

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mission Permanente du Royaume
d'Arabie Saoudite auprès
des Nations Unies
Genève



الوفد الدائم للمملكة العربية السعودية
لدى المقر الأوربي للأمم المتحدة
جنيف

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The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to refer to the letter dated 5 April 2012 and the questionnaire attached on housing finance policies and programmes elaborated by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 15/8.

In this connection, the Directorate-General of Studies and Research at the Ministry of Housing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has provided the following information:

"The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is promoting housing finance policies and programmes to enable citizens to acquire ownership of appropriate housing for their families.

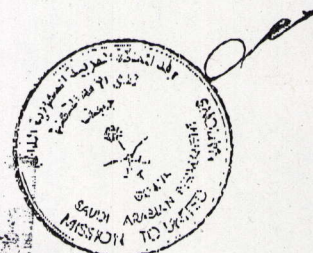
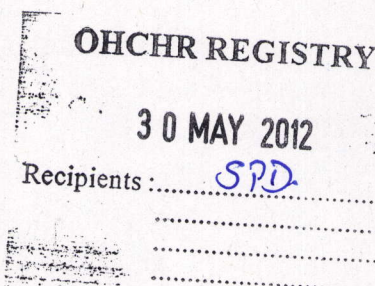
In accordance with Royal Decree No. 23 of 11/6/1394 AH (2 July 1974), the Kingdom established a Real Estate Development Fund which provides citizens with housing loans, limited to a maximum of 500,000 riyals, to cover up to 70% of the cost of home construction and repayable in instalments spread over 25 years. From the time of its establishment to the end of the financial year 1431-32 AH (2011), the Real Estate Development Fund has granted 624,248 loans amounting to a total value of 172,231 million riyals and funding 775,825 housing units in 4,279 towns, villages and agricultural settlements.

The Saudi housing market offers various types and sizes of housing units (villas, duplexes, apartments) in a wide price range to meet the requirements of all segments of society. In the year 2008, the minimum per capita income was 3,000 riyals per month and the average annual income of Saudi citizens amounted to 70,859 riyals.

The State established the Saudi Credit and Savings Bank, which grants loans up to a maximum of 45,000 riyals for purposes of home renovation.

Since the early 1960s, the State has been running a programme, through the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, under which 2.2 million plots of land of not less than 600 m² have been granted free of charge to citizens, in addition to other plots of land that some Government Ministries grant to their personnel.

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The State provides infrastructural facilities and extends their networks free of charge to residential areas and homes. Although a charge is levied for services such as electricity and water, the amounts billed are below the actual cost of the services provided.

The Kingdom's citizens are not burdened with taxes and the various forms of governmental housing subsidies are provided without the imposition of any taxes or bank interest charges.

The Kingdom's housing policies and programmes are funded from the State budget (Ministry of Finance) without any participation from international financial institutions or regional development banks.

Although the Kingdom has shown concern for the housing sector for a long time, the State has been implementing organized and comprehensive programmes and policies only since the early 1960s.

Far from being implemented as part of recovery measures in the context of the financial and economic crises, the State's housing programmes and policies have been formulated in response to market conditions and in order to correct an imbalance between supply and demand.

All segments of the national population have benefited from the Kingdom's housing programmes and policies. The preliminary results of the general population and housing census conducted in 1431 AH (2010) indicated that the total population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia amounted to 27,136,977 persons, as compared with 22,678,262 persons according to the results of the 2004 census, i.e. an increase of 4,458,715 persons (19.7%), and the number of occupied dwellings in the Kingdom amounted to 4,643,151 as compared with 3,990,559, i.e. an increase of 652,592 (16.4%).

According to the general population and housing census of 1425 AH (2004), 35% of Saudi households were living in rented premises and 5% in housing units provided by employers, while 60% of the total number of 2.7 million Saudi households were living in owner-occupied premises.

With regard to the percentage of households with access to sanitation (including in rural areas), the results of the demographic survey conducted in 1428 AH (2007) showed that the proportion of dwellings connected to the public sanitation network amounted to 44.59% and were accommodating 43.86% of the total number of Saudi households; the proportion of dwellings dependent on cesspits amounted to 53.34% and were accommodating 54.50% of households; 1.13% of inhabited dwellings depended on a private sanitation network and were accommodating 1.06% of households; and only a very small proportion (0.94%) of dwellings in which 0.57% of the total households were accommodated had no access to sanitation.

The proportion of the population with access to electricity in their homes (including in rural areas) amounted to 100%.

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One of the aims of the Ministry of Housing is to increase the private sector's proportional contribution to the housing sector in order to increase the supply of all types of housing in such a way as to help to meet the various needs of citizens. The Ministry of Housing is studying appropriate programmes for the achievement of this aim."

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.