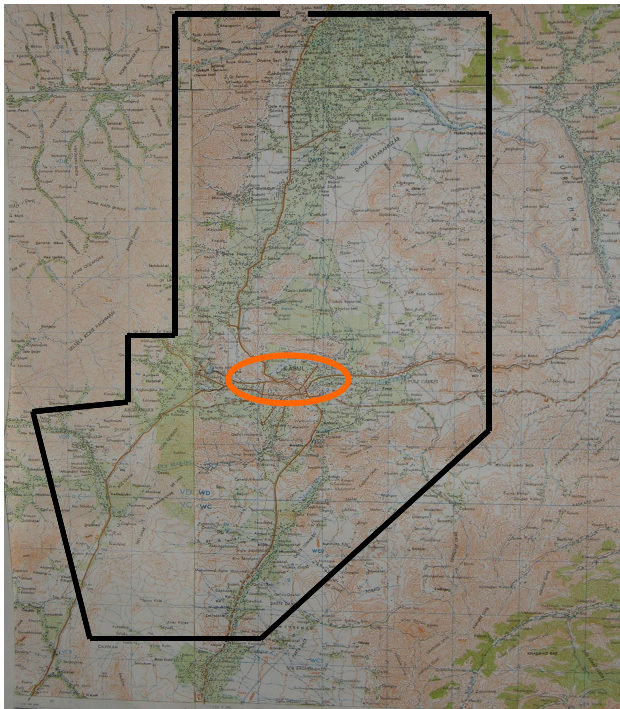
density of Kabul 751 pers/sq Km

Delineation of the National Capital Region of Kabul

Due to the geographical location, organic growth and development of the area Kabul Region has the potential of development to the following directions:

- From North to Jabulsaraj.
- From East to Tangi and Khak-e-Jabar.
- From south to Logar.
- From West to Maidan Shahr.

Figure 67



About 100km from the north to the south
About 50km from the west to the east

Source: SDP Presentation

- **The Study of the Kabul Metropolitan Area Urban Development**

This survey, which was requested by the Government of Afghanistan, was carried out by JICA, the Japanese cooperation with RECS International Inc. survey, in 2006. It was conducted by a technical group of experts as a draft exercise in contributing information for the preparation of a master plan for a new city project in Dih Sabz. This initial study examined the strategy and directions for urban development in Kabul and clarified issues involved in the new city. The results were presented in July 2006 to the major Kabul Urban authorities. The following points are taken from this presentation:

The survey

The Study on the Kabul Metropolitan Area, Urban Development in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The study objectives:

- *Examine directions and alternatives for Kabul urban development.*
- *Prepare a conceptual development plan for the Kabul new city*
- *Clarify the position and viability of Kabul new city development and issues involved.*

Kabul Urban Development Strategy

- *Participatory community development*
- *Formalization of informal settlements*
- *Improvement of core infrastructure in city centre*
- *New residential developments on outer districts*
- *New city development in Dih Sanz.*

New juridical context has to be set for the feasibility of a the new city

- *Urban planning law*
- *Building code*
- *Land acquisition law*
- *Local government law*
- *Dih Sabz special economic zone act*

Spatial Framework in the North East of the city and specify the characterisation of New City

- *Self-reliant with lively-economic activities.*
- *Symbol of National unity for reconciliation and co-existence of various people.*
- *Provision of low-cot housing*
- *Spacious urban living environment*

New Management Institutional Structure for this urban project

- *A new Structure besides the traditional institutional structure with KM, MUD*
- *With a Presidential office*
- *With a Board (Task Force) in relation with a steering consultative and coordinate committee that has to be created within KM and the MUD.*
- *With a central role as Master Developer.*
- *And a staff of Developers and utility companies.*

JICA estimates an initial Phase of New city's Development

- *A definition and repartition of land use,*
- *with several density of residential (low, medium and high),*
- *with various using : office, commercial, cultural, high education and research park*
- *tourism & recreation areas, urban parks*
- *arterial roads*
- *and agro-industrial zone*

Priorities of infrastructure must be developed with the initial phase

- *Transport (arterial roads ad service roads, option for a new airport after 2012)*
- *Water supply by aquifer from groundwater of Parwan, deep wells,*
- *Sewerage and drainage (combination of different systems)*
- *Power supply (link to Kabul, by private company)*

- *Telecommunications (satellite system, and international service provider)*
- *Solid Waste Management. (with recycling and composting system)*

Financial cost analysis

- *The investment has to be shared between Public investment and Private Investment*
- *Difficulties would be critical for the 5 first years, more difficult cash for development corporation⁵⁸*

Point of view of the Japanese cooperation and recommendations

Constraints of the project

According to Mr N. Okuda, Ambassador of Japan, and Mr Nakahara, Resident Representative of the JICA Afghanistan Office, the development of a new Kabul city is really much more complicated, requires significant resources and budget and urban development expertise than was first thought.

- This project was thought up after twenty years of neglect to the city infrastructure and conflict.
- Kabul city is nearly 350 years old. The new city needs to be a symbol of nationality and pride for the country and throughout the world.
- There are numerous immediate priorities: implementing a new road network, an option of railway transport could be assessed, water supply needs to be sourced over 20km, building a sewage system from scratch and, first and foremost, land tenure issues need to be resolved. This new town would cover about 25km² and must include a lot of public facilities, open space, etc. Several laws need to be introduced to cover water and land tenure issues.
- The budget required for building a new city is huge.
- Afghan capacity in urban planning is weak.

Feasibility

According to these comments, the development of a new city depends on a number of conditions:

- Building a new city depends totally **on private investment** given the current financial situation in Afghanistan.
- Attracting private investment requires **specific skills** that do not yet exist within current Afghan urban institutions, such as the MoUDH or KM. The Government of Afghanistan needs to delegate the management of this aspect to **an urban managerial team** which would have an institutional independent status in relation to the MoUDH and KM, but not integrated with.
- The management of active transactions with partners is a lengthy process and it would be advisable to engage in this process as soon as possible if Afghan authorities want to appear credible to potential investors.

⁵⁸ JICA, extract from Powerpoint Presentation

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Urban situation

7.1.1 Physical situation

- **Positive view of Kabul city**

Despite the present damaged urban situation due to both a lack of administrative urban management and to the effects of conflict, Kabul has the potential of becoming a pleasant city as it was a few decades before. The city has preserved some of its urban structure to cope with the different challenges. The road network with straight tree-lined streets is well defined in flat urban areas. In most neighbourhoods, the urban fabric is regular with large plots where walls protect gardens surrounding houses. The urban landscape is coherent with regular one or two storey-high buildings. Houses are built in traditional shapes and with traditional materials, with flat roofs, large square wooden-framed windows and mud walls. Kabul city has a coherent architectural view from the top of some of its hills. Some parks, like the famous Babur Park, which is undergoing restoration, gives an idea of what Kabul could become again. A spacious, green and well-structured city surrounded by beautiful high mountains and hills. The old centre and a number of major streets play a critical business role and density with new modern buildings could be the solution for attracting private investments. Kabul city could benefit from a healthy equilibrium within a specific climate, contrasted but favourable, for example with clean air and abundant fruit supply. The overwhelming desire of the Afghan people to live normally again both now in the present as well as in the future is no more apparent than in the self-build dynamics. The international focus on the capital of Afghanistan could be an opportunity for opening up Kabul to international urban challenges, like other cities in countries under development.

- **Negative aspects: Kabul's physical situation**

However all urban actors and urban users agree that Kabul city at present is chaotic, dirty, with uncontrolled housing settlements and buildings, traffic jams, streets network that have fallen into disrepair, insufficient power and unsafe water for domestic use. Kabul's river is polluted with little running water, the streets are full of garbage, the open sewers overflow onto the pedestrian walkways producing an overpowering stench day and night. In winter, the ground turns into a muddy field and some streets and in summer, the air is highly polluted as a permanent fog of dust invades everything.

Similarly, urban expansion and development appears to be uncontrolled. Pretentious private buildings are popping up like mushrooms in the traditional urban fabric. Informal settlements are spreading up every available slopes of the different hills situated in the middle of the city. As it suffocates in the centre, the city has launched into a rapid horizontal expansion towards the outskirts, with people stealing land or occupying stolen land, or a modernist new town expansion which are generally private initiatives. 70% of the urban population has no basic services.

- **Kabul needs to upgrade its physical environment** but also enhance its image in the eyes of the Kabuli people, Afghanistan as a whole and the international community.

7.1.2 General lack of urban management and unclear institutional roles

- **Lack of urban management and urban planners**

In addition to the weak capacity of urban administration, the deplorable state or total absence of basic infrastructure is an indication that something is amiss with Kabul urban management. The most recent conflict alone does not explain why the city remains in such a disastrous state. The different interviews and analysis undertaken for this survey highlight the weaknesses in urban management and urban planning skills in Kabul Municipality and in the Ministry of Urban Development, in terms of cartography and topography administration

(AGCHO). In fact, overall urban and building knowledge is outdated. The engineers all studied in the Soviet bloc thirty years ago and their technical skills and urban understanding is no longer appropriate to the present situation. In the same way, the administrative framework has not evolved since 1978 and the Master Plan is becoming a stumbling block rather than providing the necessary guidelines. There is no updated Afghan database. All urban actors are working with different spatial references. There is no coordination on urban planning. Municipal law is either not applied or contested. KM does not have the necessary budget or capacity to manage the city.

- **Institutional misunderstandings**

According to a KM advisor, dissension exists between the main urban institutional authorities: Kabul Municipality and Ministry of Urban Development. The overt conflict between them is one of the main difficulties for Kabul city planning. KM has a special status like that of a Ministry and answers directly to the President. KM is not subordinate to the MoUD and KM wants to retain control of city planning decisions. Some aspects of the existing Municipal law in favour of municipality independence do not appear to be applied. Other aspects need to be changed or added to give KM real support in its role. However, due to the lack of urban skills and an inefficient tax collecting system, the MoUD is involved in resolving Kabul's urban issues. The time spent by the two institutions in negotiating is by and large responsible for the delays in reconstructing the city.

Other institutions involved in urban sector and Kabul in general are also outdated in their way of managing their urban responsibilities. For example AGCHO, in charge of cartography, has not drawn up current plans and delays handing over information. The cadastral department has no available plans either. The CAWSS, as water administration, is closely involved in water issues but is not in charge of solid waste collection. Urban management in Kabul is not coherent in institutional terms.

7.1.3 Policies, programmes and projects

Urban institutions have taken almost five years since the end of the conflict to become a priority. During this time, some programmes were assessed in different ways such as infrastructure rehabilitation, informal settlement analysis, development strategies and land tenure regularisation but very few projects were implemented. The different issues related to urban policy (such as rehabilitation, development, governance) are still in discussion. Today an urban framework exists but the urban priorities according to the different urban stakeholders are still in question. One of the main problems was the opposition between international aid (World Bank, UN-HABITAT) and Afghan points of view. Given the complexity of the different issues (illegal occupation, technical difficulties in supplying basic services in existing areas, population growth, urban management at a standstill), the Afghan authorities would like to develop a new town on the outskirts of Kabul. International aid stakeholders want help the city by upgrading existing areas, regardless of the illegal or informal status of urban occupation.

A few pilot projects conducted by international organisations (UN-HABITAT, EC) will be followed by a more significant Rehabilitation Project for Kabul (KURP). The WB decided to fund this project two years ago but an agreement on how and where to implement it was only reached in July 2006. A technical survey was then carried out and project implementation will only start in 2007. Anyway, this project only concerns a few, very small areas in Kabul. Some international organisations participate in building water sanitation networks, but a coherent water sanitation policy requires greater state involvement.

The other main urban issue is finding a solution to cope with population growth. Afghan authorities are intent on creating a new city north of Kabul. The GoA submitted a request to the Japanese Cooperation (JICA) to carry out the feasibility study but the WB is still advising Afghan authorities to move forwards more prudently by undertaking several steps of

development, such as density in some areas, extension in the east and at a later day, other programmes can be implemented.

7.2 Analysis shows absence of spatial vision and lack of data

7.2.1 Lack of synthesis with all analysis

A lot of surveys have been conducted by different urban actors, advisors, international organisations, both within the institutional framework and outside but there appears to be a lack of any synthesis between the different conclusions. It seems that some issues have given rise to a wealth of research, such as land tenure and property issues, vulnerability, infrastructure upgrading, governance, urban capacity building, and more specifically, the financial sustainable system to implement in KM.

But an official document providing an overview of these different fields is not yet available for urban actors. There is also a degree of confusion over the number and content of all these documents. According to the Deputy Minister, the MoUD is collecting all the publications about the different subjects, in which case it would be worthwhile extracting all the necessary information and drawing up an inventory of findings and recommendations.

7.2.2 Lack of spatial reference

In this report, we have written at length about the lack of spatial representation, the difficulties encountered in obtaining relevant maps, the inexistence of urban plans, the obsolete administrative spatial references, the absence of cadastral maps, incorrect data on existing plans, lack of scales and the absence of a detailed urban map. The problem is not so much having to cope without the necessary maps of the real urban situation, because satellite images are always available by default. The real problem is what this implies, i.e. urban authorities do not have a coherent spatial vision for urban issues, nor do they have an inventory of projects to implement. A considerable amount of work needs to be done on updating spatial data and establishing an urban planning map.

7.2.3 Lack of coordination and information

With only a partial synthesis or lack of official synthesis on the different urban analysis on the one hand, and the lack of updated spatial references on the other, proper coordination mechanisms between urban actors cannot exist. There appears to be plans for a coordination mechanism within the MoUD, but in 2006 it is not yet in operation. Then coordination between urban stakeholders is missing at all the levels of decision making, planning, assessments, surveys, implementation and works. In terms of coordination, there is a general lack of communication between the institutional actors themselves, but also with civil urban actors and especially urban citizens. The absence of information about the upgrading process is a major error. The urban population does not understand why the situation has not improved. There is the risk that instead of being urban partners, they might become disruptive components of the urban improvement process.

7.3 Recommendations

7.3.1 Establishing reference documents and validating them officially

- **Synthesis Report**

There is a need to produce a Synthesis Report:

Based on all the surveys that have already been conducted, this Synthesis Report would provide a clear hierarchy of the relevant recommendations, propositions of studies and activities to be carried out in each field in terms of quality and needs, prioritise these different studies and activities and establish a consensus between all the policy makers and urban stakeholders. The Synthesis Report needs to be **validated by all decision makers**.

- **General Directory**

The validation of the Synthesis Report is the starting point for establishing a General Directory. This General Directory, as a primary planning document, must be flexible and easy to adapt in light of future analysis and rapidly changing contexts. This document must provide an urban framework for the activities that will be conducted in different timeframes: short term, medium term and long term. Several components have to be included in this framework: institutional references, such as administrative maps; urban policies and technical guidelines; and all the findings of the different research studies and surveys.

The General Directory must take in consideration the desire to improve Kabul's image in terms of quality, Afghan identity and international status.

This document must be open to international urban thinking about different urban questions, such as:

- Limiting urban population growth with different housing solutions outside of the city and income generation schemes linked to the city but not in the city.
- Preservation of environmental balance, terms of reference for reducing pollution, methods for reducing energy expenditure and details of the constraints involved, water supply with sustainable system and practices. Garbage collection and sewer network needs to be thought out at the inhabitants' level but also at municipal level and surrounding areas.

The General Directory **should be validated by all policy makers**. A monitoring process needs to be set up to include new maps and documents, always with an updated validation process.

7.3.2 Response needs to cover different timeframes

This particular situation of rehabilitation and reconstruction which is being funded by specific budget lines that are limited in time, means that the classic urban approach needs to be broken down into different phases.

- **Emergency response in the short term**

The emergency response is in general gradually winding down. Certainly many pressing needs remain in different urban areas, such as informal settlements, or in different domains, such as health problems linked to garbage disposals or vulnerability due to lack of income. These specific problems could be addressed by NGOs or international organisations but it is essential to assess which needs exist where. It is up to Afghan authorities to collect all the relevant data about people's needs because otherwise there is a risk that international aid will leave Afghanistan because these needs are no longer visible. Assessments should be launched again in the urban community in order to determine in which technical sector or area there is still a need for an emergency response. However, in the reconstruction process, there is still a need for some specific activities or projects. These activities tend to be socially oriented, such as providing support for income generating activities at the community or individual level. For the projects, apart from some small specific fields, such as thermal insulation, solar power, water supply systems, the best way of supporting this nascent urban policy is by assisting the urban community in its development programmes and supervising implementation.

- **Urban planning capacity in the medium term**

The financial commitments of the international community have reached their midway point. What is now needed is an acceleration in the process, but in view of the difficulties encountered by Afghan urban administrations in building their planning capacity, the authorities should call on high performance technical engineers and urban planners. Afghan engineers are not yet capable of carrying out the necessary amount of research or producing the relevant documents that are required for policy making and budget design. Given the

current level of expertise amongst Afghan urban officers, training urban professionals is going to take more time than usual (more than four years). At this stage, KM and MoUD staff should both be trained in urban planning but should also be encouraged to work alongside urban professionals who have a thorough knowledge of the modern processes of rehabilitation and planning and are accustomed to working with the relevant computer software. This phase is critical if Kabul is to move forwards out of the previous five years of inactivity and prepare its future development.

The international community is still present with funding and capacity, and Afghan authorities are responsible for drawing up a framework of all urban expertise, surveys, activities, budgets and projects for the next four years. The building sector needs time between receiving the go ahead and completing the works, on average more than twelve months for each project. Afghan urban authorities must not miss this opportunity for international aid. This is an urgent priority if people are to experience the beginnings of a better life in urban areas.

- **Long-term vision and the development process**

Afghan urban authorities are impatient to develop new towns besides the existing city of Kabul, and the same applies for other cities in Afghanistan. But as advisors and donors concur, this solution will not resolve the current urban problems faced by existing urban populations. It is inevitable that Kabul city will eventually evolve in this way but it firstly needs to respond to needs in existing urban areas because water supply, power supply, transport network and employment opportunities in the new city will all depend on the solutions found for the existing city. It is a mistake to split up the different urban issues when synthesis and an overall spatial vision may reveal a link between the different areas and the different urban sectors. Development should be a process, from improving existing areas to creating a new urban centre. Similarly the criteria for future development must be based on and learn from the current situation. Anyway, the main determining factor for developing a new city is the financial capacity of Kabul Municipality. As JICA confirmed, it is a question of finding a balance with financial objectives. One recommendation is to prepare a solid operational framework for private investment partners, without whom, KM is incapable of engaging in the development process but with whom there is the risk of social disaster if the urban administration fails to impose its authority as the guarantor of social rights.

7.3.3 A specific technical, urban development engineering agency

In this transitional period, the development process needs to be speeded up with a wide range of complementary expertise in various fields, such as improving the skills of urban planners, technical and cross-cutting analysis, urban plans with different levels of detail, coordination at the political level, as well as management and implementation levels.

Traditional urban authorities are completely preoccupied with updating information at all levels. The urban reconstruction process is fragmented and inefficient. It would be beneficial to establish an intermediate urban organisation, such as a “National Urban Agency”, with a specific status that enables it to engage all the necessary skills and expertise with a view to preparing a solid base for the urban planning process. This should enable KM and the MoUD to speed up the decision-making process and establish a thorough background knowledge of the situation, such as the conditions required for development. This agency could act as a good neutral advocate for the different urban stakeholders, both Afghan institutions and international actors. This agency would be the means of engaging all Afghan professional engineers, urban planners and architects in an international technical team. On setting up this agency, stakeholders must determine a time when its responsibilities, data and skills will be handed over to urban authorities.

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