



Observations and recommendations by the organisers on the proceedings of the British Syrian Society/MAM seminar:

A. The Seminar shed light on the great deal of work that has been done separately by various agencies to arrive at overall structural understandings of Damascus in urban planning terms. In particular, the work presented by the General Company for Researches and Technical Studies on the Damascus Master Plan is clearly valuable. Nevertheless, the accomplished work seems to have been done by the various agencies on individual level with little overall coordination.

B. Considerable effort has also clearly been expended by the Damascus Governorate through the Old City Master Plan to bring forward ways in which the area within the walled city might be protected and enhanced. The Old City Master Plan, however, has excluded all the parts of the Old City outside the wall.

C. It is also clear that the proposals for King Faisal Street are motivated by the need for urban development in a general sense and that the proposals have been the subject of considerable work by the Governorate and others.

D. It became clear during the seminar both in general terms and in the specific context of the King Faisal



Street case study that the available opportunities and requirements for integrated cooperation between governmental agencies and other relevant bodies have not been respected to an adequate degree. For example in the case of the King Faisal St. area proposals the role of the Ministry of culture and the Directorate of Antiquities in particular has surprisingly appeared to be minimal. If better advantage had been taken of the opportunities legally available for involvement many, of the difficulties identified below could perhaps have been avoided.

E. There was an apparent lack of a unified vision for the future of Damascus between the various governmental agencies. Indeed it would appear that there are a number of competing visions for the future of Damascus within the

different agencies. In future full benefit should be taken from the existing processes to ensure a sustainable unified approach to planning for the future of the capital city and to realise full benefit from the serious work that has been done.

F. Speaking specifically of the King Faisal Street area, it appears that the requirements of the World Heritage Convention have not been taken into account and namely the fact that the King Faisal area is within a buffer zone that is meant to protect the city intra muros inscribed on the World Heritage List. Parts of the proposed extension of the King Faisal Street, which foresees demolitions, are within the registered National Heritage areas and should therefore not be demolished. UNESCO World Heritage Centre reported that they had only learnt of the King Faisal St. area