

Urban Strategies for a Renewal of Algerian Cities: Constantine of Tomorrow

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Abstract The town is not 'fixed', it is constantly developing, transforming, extending, renewing... These developments are made according to inhabitants needs, the evolution of lifestyles, opportunities or territory projects, policies, wills ... etc.; But also according to the capacities for the evolution of urban fabrics and social acceptability of this evolution. Today, urban intervention takes place in a context of 're-urbanization' marked by territorial and socio-economic complexity and by uncertainty. While new fabrics become increasingly important and concern the notion of 'project' instead of that of 'plan'. In Algeria, since independence in 1962, the town plan had been promoted as a 'plan' which had worked to extend the city beyond its fringes in order to respond to ever-increasing demands for housing. After years of drastic cuts in public spending, a turning point seems to be taking place. Indeed, the last two decades have been marked by many political, economic and social modifications at the same time. Through a financial upturn, the government committed itself to a series of reforms aimed at boosting the economy, increasing housing and employment, and undertaking extensive urban restructuring work. This new socio-economic context has led, in an unprecedented way, actions and interventions on the existing urban fabrics, to prefigure Algerian city modification and bringing out new and complex problems. Thus, in parallel with an Algerian city that continues to spread, the existing city is moved by a profusion of structuring public projects but also different operations of transformations; So many actions that can be assimilated to the beginnings of urban renewal for the Algerian city. The capital of Algerian east 'Constantine', is a city that could be described as an 'incomplete metropolis', it is highly renowned for many specificities, yet it has a specific crisis in relation to its context and its Urbanization, its upgrading is imminent and adapts itself to the international economy within the framework of a sustainable development in relation with the quality of life and the future of future generations. It seems to know, as Algerian cities do, many actions and projects that are transforming. The main objective of this work is first, to

examine the effectiveness and relevance of the degree of involvement and involvement of local actors, in particular the users, and finally to consider the consistency of the programs.

Keywords Urban Strategies, Urban Renewal, Mutated City, the Future Town, Constantine

1. Introduction

Urban sprawl, the dispersal of the built environment, the proliferation of motorized travel, increasing waste volume, flows, the use of energy and the development of new uses, result from the economic and social forces of the current era, and support excessive urbanization. Indeed, new dynamics now characterize the cities, the majority of countries are experiencing dysfunction and negative urban dynamics. Outcome: transformations in approaches of urban planning have been made, and the cities are experiencing transformations and mutations that correspond, sometimes, with real vectors of positive change.

It is true that for a long time, the intervention over the city consisted of a major production of buildings and infrastructures in inbuilt areas and intended for individuals with relatively homogeneous aspirations. Today the development of cities is in an already heavily built environment and is intended for individuals with very diverse aspirations. The urban intervention is therefore in the context of "re-urbanisation" marked by territorial and socio-economic complexity and uncertainty[1]. Therefore, new challenges are becoming increasingly important and the use of the term "project" instead of "plan"; because it is no longer a matter of regulation, guidance and growth control, often on the outskirts of the city, but to find initiatives to stimulate the development of central areas and slow the urban sprawl. This is more commonly called the urban renewal or reconstruction of the city on itself. This

corresponds to the definition of an option to counter the trends of sprawl and urban dysfunctions, a trend that seeks to overcome the urban crisis and to reconsider the city and its development.

2. Objectives and Methodology of Work

Algerian city lives a specific crisis context and its course of urbanization, it should more than ever be renewed, its upgrade is imminent, and it must also accommodate an agreement with the international economy and a sustainable development approach that cares about the quality of life and future of generations. In front of its high stakes, it seems to experience many actions, and projects that hold transformations. In this context, it is important to question the effectiveness and appropriateness of its actions which seems to be imported from elsewhere!

To better understand the reality of matters and determine all this, our choice fell on the city of Constantine that could probably be described as 'an incomplete metropolis' and a highly reputable 'regional capital'. This choice was almost imposed because it favors the observation of a transforming city...

The latter already plays a significant and structuring role on a regional as well as a national scale, it presents a delicate and disadvantageous situation; indicating numerous dysfunctions and a loss of its architectural, urban and identity properties, particularly in the area of ancient and heritage fabrics.

The objective of our work is to examine the transforming situation and to measure the importance of the renewal issue of the project of metropolization of this great city. In this case, the confrontation between theory and reality, as well as receptivity of residents and users representing the fundamental support of our research.

3. The Urban Project to Renew the City: Towards the City of Tomorrow!

The concept of the urban project is at the heart of urban renewal of the contemporary era, it is a formula that has mainly been used in Europe since the seventies, to counter the functionalist urban planning within a changing socio economic environment (awareness in relation to the crisis of the city, development of urban thought, and science in general). In fact, urban standardized and reproducible responses are becoming rarer and less and less effective. This requires special attention to the processes that organizes the intervention appropriately to each particular case. Therefore, urban policies evolve and the urban project acquires a place among the new forms of intervention on the city. This new situation is essentially characterized by the withdrawal and the changing role of the public sector in the definition and implementation of

urban development. The withdrawal and disinvestment of the state is partly explained because of the crisis in public finances. But it also reflects an illegitimation of the State in terms of planning as much social as spatial, which reflects the development of neo-liberal policies and the crisis of the welfare state (It is precisely in this situation where Algeria ended up during the late 80s and early 90s).

The urban project gives birth to a new dimension of urban policy integrating the concepts of negotiation, consultation but also compromises between the different actors in the city. So it can become a "city project", "social project", where it really involves its beneficiaries and is not limited to a simple urban marketing operation. It is also considered as a new approach to spatial intervention that may provide a framework of a rolling action and self-regulation, open, flexible and efficient. It aspires to improve the quality of urban life and try to correct the imperfections of urban planning. It takes into account all the data characterizing an area, a town, a commune, from an economic point of view, sociological, or cultural, while considering the geography of the land, the history of existing assets and by giving priority to a prudent management and space control[2]. The urban project defines an approach that is in line to write another city on the city; renew the city that is designed in the absence of quality.

Indeed, Renewing a city is to change it widely and to demonstrate several principles, this leads to conduct a real project: policy renewal - enhancement of the economic aspects - of reconnection and social cohesion - revaluation of the cultural aspects and contextual specificities, respect for the traditions and the past while seeking to open up to the renewal for a city of tomorrow. Referring to the city of tomorrow, is also to adopt, in the context of the renewed city, a vision of sustainable development, a vision that aspires to be the new ethic of the future: a re-humanization of cities, a unique social and urban project for each city and a true "project of a city".

4. Urban Project and Metropolization of the Big Cities of Algeria

Research has shown that Algerian cities unfortunately result from the absence of a coherent and cohesive development policy. Indeed, during the post-independence years, population growth and the rural exodus forced the authorities to adopt policies of mass production of housing to try to control its crisis and to curb the phenomenon of slum. According to this view, the extensions of the Algerian peripheries were made by breaking with the old nuclei, and the incoherence was accentuated by the propagation of repetitive and monotonous urban and architectural forms. The various urban planning instruments, for their part, focused on the programming and quantification of needs and their spatial locations, in addition to their dislocation with the rapid changes in

urbanization. The Algerian city was therefore shaped in the absence of landscape and architectural quality.

However, we note that since 2005, agents of change and profound transformations are gradually implemented in the Algerian city (especially big cities). This is due primarily to favorable economic conditions (including hydrocarbon revenues), but mostly the desire to integrate the global system, which is considered a necessary step in any development.

In fact, it is in a context of agreement with the international economy and in order to "stay in the race" in globalization, that is to affirm the will to "metropolize" major Algerian cities. Indeed metropolization can be identified as a territorial development and development strategy, in order to provide the great city with the assets and the "image" necessary for its integration into competitiveness.

Today the urban landscape in these cities reflects the image of cities that are implementing major facilities, the urban project seem to be the basic element in the work of 'reconstruction' of 'cityscape'. The projects are real elements of upgrade, developed through a set of strategies for implementing standards of modernity, to hoist the Algerian cities competitiveness thresholds required in Maghreb, Euro-Mediterranean and global areas. They are an opening provider but may result in discontinuities and multiple inequalities...

However, it must be admitted that these actions remain the prerogative of public policies, and the contribution of other private actors and economic operators remain also minimal if not absent.

5. Brief Presentation of the City of Constantine

The will to deliver a presentation of the city of Constantine in a few lines is almost impossible. Indeed, what to say about this city that is doubly millenary, a defensive site surrounded by the Rhumel whose gorges make two kilometers long and one hundred feet deep[3], a picturesque landscape of the finest in the world . Its privileged position (intersection between the boundaries of the high plains by its south and mountains of the tell in the north[4]), its particular history and its original character, came together to make this city the largest commercial grain market, a craft center, a center of worship and culture, a kingdom and a regional hub for many civilizations ... and that since ancient times. Today it is the capital of eastern Algeria.

The site on which was built the city is provided with favored assets that pushed each conquering civilization to superimpose their cities on the ruins of the previous one. You cannot make a step back to summarize the history of Constantine without emphasizing the permanence of its heritage, and that it was built and rebuilt many times, it is a stratified tissue of cultures, civilizations and stories. This

provides information on the background that supported this city, and helps to better understand the changes and transformations that are being prepared today.

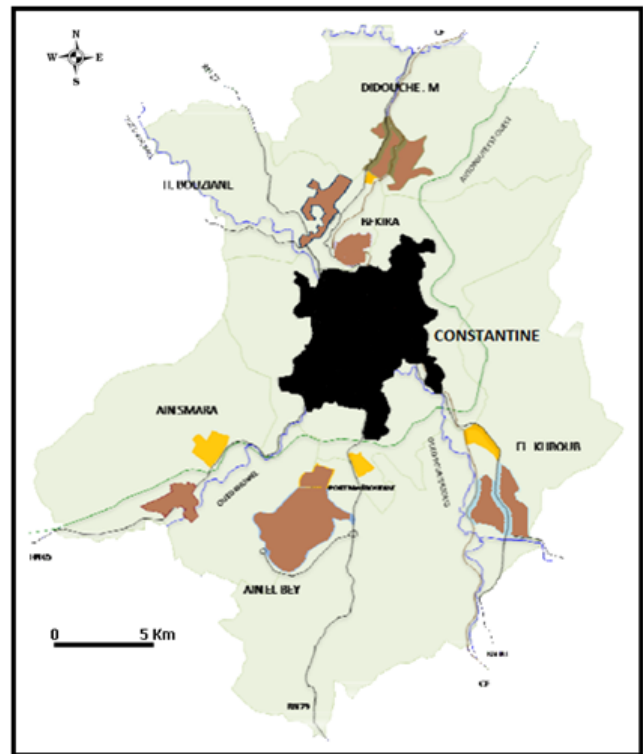


Figure 1. Metropolitan area of the Constantine city

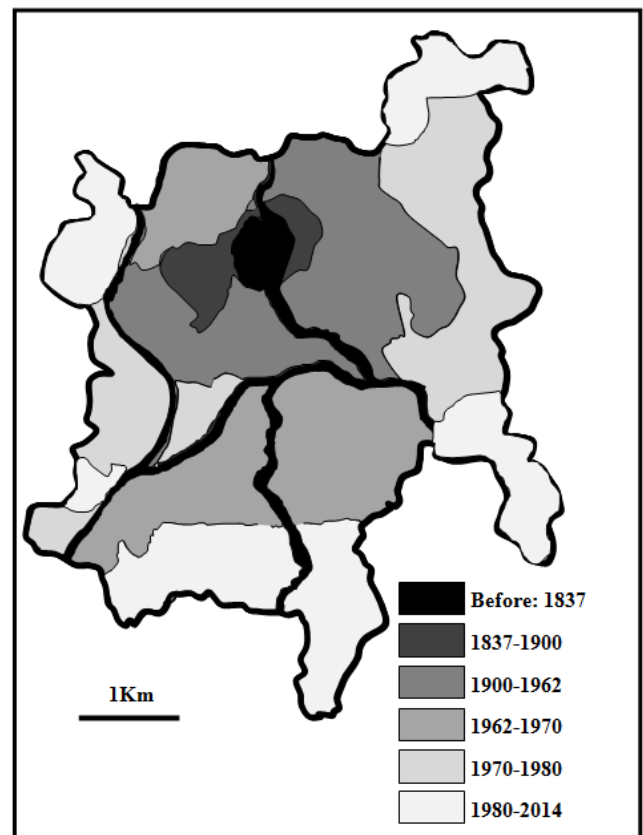


Figure 2. Evolution of the Constantine city (1837-2000)

The reconstruction of the city's diagenesis[5] should be required to understand how was Constantine of yesterday to better ... " draw 'Constantine of tomorrow.

6. Constantine in the Contemporary Era: Issues and Prospects

The city of Constantine knows, in our era of all the turmoil, like the Algerian towns, a delicate and disadvantaged situation; including: a chaotic, sprawling spread of its periphery at detriment of the quality of life,

environment, loss of identity and cultural landmarks within the anonymity of housing estates and unfinished housing development, and a loss of architectural and urban property, central ancient fabrics (the old rock / (Old Town) among others) inclined to continuous degradation, malfunction, congestion, inadequate practices, neglect and devaluation of public space ... etc. Constantine is therefore formed without synergy between different urban entities. But she has known for almost a decade the application of an ambitious modernization plan (MUP) for its revitalization and outreach! (See fig. 3).

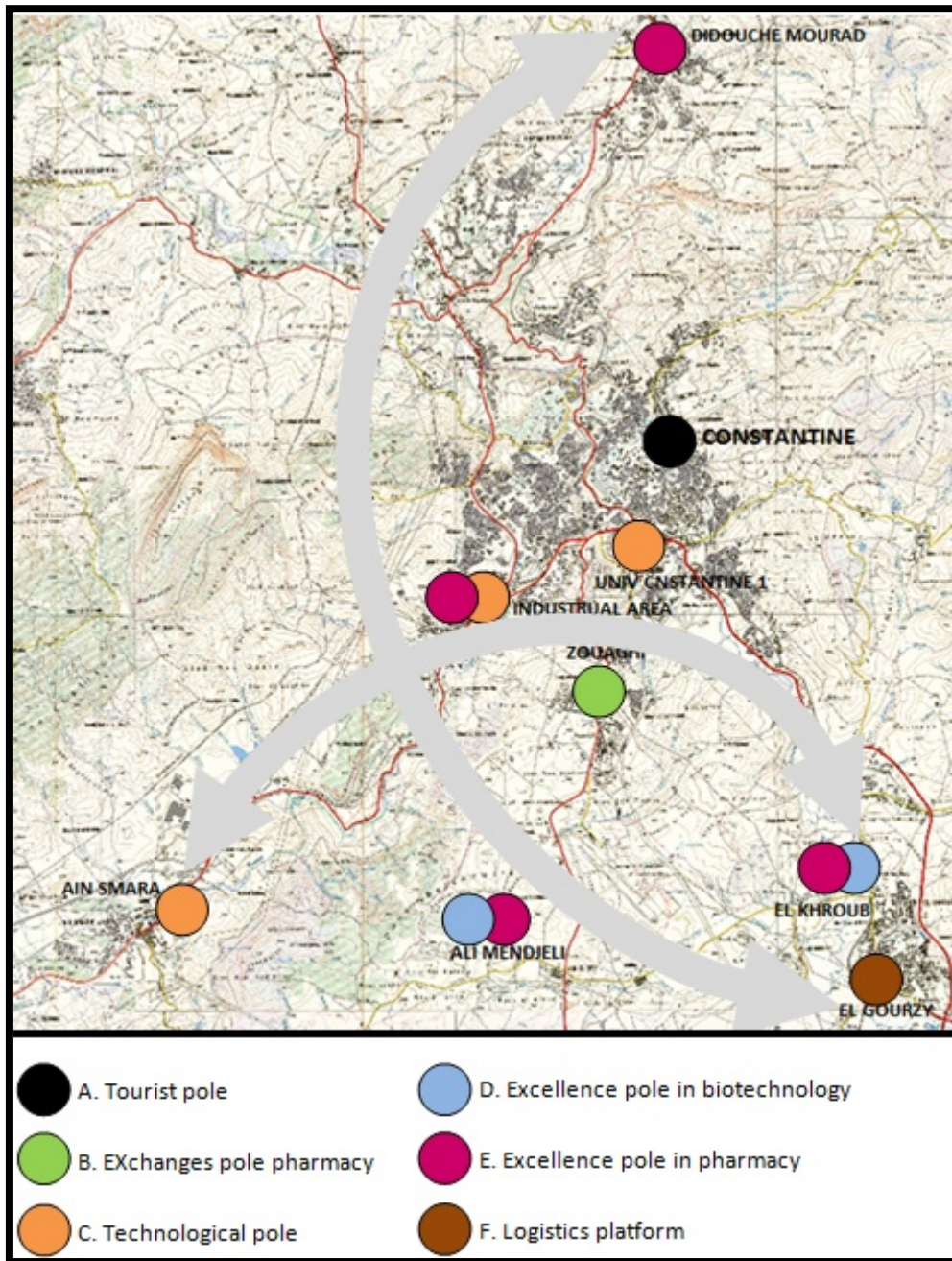


Figure 3. Major components the PMU of Constantine

Table 1. Major urban projects in Constantine

Poles of the UMP	Projects launched	Features - Progress / impacts
Tourist hub Heritage - administration (Medina, Koudiat and Bardo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project to rehabilitate the street of Mellah Slimane (old town: the rock) launched under the Permanent Safeguard Plan and Enhancement of Protected Sectors. - Rehabilitation and restoration through Souika. - Bardo, Djanan Tchina. 02 shanty towns that have been demolished. Launching of the construction of 03 hotels (luxury). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The PPSMVSS of the old city of Constantine began in October 2007, the project has taken the appearance of an urban project (consultation with all stakeholders and especially the locals). Other actions are still in progress. - the operation of demolition allowed to recover perfectly buildable land assets which will be erected modern buildings near the old city center (work in progress). - Ibis and Novotel: completed The Marriott (under construction) in addition to 04 other hotel launched in satellite towns.
Transit hub and Commercial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of an international airport as well as the refitting of the former Hall and the construction of new airport runways. - Central Multimodal Station in Zouaghi (tramway terminus) will regroup in a few months the two existing stations in order to decongest the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The construction project is completed and the goal was to increase air traffic so to provide more quality service to travelers. - Acting as a catalyst and influence on urban regeneration, the proposed station will have a global impact on the dynamics and the image of Constantine. However, as it is not yet realized, research of the project impacts can only be prospective.
Networks and infrastructures for mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The tramway, 9 km of line from the city center to Zouaghi, with a capacity of 160 000 passengers / day, 08 stations and 03 poles of exchange. - The completion of the cable car. -The Project of Trans-Rhumel, it is a giant viaduct which will span the Rhumel and connect both banks over a length of 1,150 m. The project of the Trans-Rhumel is now effective. This is a giant viaduct which will span the Rhumel and connect both banks over a length of 1,150 m. A bridge oriented to be functional, but whose appearance seems to be of prime importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Tramway offers since its launch in July 2012, to promote the use of clean public transport respectful of the environment. - Enabling a real improvement in comfort and / or speed for users. - It has improved the quality of public transit because the tramway line is positioned on one of the axes of the highest demand over the old buses that were deleted or shortened. - The cost of transport is still relatively high and does not suit all social categories. - The cable car has allowed thousands of users to use a convenient, fast and environmentally friendly transport mean, thanks to its two distinct sections. The first, from the street of Tatache (formerly rue Thiers) joins the university hospital with a length of 425 meters. The second, more important, joins the same UHC to the Emir Abdelkader city (formerly Faubourg Lamy) and has a length of 1,091 meters. The work is in progress, and will have four roadways and one for the tramway, for the UN square (El Fedj) and goes up to the plateau of Mansura. A behemoth designed to connect several neighborhoods and reduce the strain on the current roads network and will allow more fluidity for traffic which cannot support the growth of the car fleet without benefiting from such important road network solutions, it will be commissioned in the course of the year 2014 and therefore its impact will remain prospective.

Indeed, the "Modernization Project of the Constantine Metropolis" (PMMC) initiated since 2007 by the President of the Republic, aimed at breaking with the previous logics of development and planning. The project has thus declined a desire to give legibility to structuring projects. It was also a question of asserting a general coherence on the

territorial plane of the metropolis, and creating a real articulation between the different domains and sectors (ref SCU). It was structured around three main objectives: urban "remodeling", improvement of transport networks and attractiveness of tourism. The culmination of this vast and profound enterprise would be "the re-new of

Constantine's face". Numerous actions have been deployed within the framework of this ambitious modernization project[6], in order to regain the dynamism and regional influence of the historic metropolis, in particular by enhancing its intrinsic, patrimonial and identity potentialities and enhancing the image Of Constantine metropolis.

This modernization reflects a «political» desire on two levels: first to make a qualitative transition, by equipment acquisitions (the various initiated projects) and thus put the city and region in range with the world; Secondly to achieve a positive change in the living environment of the users and citizens. The new approach of the urban strategy aspires to be qualitative multidimensional; breaking with the punctual and sectoral actions of previous developments.

Other projects exist in the city, and concerns varied and numerous actions both for upgrading, redevelopment, urban improvement, refitting ... etc. Especially as part of the event of Constantine, the capital of Arab culture. In fact, the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO) had designated Constantine as the capital of Arab culture in 2015, the event represented a real revival for the capital of the East on every front the plans would enable it to upgrade its cultural infrastructure, both in the capital of the province and in all the other communes. Many actions have therefore been implemented, but their coordination and impact remain a matter for debate.

7. Urban Renewal Project for the City of Constantine: between Theory and Practice

All the actions taken in the city and its agglomeration reveals a profound spatial, social and economic reconfiguration that is about to take place .This announces the beginning of a new face being painted gradually for Constantine of tomorrow; as well as new human relationships (the upheaval of old) and a new urbanity!

Despite the existence of a modernization plan that could be likened to a founding charter, it must be noted that the actions do not really reflect the character. They remain individual responding to specific problems, which may produce discontinuities that will only aggravate the problem of dislocation experienced by urban spaces. The fact is that some projects were decided well before the launch of the famous modernization plan; they were built there later, which provides information on the differences in the approach and in the overall approach. Modernization was not thought integrally as envisaged in the urban coherence plan.

Another observation raised concerns territories affected by the projects, which are in large majority central and / or strategic, and a number of suburbs with a deplorable living environments, are still waiting to be upgraded,

facing an emergency situation worth taking a convincing support.

The new perspective of modernization and development to meet universal standards established in Constantine is based on the urban plan as a tool for action and whose doctrine favors the elimination of spatial and social imbalances in the context of an open process , participatory and involving all stakeholders in the city. But the fact is that multiple inequalities emerge, residents meanwhile remain excluded from effective participation in various real actions. Residents and users, because of their practices are real actors influencing predominantly the realities of the city. What is needed is the dialogue and coordination of efforts in order to reorient all the dynamics (spontaneous and planned), reintegrate and lead an improvement in lives of people. Rethinking Constantine of tomorrow must pass through good 'listening' to the society that invest in it. What we can demonstrate, it is the absence of a civil society capable of executing an anti-establishment in Constantine, but also throughout Algeria. The fact is not due to unawareness of the citizens, but rather it is the fact that Algerian society is struggling to organize and polarize toward common interests[7]. The people convey a dynamic and real strategy to a convergent urbanity: they have a skill to produce their city of tomorrow.

8. Conclusions

Following the state of the city, Constantine has a fragmented urban network, with public spaces that are abandoned or no longer fulfill their role as a link, roads undersized and congested, thus raises a specific and complex problem. Each urban entity was created under specific conditions, and bears characteristics that isolate more or less from the rest of its spatial, social, economic environment. The urgency for Constantine is to practice true integration of all these entities in the same urban system, to improve the image and quality of life of the city for its residents and users and mitigate the propagation of its anarchic sprawl, these are the major challenges of Constantine. It is only once these objectives will be achieved, that we can claim that this big city can have a place among the international cities.

It is true that its today's image is renewed thanks to two movements;

- Spontaneous and punctual renewal, with a commercial characteristic, sometimes illegal, essentially driven by residents and users.
- A planned renewal managed by multiple regular projects, which remain sector-based, sometimes individual ... though managed by a modernization plan.

The metropolization project initiated in Constantine constitutes an ambitious vision and a challenge for the city

to get in line with globalization. It comes to a long-term project that will bring a major development. This will be possible, in our opinion, only if the many projects launched may first allow citizens to access better life standards in a quality environment, and eventually upgrade and modernize the city through large-scale international facilities.

An urban project in the prospect of a renewal and an upgrade of the city is a multidimensional project, which should be based on several aspects of both: economic, social, environmental, deep knowledge of the built environment and its realities, it is expected to create wealth and generate endogenous dynamics that may incorporate humans, meet their expectations and make him rediscover the pleasure of experiencing the city as the user continually adapts to his space, he deserves to be integrated and especially involved in the renewal process engaged. The city project must result in concrete actions having a direct and visible impact on the city and on the city-dweller, as part of a real coherent and cohesive global strategy that will have to be structured through scales and a timeline of action. Solutions can not emerge from nothing, it is permissible to be inspired, and the most important is that the greatest consensus was gathered around a local context. The urban project in Algeria should not be regarded as a goal, a speech that we have to adopt absolutely, but it should rather be an approach to be

adopted to try to restore welfare, social justice, respect of nature and of man, by actions appropriated to the conditions that arises. It is only in this way that we can consider a strategy of upgrading for Constantine.

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