INTRODUCTION
The present work follows in conception, form, structure and title its predecessor, i.e. the first book in the series: On Housing and Physical Planning - Selected Papers From International Conferences, Cairo 1987. A series which we hope and will work to continue; bringing together some of the fruits of our published work and research contributions.

From the conception viewpoint, the present work shares the three directives that influenced the first volume’s form and purpose and which were spelled out to justify the wisdom of collecting separate and individually published works in one volume accessible to those involved and/or interested in Third World & Egyptian Development (physical and other wise).

The three directives may be summarized as follows:

- to continue to put together selected features of the physical development context in Egypt through its two major constituents: physical planning and housing, in an integrated work combining: objectives, approaches and action streams on one level and determinants, alternatives and products on another. This is achieved through sectorial and comprehensive analysis and attempts to read and to explain the development context during a relatively short period extending between the publication of the first work in 1987 and till the end of 1989.

- to prove that the gap separating theory and practice or that extends between rational approaches and adopted policies & implementation can be bridged and surmounted.

- to emphasize the importance of collecting scattered research polemics and discourses in a concise book that may allow following up, evaluation and criticism to all concerned.

As for the form and structure, this work greatly benefited from its predecessor. It combines unity and coherence, clarity and rational structure. It comprises articulated and easy to follow parts that shifts from the micro to the macro and from the particular to the comprehensive while maintaining their relative independence.

The structure thus allows the work to be treated as an integrated whole without denying the reader the freedom of movement through its parts regardless of its sequential format.
The research papers were generally classified into three levels:
- Buildings and building contexts.
- Sites and settings.
- Macro contexts (combining: directives, conceptions, general structures and expressions).

The above classification faced two practical and conceptual problems, namely:
- the multitude of levels and scopes covered by the papers which allow a variety of classifications,
- the importance of separating Arabic from English articles and its effect on classification and sequence.

The two problems were solved through the formulation of an optimum sequence for the structure and organization that combines clarity and practicality and the bilingual organization of the book (where the Arabic section contains the Arabic papers and synopsis of the English and vice versa).

As for the title, the present work partly retains the title of the preceding volume with a minor modification. It replaces "selected papers from international conferences" by "selected published papers" which better describes the nature of its contents.

To reiterate, the general logic behind the sequence and organization of the present work is based on contextual levels and thematic harmony. The contents shift from the particular to the general without sacrificing the necessary coverage of related realms and levels. This reflects the complex nature of the present work in terms of scope, contents and details. In short, the above features make it rather difficult to effectively summarize the contents and logic of the adopted sequence, as the outline of its elements, conceptions and directives which are presented below, clearly show.

The first paper looks into the optimum size of small scale communities and related services within local areas from the viewpoints of users' identity and socio-economic development objectives.

The second study compares and evaluates the two major approaches to shelter provision for low income groups in developing nations, namely: formal mass housing and informal housing developments. The merits and
drawbacks of both are then outlined and means of combining their potentials in future shelter projects are presented.

The third paper presents a tool for the evaluation of infrastructure cost in housing layouts. The chapter introduces conceptions, an overview and brief analysis of selected layouts from existing Egyptian settlements, to understand, abstract and present their basic components. It then illustrates the use of the suggested tool, possible applications and potentials.

The fourth paper includes a critical review of basic planning units, covered by the earlier three studies. It looks into the application of the neighbourhood concept in Egyptian new towns. It then critically addresses its appropriateness as a basic planning unit in the light of the closely related issues of: local identity, community realization and service facilities provision and location.

The fifth discourse shifts to the physical aspects of shelter provision in developing countries. It stresses the gap between current practice and appropriate means of spatial organization of low cost housing projects. Means of bridging the distance between real and affordable costs of shelter and environs are then highlighted.

The sixth study focuses on community facilities as a key element in physical and comprehensive development of existing and new communities through a brief review of the experience of community facilities planning in Egypt. The paper puts forward basic concepts to improve service facilities planning form an urban design viewpoint.

The seventh paper shifts to the imbalance, in new settlements' development, between industrial provisions & projects (and related job opportunities supply) on the one hand and the effective settlement of the labourers on the other. It points out: the causes, means of restoring balance and approaches to modify and adjust adopted housing policies.

The following three studies present three perspectives into the problem of physical and housing development in Egypt and similar contexts.

Section eight compares houses on plots and apartment blocks, which are arguably the cores of the two distinct approaches to housing development in Egypt and developing nations. The merits of each approach are
presented and the need for further investigation and detailed comparative evaluation (economic & otherwise) are pointed-out.

The ninth study looks into the physical aspects of shelter enablement and reviews the roles and relations between designers and shelterless communities and demand groups. It stresses the need for the modification of: stereo type mechanisms, relations and products to secure better and effective shelter provision. It also emphasizes a number of notions to reduce the cost of shelter and settings.

The tenth note attempts to concentrate the previously mentioned principles and bases for physical and housing development in developing nations, with special reference to the problem of basic planning units, hierarchy and expressions as means of territorial and communal identity realization and enhancement. The paper reviews selected features of an integrated planning approach towards securing territorial and communal identity. The approach is based on the clear identification of planning levels and the effective utilization of an appropriate basic planning unit.

Sections eleven and twelve register a timely shift into the larger frameworks for physical development in developing nations.

Section eleven looks into the conception and relative importance of urban design and stresses its importance in the development processes in limited resources settings. It points the inherent relations between urban design and the local identity of communities and the character of societies.

The twelfth study concludes the sequential discourse of the development process and its constituents through a critical look into the conceptions of: local culture and civilization, heritage and urban character. It confirms the close relation between architectural and urban products and socio cultural frameworks and stresses the importance of committed understanding of local cultures and respecting their determinants in development drives.

The above synoptic overview of the form and contents of the present work clearly shows the wide and expansive ranges of its concerns and directives. It also hints at the continuity of thoughts and conceptions in the structure and contents of its discourses and studies. Through which it is possible to trace a continuous stream of research
into housing and physical development issues as well as a matrix of concepts and hypotheses related to its various aspects. The stream and matrix are combined into a rational framework that owes its features to the dialectics of theory and practice in the realms of: housing, physical planning and development formulated and experienced by the authors during the past decade. Hence, it is justifiable to claim that the prime merit of the present work stems from its attempt to bring together unity and diversity on the one hand and its endeavours to achieve rational fitness between the Egyptian development context and the wilful search, by the authors, for: answers to, patterns of and hypotheses on development problems and challenges, on the other.

This volume together with its predecessor may thus be treated as an integrated whole that, in spite of the range of its coverage only amounts to an open-ended contribution to the field of housing and development planning. A fact that points out the inherent need for positive support and further elaboration through review, criticism and meticulous evolution. An effort that we hope to share with those concerned and that we will endeavour to undertake.

Cairo, 8th November, 1990.