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The UN Secretary General visits Oman



UN secretary General is welcomed by Mr. Frode Mauring- Resident Coordinator a.i.UAE, Oman & Qatar (from right) Mr. Asr Toson -UNFPA GCC Representative, Ms. Nora Ourabah Haddad - FAO Representative, Ms. Maha Damaj, UNICEF Programme Manager, and Ms. Hamda Al Kharusih, WHO Programme Assistant

On 14th of February 2017, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General (SG) of the United Nations arrived on a day-long visit to the Sultanate of Oman, along with a delegation. Guterres was received by H E Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs in Oman.

Following that, the UN staff members: Mr. Frode Mauring –Resident Coordinator a.i, UAE, Oman & Qatar, Mr. Asr Toson-UNFPA GCC Representative, Ms. Maha Damaj-UNICEF Programme Manager, Ms. Nora Ourabah Haddad - FAO Representative, Ms. Hamda Al Kharusih-WHO Programme Assistant, welcomed the SG and had a terse meeting with him.

The SG was briefed about UNFPA's work in Oman and GCC area. He had some insightful questions regarding population development, youth issues/ empowerment and gender equality.

Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative was delegated to lead the UNCT interaction, given his seniority as a member of the UNCT in Oman. The attending staff members were given the opportunity to provide inputs in this interactive meeting. Mr. Toson provided the SG with a detailed overview of office activities in the sub-region in general with a focus on addressing the national development priorities.

At the end of the meeting, the SG thanked all agencies working in the country, and expressed his gratitude to the undertakings of UNFPA in the region and the UN country team members in Oman.

ALWANE Bahrain delegation visits UNFPA GCC



End of the visit group photo featuring Alwane team, UNFPA GCC staff members

On 2nd of March 2017, UNFPA GCC received a delegation from ALWANE Bahrain, which is one of the committees of SME development society of Bahrain that established in 2010. The Active Leaders for Women Advancement in the Near East (ALWANE) is a Bahraini forum of leaders committed to the advancement of women's leadership by using innovative technologies and engaging young new voices. The ALWANE Society has been established by Women Campaign International (WCI), which is a nonprofit association that enables like-minded individuals to come together to share knowledge through a network of learning and professional development supporting women to become economically independent.

During the visit, UNFPA GCC Representative, Mr. Asr Toson, welcomed the delegation and explored possibilities of co-operation between UNFPA GCC and ALWANE, since there are several common areas of mandate, including women empowerment, gender equality and youth development.

Through the meeting, ALWANE President, Mr. Ammar Awachi, and ALWANE Consultant, Mr. Mohamed Al Ahmadi, discussed the recent initiatives of ALWANE aiming at enhancing women economic empowerment by establishing incubators and micro-credit programmes to assist women in launching their small businesses and develop their technical and social skills.

Mr. Salah Al-Saleh, UNFPA GCC Programme Analyst, highlighted UNFPA's mandate and scope of work, in addition to the current programmes of the sub-regional office with the government partners in Oman particularly which aim at developing women skills, empowering youth and enhancing the public regulations and policies to mainstream gender equality and population issues in the development process.

UNFPA GCC participates in Oman MoH national workshop on Motherhood and Childhood

On 4/1/2017, at Holiday Hotel Muscat, the Woman and Child Health Department, Ministry of Health of the Sultanate of Oman, held the National Workshop for Woman and Child Healthcare.

UNFPA GCC was invited to attend this significant national activity which was held under the auspicious of Dr. Said Al Lamki -Director General of Primary Health Care at the Ministry of Health. Ms. Shaima Aly, UNFPA GCC programme/communication associate attended to represent the office. The workshop was a great opportunity for the attendants to discuss several persistent issues. The first presentation was given by Dr. Fatima Al Hinai-Director of the Department of Women's and Children's Health, on strengthening the preconception services. That was followed by presentations on the prenatal mortality in Oman, and the near miss findings of maternal near miss review.

The workshop was composed of three sessions, during the first one, Dr. Hanan Al Muhrooqi, Family Health Consultant at Ministry of Health gave a presentation on the Birth Spacing initiative and its related updates in Muscat. During the second session, there were presentations given by Dr. Nawal Al Rashdi—Head of Women Health Department at the Ministry of Health on a study of maternal and fetal outcome in Diabetes Mellitus and implications of early pregnancy obesity on maternal, fetal and neonatal health in Oman.

The event also included prize awarding to the winners from different governorates in the Birth Spacing Competition. Furthermore, the workshop featured displaying many hand-paintings presented by female adolescent students from several schools in the country, which all representing the young mothers' challenges to foster their children and the risks resulted from overlooking birth spacing.



Hand paint showcases the mother's challenges to foster her family displayed on the margin of the MoH national workshop on motherhood and childhood

Painting by: Jameela Al Memaria—tenth grade, Muscat

Joint message from UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin and UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

6 of February 2017

The world must make faster progress to end female genital mutilation by 2030

It irreparably damages girls' bodies, inflicting excruciating pain. It causes extreme emotional trauma that can last a lifetime.

It increases the risk of deadly complications during pregnancy, labor and childbirth, endangering both mother and child.

It robs girls of their autonomy and violates their human rights.

It reflects the low status of girls and women and reinforces gender inequality, fueling intergenerational cycles of discrimination and harm.

It is female genital mutilation. And despite all the progress we have made toward abolishing this violent practice, millions of girls -- many of them under the age of 15 -- will be forced to undergo it this year alone. Sadly, they will join the almost 200 million girls and women around the world who are already living with the damage FGM causes -- and whose communities are already affected by its impact.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals recognized the close connection between FGM, gender inequality, and development -- and reignited global action to end FGM by 2030.

In 2016, more than 2,900 communities, representing more than 8.4 million people living in countries where UNFPA and UNICEF work jointly to end FGM, declared they had abandoned the practice.

In 2017, we must demand faster action to build on this progress. That means calling on governments to enact and enforce laws and policies that protect the rights of girls and women and prevent FGM/C.

It means creating greater access to support services for those at risk of undergoing FGM and those who have survived it. It also means driving greater demand for those services, providing families and communities with information about the harm FGM causes -- and the benefits to be gained by ending it.

And ultimately, it means families and communities taking action themselves and refusing to permit their girls to endure the violation of FGM.

Let us make this the generation that abolishes FGM once and for all -- and in doing so, helps create a healthier, better world for all.

UNFPA GCC marks the International Women's Day

On March 8 every year, the world celebrates women around the globe and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been always ticking this significant date on its events calendar.

This year UNFPA sub-regional office for the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries marked this day by holding a press conference to feature the statement made by the UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin. Several local newspapers accentuated this statement in their publications.

During the press conference, Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative underlined the importance of universal access to health services as the key to gender equality.

Quoting the statement made by UNFPA Executive Director, Mr. Toson mentioned that "Gender equality is vital to sustainable development, peace and security. It's not just a women's issue. It's an issue for all of humanity," Mr. Toson said. "Together, we can empower women, advance gender equality and ensure a more prosperous and sustainable future for all of us," he added.

On the national level, Mr. Toson praised the developments achieved by the government of Oman which secured access to the needed health services by women, stressing that UNFPA is always prepared and available to continue the co-operation with the government and provide the needed technical assistance to the respective authorities in the country, including Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development, to ensure equity in health service availability and provision.



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The United Nations Population Fund: Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA—Because everyone counts!

GCC SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE