

Chapter VIII
Local Development

Experience with Local Authority Rule

Local Authority, in its modern rendition, occupies an important place in the government system. Local Authority is playing an effective role in economic and social development. It is also characterized by being close to the people and more able to discern the real local conditions and needs, hence is able to put together the capabilities, mobilize the resources and organize opportunities for successful implementation of policies. In addition, local authorities are better able to manifest the aspirations and ambitions of the people and to accelerate the growth at the national level.

The decentralization option was an early aspiration, since the unification of Yemen. It is also related to the improvement of administrative performance and tied to instilling democracy and community participation through free local elections. In addition, it entrenches the custom of holding different branches of local authority accountable to their constituencies. The Constitution of the Republic of Yemen affirmed the orientation towards decentralization and the significance of local authority in the governorates. Article 145 of the Constitution stipulates that “the territories of the Republic shall be divided into that enjoy full legal status and represent integral part of the authority of the state. Those administrative units exercise their roles through elected local councils, which will have duties, authorities, rights and obligations to be set out by Law”.

Although the experience with local authority is still short, the success thereof has been proven on ground. The application of local authority and reinforcing decentralization has come as articulation of the biggest national project in the beginning of a new era. National efforts have been mobilized and joined towards achieving the objectives of the government and the society to achieve comprehensive national rejuvenation. The adoption of local authority to manage domestic affairs matches the political, economic and social developments, and provides a better outlook for future, in all its horizons and dimensions. Local authority provided an opportunity for communities to participate and to implant democracy. It also allowed for the mobilization of all human capabilities and material means to contribute to local development plans, create confidence, and support national unity. Local authority has already reduced the burdens on the central government towards elimination of bureaucracy. It also enabled the population to obtain services at lowest costs, least of efforts and the shortest of time. Participation of the people in local economic and social development projects made them value their importance and take advantage of the services they provide, in addition to their impact on curtailing migration to the cities.

The Legal Framework

The issuance of Law No. 4 for 2000 Concerning Local Authority and its Executive bylaw constituted the basis for launching the transformation to local authority system. The Republican Decree No. 89 for 2000 formed a ministerial committee to prepare and arrange for that transformation. The Local Authority Law grants the elected Local Councils in all districts authorities and duties to manage its affairs, including

reflecting priorities of districts and development needs. However, the Law was not limited to granting authorities to governorates and districts, but also guaranteed financing through own revenues for the respective local authorities to carry out their responsibilities and upgrade development in the governorates and local communities, to create job opportunities and to alleviate poverty. Financial resources for the administrative units consist of the local revenues collected in the district, the shared revenues collected at the district level for the governorate as a whole, the general shared revenues levied and collected centrally and finally the central support allocated by the government to the administrative units. The public budget is now divided into two sections; one is central and the other local. The local councils are assigned responsibility over all development affairs and the management of all utilities and institutions within their geographical jurisdictions.

The administrative units enjoy legal status, and elect local councils directly and freely at the governorate and district level. Local councils carry out their duties and enjoy their authorities within their respective administrative units. They are responsible for proposing investment plans, programs and budgets of the administrative units. They also oversee, control and hold the local authority offices accountable in accordance with the Law. All administrative units and local councils are an integral part of government. Governors are accountable and responsible before the President of the Republic and the Cabinet, and their decisions are binding on them. The district local councils, which number 334 district local councils, and 20 governorate local councils, have been formed to include 6,700 elected representatives who carry responsibilities of administering local authority with complete freedom.

Numerous strides have been made since the issuance of Local Authority Law, including carrying out local elections in April 2001, holding three annual conferences for local authorities, and transferring budget revenues to governorates and districts. Local authority, as a new experience represented a challenge in itself that had to be overcome and turned into a success. It was essential to provide the legislative system that guarantees success and avoids any deficiency and arbitrariness. Hence, the following legislations were issued:

- The organizational by-laws of the Ministry of Local Administration, which were issued by Decree No. 23 for 2001;
- The Financial Procedures for Local Authorities, which was issued by Decree No. 24 for 2001;
- The Organizational by-laws for the Governorates and Districts, which was issued by Decree No. 265 for 2001;
- Prime Minister's Decree No. 283 for 2001 on the values of the local and common tax bases.

The experience indicated that the transformation to decentralization by adopting the local authority system has culminated into a strategic reality, based on the fact that community participation in an institutional framework is consistent with the democratic and pluralistic political approach. In its integrated implication, this leads to achieving a national cause that the government and the society together contributed to. The local authority experience, in its short age, has proven its capability of continuation, viability and improvement.

The Administrative Divisions of the Republic of Yemen

The Republic of Yemen is administratively divided into twenty governorates, in addition to the Capital Secretariat. They, in turn, are divided into 334 districts, which branch out into 2,082 Ozlah (sub-district). Those Ozlah comprise 37,598 villages and 68,215 local communities and neighborhoods.

1. Sana'a, the Capital Secretariat

The Capital Secretariat of Sana'a (City) derives its importance from being the political and historical capital of Yemen. It is situated in the heart of the Yemeni highlands, at an elevation of 2,200 meters above sea level. Sana'a, the Capital Secretariat enjoys year-round sunshine, except for some weeks in spring and summer seasons, when it becomes covered with rain clouds. The climate of Sana'a is moderate in the summer and tends to be cold in the winter nights. The total area of the city reaches 381 km², while the population of the city is about 1,747,000 inhabitants, according to the initial results of the 2004 Population and Housing General Census. Sana'a occupies first rank in terms of population density, with 5,511 persons per km². It is administratively divided into 10 districts, after having expanded significantly during the last two decades. The Old City of Sana'a is the heart of the Capital Secretariat, with its unique architectural style and the Grand Mosque. The mosque has remained a significant cultural landmark throughout history. It also houses a historical library, containing manuscripts and valuable books in all fields. The Old City of Sana'a is overflowing with several displays of architectural art and is characterized by the amazing coordination of its parks, gardens, mosques and Turkish baths, all of which integrate with the rhythm of daily life of its inhabitants. This prompted the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to declare Sana'a a historical city that must be preserved.

2. Sana'a Governorate

Sana'a Governorate is unique by its geographical location, which connects it to a number of governorates, in addition to surrounding the Capital Secretariat. The governorate includes 16 districts situated in the heart of the Central Highlands. They extend from the mountains of Haraz in the west to Khoulan-Al-Tayal in the east, and bordering Marib Governorate. As a result of its wide expansion, it neighbors seven other governorates. The total area of the governorate is 11,961 km², and its population is estimated at 379,000 inhabitants. The governorate is rich in its historical sites. The governorate also produces numerous important agricultural crops, including grapes, coffee, and honey. The governorate is promising for tourism activities due to the many architectural historical remains, such as the forts, castles, historical mosques, such as the Al-Abbass Mosque in Khoulan, the Tomb of the Prophet Ayyoub, the Tomb of the Prophet Shu'aib, Al-Hijra City, Manakha in Haraz, etc.

3. Aden Governorate

The City of Aden is the economic and commercial capital of Yemen, and the most important sea outlet for Yemen to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Aden is the first free commercial and industrial zone in Yemen. Aden Governorate consists of eight districts and occupies an area of 6,980 km², with an estimated population of 590,000 inhabitants. The City of Aden goes back to ancient times and has witnessed many significant historical events. The most important historical archeological landmark of the city is the Taweilah Cisterns, Siera Fort and a number of vivid Islamic sites, such as the Aden Mosque and Minaret. Aden has a promising economic and tourism future, in view of its unique location, the abundance of fish wealth and the industrial and agricultural potentials.

3. Governorate of Al-Hodeida

Al-Hodeida Governorate is the connecting link between the mountains of the Western and Southwestern highlands and the Red Sea. The capital of the governorate, the City of Al-Hodeida, is the third largest city in population and is the major port city on the Red Sea. The area of the Governorate is 13,252 km², with a total population of 2,161,000 inhabitants. There are 26 districts in the governorate. The governorate is well known for its historical cities, such as Zabid, wherein the oldest Islamic universities were first established. Zabid is known as the City of Scholasticism and Scholars, such as the Linguistic Scholar Mortadha Al-Zabidy, the author of the "Crown of the Muse". It is also the hometown of the scholar, poet, and mathematician, the Jurist Ismael Al-Muqry, the author of the Full Honors in History, Jurisprudence, Grammar, Rhymes and Verse". There were also other scholars, whose fame went beyond Yemen, and spread to the entire Islamic World.

Zabid was the cultural capital of the Rasulid Dynasty, which reigned during the period 628-858 AH (1250-1480 AD). The government directs considerable attention to the City of Zabid, after UNESCO declared the city a world cultural heritage that must be preserved. Beit al-Faquih follows Zabid in fame. It became famous as a commercial center and the collection and depot for preparing Yemeni coffee for export. Al-Hodeida Governorate has the essential elements for an economic, agricultural and industrial takeoff. The governorate is distinguished by its fertile agricultural land and large wadis (Wadis Zabid, Remma'a, Siham, Surdoud, and Mur). It is the food basket for Yemen. On top of this, there is the famous commercial port of Hodeida and Al-Salif Port, from where dry and solid commodities and products are exported, such as gypsum and rock salt. In the governorate, there are many roads, land overland and marine inlets, which can help towards the achievement of rapid economic growth.

5. Ta'ez Governorate

The Governorate of Ta'ez joins together its Red Sea commanding views at Mocha and Dhibab with the green plains and wadis that intertwine through the mountains of Al-Hugariyah, Mawiyah and Shara'ab and Jabal Habashy. Ta'ez is the third densely populated governorate (250 persons per km²). The population of the governorate is 2,402,000 inhabitants in an area of 10,009 km², which encompasses 23 districts. The capital of the governorate, the City of Ta'ez, lies on green mounds and hills along the sloping surface of Jabal Sabir. Ta'ez City played an important role throughout the

history of Yemen, especially in the early Islamic period. When the Prophet Mohammed (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) assigned Ma'adh Ibn Jabal as Administrator of Yemen, he instructed him to make Al-Janad, a suburb of Ta'ez City today, as his Administrative headquarters. Ta'ez City was also the political capital of the Rasulid Dynasty for more than two hundred years. The governorate is rich in tourism products, including beaches along the Red Sea Coast, historical remains, and fortresses, such as "Al-Mansoura" Fortress and "Al-Qahira" Citadel. In addition, the governorate has economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial capabilities that can be noticed in the life of Yemenis.

6. Ibb Governorate

The Governorate of Ibb lies in the middle of the geographical regions of Yemen. It is surrounded by the Governorates of Ta'ez, Al-Dhali'a, Al-Beidha, Dhamar and Al-Hodeida. It is well known for its greenery, abundant rainfall, the flowing streams and springs in the wadis that are famous for growing coffee, the perfumed *kadhi* plant and sugar cane. These wadis include Wadi Bana, Wadi Shei'an and Wadi Al-Dor, which stimulates poets to recite love poems. The area of the governorate is 5,344 km², comprising 20 districts with a population of 2,137,000 inhabitants. The capital of the governorate, Ibb City, lies on a green mound on the western slope of Jabal Ba'adan. It is the biggest city in the governorate. Its population has grown tenfold over the last twenty years. The important historical cities in the governorate include Dhofar City, the capital of the Himyarite Kingdom, and Jibla City, the capital and cultural and scholastic center of the Suleihi Dynasty.

The governorate has a favorable economic, agricultural and tourism components. Numerous agricultural crops are produced in the governorate, including cereals, vegetables, fruits, fodder and honey. There are poultry farms spread throughout the governorate, which cover a significant share of the needs of the country. Furthermore, the governorate possesses several important tourist sites.

7. Abyan Governorate

The Governorate of Abyan lies from the sea to the depth of Yemeni land territory, with a total area of 16,445 km². The population is 438,000 inhabitants living in 11 districts. The governorate capital of Zanjibar lies at the end of Wadi Bana at Delta Abyan and historical Jabal Khanfar. The city is surrounded by gardens, banana and other fruit trees.

Abyan Governorate ranks first in the cultivation of long fiber cotton, which used to be exported to Britain in commercial quantities in the Fifties and Sixties of last century. Attention to the cultivation of cotton was revived after the unification of Yemen. The governorate is also characterized by the abundance of fish wealth, with its 300 km long coastline overlooking the Arabian Sea.

8. The Governorate of Lahj

Lahj Governorate became famous for its beautiful art, especially poetry and music. The area of the governorate is 12,697 km², encompassing 15 districts. The population is estimated at 727,000 inhabitants. The governorate capital of Al-Houta is situated on Delta Wadi Tiban, which is famous for the pleasantness of its flowing waters and for the Al-Husseini Gardens, with their abundance of perfumed plants such as the Arabian jasmine and rose plants. Lahj is also known for manufacturing confectioneries and its fine arts. Al-Houta is situated on the commercial route between Aden, Ta'ez, Ibb and Sana'a cities. The governorate has a long coastline, which is rich in fish wealth and marine life. There are also many hot natural sulfur baths, such as the Al-Houaimy Bath (in Karash) and Shar'ah Bath.

9. Al-Mahara Governorate

The Governorate of Al-Mahara is Yemen's Eastern Gateway to the Arabian Gulf region. On the east, it is connected to the Sultanate of Oman and on the north to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The governorate overlooks the Arabian Sea to the south, while it is connected to Hadhramaut Governorate on the west. It has an area of 67,300 km², which encompass 9 districts. The most significant cities include Al-Gheidha, which is the governorate capital. The historic Nashtoun Port is the most famous for fishing and export of fish. Al-Mahara is the least populated governorate, with an estimated population of only 89,000 inhabitants, who mostly live in the coastal towns, especially in Seyhout, Qish, Al-Gheidha and Dimqout.

Al-Mahara is known for the cultivation of frankincense trees and the manufacturing and trading of incense. It leads the other governorates, in terms of the abundance and diversity of its fish wealth and marine life, with its 500 km long coastline. The governorate has attractive tourist areas and historical sites, especially in Al-Gheidha, Qish, and Seyhout, etc. The governorate also has water streams and springs.

10. Al-Jouf Governorate

Al-Jouf Governorate occupies Yemen's northern and eastern plains. The area of the governorate is 39,503 km², encompassing 12 districts. The 451,000 inhabitants of the governorate are spread out in scattered communities, especially in the capital city of Hazm Al-Jouf and around Wadi Khabb and Al-Sha'af, Wadi Al-Jouf and other wadis and oases. Al-Jouf Governorate is the habitat of the Maenian civilization, which prospered during the period 400-100 BC. The Maenian Kingdom was known for its historical cities along Wadi Al-Jouf, where their remains are still visible today. Such historical cities as Baraqish and Maen are rich in architectural heritage.

11. Marib Governorate

The Governorate of Marib is situated in the eastern region of Yemen. It is surrounded by the Governorates of Al-Jouf, Amran, Sana'a and Shabwa. The area of the

governorate is 17,433 km² and is divided into 17 districts, with a total population of 241,000 inhabitants, distributed in a number of population agglomerations scattered around the Dam Wadi and oasis with available groundwater. The present capital city of the governorate and the well-known capital of the Saba Kingdom, Marib City, is situated on the bank of Wadi Adhana, on which the ancient Marib Dam was built and where it was reconstructed in the Early Eighties of the last century. The location of the Ancient City of Marib is characterized by the control it had over the old trade route known as the Frankincense Trail. Marib City remained the capital of the Kingdom of Saba for many centuries. Thus, it has many archeological and historical sites, especially the temples, such as the Temple of Awam, Bilquis' Throne, Barran Temple and the Sanctuary of Bilqis.

12. Shabwa Governorate

The Governorate of Shabwa is predominantly desert, lying in the middle of Hadhramaut, Abyan, Marib and Al-Beidha Governorates. It has an area of 38,993 km², encompassing 17 districts. The population of the governorate is estimated at 466,000 inhabitants. The important cities of Shabwa include, Ataq, the capital city of the governorate, Beihan, Habban, Izzan, the old City of Shabwa, which used to be the capital of Hadhramaut. The most famous historical ancient port found in Shabwa Governorate is Qina Port. Shabwa is also known for agriculture, livestock and honey. The governorate is currently witnessing extended and extensive work in oil exploration undertaken by several international companies. Shabwa is also famous for its archeological remains. There were 300 archeological sites discovered. In addition, the governorate was known for being along the ancient trade routes and the silk, frankincense and incense caravan routes, which extended from Qina Port, passing through Najran to the Port of Gaza on the Mediterranean Sea.

13. Dhamar Governorate

The Governorate of Dhamar is located in the middle of the Central Highlands of Yemen amidst many surrounding governorates. It lies across the Jahran Grounds, the Al-Haql Grounds in Anis, the plains of Ans and Al-Hada Districts, the famous Utumah Mountains, and both Wisabs (Higher Wisab and Lower Wisab), which are known for the greenery and their flowing streams and springs. The governorate is an area of 7,586 km², encompassing 12 districts. The population of the governorate is 1,339,000 inhabitants. The governorate is famous for the cultivation of various crops. The total fertile arable land area reaches 138,220,000 hectares. Dhamar Governorate is also known for its natural hot baths such as the Ali Bath, the famous Wadi Ramma'a streams and springs, in addition to the steam baths in Jabal Lyssee and Jabal Asbiel, east of the City of Dhamar. There are also manufacturing, mining and extraction facilities, such as mines and quarries as well as handicrafts activities such as agate extraction and silver jewelry making.

Dhamar City, the governorate capital, is famous historically for being named after Dhamar Ali Yahr, the King of Saba and Dhi Raidan. It is also considered an Islamic cultural city, with its famous jurisdictional schools. Many of Yemen's struggling patriots for freedom and justice graduated from these schools.

14. Al-Beidha Governorate

The land area of Al-Beidha Governorate is 9,271 km², distributed among 20 districts. The population is estimated at 571,000 inhabitants. The capital city of the governorate, Al-Beidha City is famous for the men's shawls and the traditional clothing as well as for spinning and manufacturing wool. Rada'a is another famous city in the governorate, as it was the capital of the Tahiriyah Kingdom. The Tahiris ruled Yemen during the first half of the 10th Century AH (mid 1500s AD). The historical Al-'Amiriyah School and Jiban Schools in Rada'a are among the most prominent landmarks of the governorate. They are considered the zenith of Islamic architectural art. In Al-Beidha Governorate, there are also historical remains for Awsani, Sabaeen and Himyarite Kingdoms.

15. Hajjah Governorate

The Governorate of Hajjah overlooks the western coast of Yemen along the Red Sea. It has a total area of 8,306 km², and the population is estimated at 1,480,000 inhabitants distributed among 31 districts. The City of Hajjah, the governorate capital, rises 1,400 meters above the Red Sea surface and is surrounded by high mountains, some reaching 3,000 meters, which makes them an impregnable wall for the city. The city was a prison for the Revolutionaries and Free Yemenis, due to its isolation and hard to reach.

The governorate has numerous historical ruins and other tourism products, especially for cultural and therapeutic tourists that can take advantage of the hot mineral baths in the areas of Suq Al-Khamis, Al-Tour and Hassan. Its beaches and islands are rich in coral reefs and bright colorful fish.

16. Al-Mahweet Governorate

The Governorate of Al-Mahweet is situated in the western part of Yemen. It sits in the middle of the Governorates of Sana'a, Al-Hodeida, Hajjah and Amran. The area of the governorate is 2,332 km² and the number of districts in the governorate is 9 districts. The governorate is famous for the cultivation of many agricultural crops, especially coffee, which is recently spreading in the middle wadis. Other crops include tropical fruits are cultivated in the deeper wadis. The governorate is known for the many agricultural terraces in the slopes and summits of the mountains and in the suspended villages and fortified impregnable fortresses. Al-Mahweet Governorate is relatively densely populated with around 495,000 inhabitants. The most important cities of the governorate are the capital city of Al-Mahweet, Shibam-Kawkaban, which was the capital of the Ya'afuri Kingdom in the Third and Fourth Centuries AH (Ninth and Tenth Century AD), Al-Taweilah, which is considered as a suspended fortress on the tops of the mountains.

17. Sa'ada Governorate

The Governorate of Sa'ada is located on the border of Yemen with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The area of the governorate is 12,368 km² distributed among 15 districts with a population of 693,000 inhabitants. Sa'ada City, the governorate capital, is famous for its religious jurisdictional, religious and language schools. The city played an important role in the political history of Yemen. Historically, the city gained fame because of its location on the route to Al-Hijaz and the Levant. Sa'ada Governorate has many economic, agricultural and livestock activities. The Governorate produces cereals, legumes, vegetables, citrus fruit; with considerable livestock production of cattle and sheep.

18. Amran Governorate

Amran Governorate was created after the blessed unification of Yemen, in order to consolidate the geographical spread of a number of districts and to achieve economic and social development for the governorate, by means of forming a major administrative center (governorate). The governorate is situated in the middle of the Governorates of Sana'a, Al-Jouf, Sa'ada Haddah and Al-Mahweet. It consists of 20 districts, and has a total area of 7,900 km² and a population of 872,000 inhabitants. The Governorate of Amran is famous for the many historical sites, especially the fortresses, citadels, mosques and tombs. The capital city of the governorate, the historical city of Amran is situated on the slope of the Al-Boun Grounds, which is famous for its outstanding cereal cultivation and its livestock wealth.

19. Al-Dhali'a Governorate

Al-Dhali'a Governorate is a practical evidence of unifying the Yemeni nation. It has been formed from 9 districts of southern governorates, middle governorates and eastern governorates. Accordingly, the governorate forms a tie-up factor between the peripheries of Yemen prior to unification. The creation of the governorate is considered an achievement, in view of the importance thereof economically and socially, in serving its people and achieving comprehensive development. Its establishment also reinforces the cultural and social development and provides a better livelihood for its people. Al-Dhali'a is situated in the mountainous area towards the East and occupies an area of 4,000 km². The total population of the governorate is estimated at 470,000 inhabitants. It is famous for its natural baths, with the Damt Bath being the most important, and for the beauty of its mountainous landscape and its rich wadis.

20. Raimah Governorate

Raimah is the last governorate created. It was established in 2003, after being part of Sana'a Governorate. Its creation came in response to the desire of its people and in order to improve economic and social development in the governorate, in view of

being a distinctive social and geographical bond. The area of the governorate is about 2,000 km², and its population is estimated at 395,000 inhabitants. It consists of six districts broken down into 66 communities. The governorate is merely a range of mountains that overlook west towards the Tihama Strip of Yemen. Its mountains gradually ascend from 150 meters above sea level to about 3,000 meters. The Governorate is intertwined by several wadis, with Wadi Ramma'a in the south, Wadi Seihan in the East and Wadi Al-Bulbul, Mazhar and Dhumah being the most significant. Raimah is famous for its agricultural and livestock wealth and its honey. The irrigation canals constructed underground from solid rock is considered agricultural remains that are still standing today and work to irrigate the fields with fresh water. There are several historical sites and architectural facilities that dates back to pre-Islamic times such as the places of Saba and Al-Qillaj, Dar Al-Salam and the Village of Al-Aden. There are fortresses, citadels and castles such as the Castle of Gurdan, Yafouz, Mashham, Danwah and Hikr. In the governorate, there are several historic mosques that date back to the Fifth and ninth Century, such as the mosques of Al-Hourah, Al-A'awar, and Al-Aden. Some of its communities were famous for their industry and handicrafts, such as the community of Bani Dhabiby, which is famous for the manufacture of shawls, Bani Al-Tahmily, which is famous for its gun powder, Bani Nafi'a, which is famous for the mobile commerce between the villages, carrying their goods on mules, and Bani Al-Hattar which is famous for its beautiful scripts of the Qur'an and other books.

21. Hadhramaut Governorate

The reputation of Hadhramaut in the history of Islam was widespread. This was a result of the trading activities that led to the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia. Hadhramaut is the largest governorate in Yemen, which helped diversify its climate and the activities of its population between the coastline overlooking the Arabian Sea with all its bounty of fish and trade, and the springs of the Bawazeer River, the interior of Wadi Hadhramaut with the date palm forests, and the apiaries of Wadi Do'an. Hadhramaut Governorate also became famous for the mosques, schools, and libraries of Tarim, the Forts and gardens of Seyoun, and the skyscrapers of Shibam-Hadhramaut.