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## UNFPA negotiating humanitarian assistance grants for Syrians and Yemenis

As the United Nations intensifies its humanitarian efforts to respond to the ongoing crisis in Syria and Yemen, *UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries*, in cooperation with UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) is currently negotiating two major grants with the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and King Salman Center (KSC), in order to ensure safe birth for pregnant women and to prevent and respond to gender-based violence affecting distressed women in both countries.

The first grant under negotiation is of \$3 million to be provided by SFD, which is intended to be used for supplying necessary commodities and humanitarian assistance to the Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. The second negotiated prospective grant shall be offered by the newly established King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Aid, which would worth up to \$2.5 million allocated for Yemen humanitarian assistance in the area of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and reproductive health. Those negotiations came in line with UNFPA's

undertaking to relieve humanitarian crisis in both countries, which involves reaching out to mothers and pregnant women who reside in the conflict-affected areas and who are in dire need of maternal services.

The establishment of the King Salman Center (KSC) for Humanitarian Aid gave a good sign that reflects the commitment of the Saudi government, being a major donor, to provide the sought humanitarian assistance, which is demonstrated by the Saudi's declaration to cover the entire \$274 million in humanitarian aid requested by the United Nations for war-torn Yemen. It is noteworthy that KSC was recently established to coordinate relief and humanitarian activities planned by the Saudi government in Yemen. The Center also is assigned with the role of channeling Saudi fund through UN agencies to Yemen.

Despite of these successes, challenges continue with resources mobilization, competition among UN agencies and donors fatigue resulting from protracted crisis in many Arab countries. Resources mobilization became more challenging

than ever as donors have to choose among several pressing priorities, while taking into account the national interest.

It will be recalled that up to July, UNFPA has provided reproductive health kits, worth \$500,000, to serve more than 1.8 million women. These kits include supplies for saving the lives of women and newborns during deliveries, managing miscarriages, and treating infections and rape, as well as contraceptives for family planning users.

Through the Yemeni Women's Union and other partners, dignity kits worth \$850,000 are being distributed to ease the adversity of women. So far, 26,000 kits with essential items, such as clothes, soap, towels and flashlights, have been disbursed in Sana'a and other governorates. Additional kits will be distributed when the security situation allows it.

Furthermore, UNFPA is also supporting psychosocial counselling for displaced women and children in Sana'a, as well as services to respond to gender-based violence in conflict-affected areas.

## Population Development

# UNFPA-GCC Representative visits Bahrain

Since its inauguration in 2006, the UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has been keen to establish strong ties with governmental and non-governmental partners in the GCC countries. In that spirit, Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA-GCC Representative visited Bahrain on July 8-10, 2015 in order to raise awareness among Bahraini partners on UNFPA role and mandate, resources mobilization and advocate for support to UNFPA position during the negotiation process by UN member states of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Mr. Toson set off the visit by meeting Dr. Nabeel Bin Shams, Director General of Statistics at the Central Informatics Organization (CIO) in Bahrain, where they discussed potential areas for co-operation, possibly through the establishment of a trust fund to provide for technical assistance to CIO in the areas of population development and demographic statistics. The Representative solicited support of the Bahraini government to UNFPA's position in the inter-governmental negotiations related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that

were taking place by member states in the United Nations, New York. UNFPA position is to prioritize, within SDGs agenda, issues related to its mandate of Reproductive Health, Youth, Gender Equality and Population Development.

This was followed by a meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Dr. Sheikha Rana Alkhalifa, Assistant Under-Secretary for Arab & Afro-Asian Affairs and international Organizations, where Mr. Toson explained UNFPA position regarding SDGs process, targets and indicators, and advocated for support from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to UNFPA position in that regard. The Representative briefed her on UNFPA role as a humanitarian as well as development actor in the international arena and advocated for Bahraini government support to UNFPA resources. He also highlighted the organization's activities in Syria and other Arab crisis countries where UNFPA played a significant role in addressing the needs of most vulnerable groups, i.e. women, girls and adolescents within humanitarian context in areas related to Reproductive Health and Gender based violence.

Moreover, Mr. Toson had a meeting with Mrs. Dhawiya Al Alawi, Assistant Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Women in Bahrain and other top officials at the Council, where the two parties discussed UNFPA's role regarding women development, particularly within humanitarian context, as well as the possibilities of co-operation in the areas of gender equality. The UNFPA-GCC Representative advocated for support to UNFPA humanitarian assistance to Arab crisis countries and explored possibility for a trust fund in the field of women development, family and population development. The Supreme Council for Women expressed an interest in approaching UNFPA on ad hoc basis for technical assistance.

Finally, the UNFPA-GCC Representative ended his visit by meeting Mr. Peter Grohmann, UNDP Resident Representative & UN Resident Coordinator. The two parties discussed UNFPA participation in the development of the common country strategic framework for Bahrain and UNFPA supports to the national priorities in terms of population and development.

## Workshop on Population Situation Analysis in the Arab Region

Given the importance of the Population Situation Analysis (PSA) as one of the deliverables of the UNFPA Strategic Plan and UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) Regional Programme (2014-2017), it is critical to position the region and countries to support and facilitate the conduct of PSA. To this end, UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, in collaboration with UNFPA HQ Technical Division organized a 3-day regional capacity strengthening training workshop on PSA, which was attended by Population Development Focal points of UNFPA Country Offices. The training workshop was held in Cairo on August 10-12, 2015. UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, represented by Mr. Salah Al-Saleh, UNFPA-GCC Programme Analyst, participated in this training.

The Population Situation Analysis (PSA) is an institutional priority for UNFPA to support countries in their evidence-based policy formulation and programming. Therefore, the overall objective of the training was to strengthen the regional and national capacity in PSA, building on experience and lessons learned from other regions and countries. PSA serves as an analytical contribution from the population perspective, thus it constitutes a key resource in the process of the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development

Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) in order to better harmonize the support provided to the countries by UNFPA and the United Nations System at large. The Population Situation Analysis expresses UNFPA's commitment to mainstream population dynamics, reproductive health and gender issues into the National Development Strategies, explicitly adopting a human rights, culture and gender perspective.

The knowledge generated through the PSA process will provide UNFPA-GCC with the factual knowledge needed to integrate population dynamics and their inter-linkages with gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS into policy-making. Moreover, it will mainstream UNFPA's mandate into policy dialogue with GCC countries governments and other UN agencies.

During the training, participants became acquainted with PSA structure, principles and processes. Participants also learned and enhanced their knowledge and skills on the thematic areas covered by PSA, i.e. Objectives, Content and Rationale of (PSA) Processes; Population Dynamics and Sexual and Reproductive Health in the Context of Economic and Social Processes; and Other References for the Elaboration of the Population Situation Analysis.

On the other hand, it also provided an opportunity for HQ and ASRO to reflect, based on ground knowledge of COs about available resources and governments priorities, on various alternatives to implement a PSA that



Mr. Mohamed Abdel-Ahad, UNFPA Regional Director for Arab States, during PSA opening speech.

include a full-fledged one as shown in the CO example of Nigeria, a partial one as shown in the CO example of Irak or revising existing country strategies based on available analyzed data. The workshop served as an introduction forum for PSA, as well as a platform to share experiences and lessons learned and establishing a regional resource network for PSA aiming at supporting countries in their policy formulation and decision making process.

## Youth

## AMIDEAST students visit GCC Office

A cohort of 14 AMIDEAST students and one faculty member from University of Nebraska (NE) visited UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in Muscat, Oman on July 28, 2015 to learn about the UN system and UNFPA, and its mandate and their work in the GCC in specific. The goals of the visit were to provide the students with an overview of the UN and UNFPA work in Oman, touching on topics such as development, sustainability, economy, history and culture. The tour was arranged by AMIDEAST to facilitate a cultural learning experience for the undergraduate students.

UNFPA GCC Office Representative Mr. Asr Toson gave a lecture on the operations of the organization and the sub-regional office programmes, which cover the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: the Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Kuwait, State of Qatar, Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates. “UNFPA expands the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy and productive lives. The GCC office provides programmatic and operational technical support to the GCC countries to assure the integration of population and development, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, youth and gender in the national development plans and policies,” said Mr. Toson. UNFPA GCC office representative also shared the different programmes of other UN agencies in the Arab region. “UNFPA anticipates and responds to tomorrow's challenges today. Our office assists GCC relevant government partner agencies in using population data to assess and anticipate needs, and to monitor progress and gaps in delivering development promises.



UNFP GCC Office Representative Mr. Asr Toson, meets with AMIDEAST delegation

We provide technical assistance, training and support to empower our partners and colleagues in the field,” he added. For the students, this visit was an invaluable opportunity to learn more about UNFPA’s programmes, UNFPA’S col-

continued.. laboration with the Omani government, and areas of interest. Through the visit, they gained knowledge and insight about how the United Nations operates generally and UNFPA's goals and mandate specifically. They had the chance to ask questions on humanitarian crisis issues of the region, learn about the successful UNFPA GCC office programmes such as the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) and be inspired by UNFPA experts. "Students have learned about the

Omani Y-PEERs education method through their innovative Edutainment tools and activities," said University of Nebraska academic staff member, Dr. Chris Allen.

"After visiting the UNFPA I realized the important role UN playing across the Globe and I'm impressed about the programmes done by UNFPA lead Y-PEERs in GCC," said Taylor Dibble- AMIDEAST student.

AMIDEAST is a leading American non-profit organization engaged in

international education, training and development activities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). It was founded in 1951. In its early years, the organization focused on promoting U.S. study to students in the MENA region and managing U.S. scholarships and exchanges. AS-MIDEAST works to improve education and strengthen local institutions, as well as develop language and professional skills critical for success in the global economy.

## Y-PEER Bahrain leads off Peer Education programme in schools

Building on Y-PEER Bahrain efforts, including the peer educational sessions and exercises held in 2014 at Um Kulthom Intermediate Girls School in Manana, the Y-PEER Bahrain participated in a series of partnership meetings with Bahrain National School Health Programme, Ministry of Health (MOH), during the period from January to June 2015.

The meetings were held in cooperation with the MOH and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to develop a plan of action in order to increase the outreach of peer education in Bahrain schools. These meetings were attended by Dr. Ashwaq Sabt, Consultant Family Physician and Coordinator of Youth and Adolescent Health Programme, MOH, and Mr. Ahmed Saad,

School Health Specialist, MOE, as well as Mr. Ahmed Fadhul, Y-PEER Bahrain Focal Point (FP) in-charge and Mr. Abdulla Qamber, FP.

The meetings discussed many subjects, such as introducing, continuing and expanding peer education programme to students at schools aiming at addressing different health and civic concerns. The future work plans also include training peer educators and training one female teacher at least in each school on the peer education programme, goals and the modality to address the health needs of the students, especially adolescent girl students. Furthermore, the Y-PEER FP also discussed the health promotion activities introduced by Y-PEERs to the ministries' representatives.

During the meetings, Mr. Ahmed, presented the Youth Peer Education Toolkit and Standards for Peer Education Programmes, which were commended by the attendants. The Y-PEER Bahrain will undertake these discussed activities soon based on the action plan resulted from these meetings.

Y-PEER is a youth network of young people from more than 700 non-profit organizations and government agencies in more than 50 countries initiated by UNFPA on the use of an integrated approach to working with young people, with the active participation of young people themselves.

## Youth

## UNFPA Participates in Salalah Tourism Festival

Following the successful participation in 2015 Muscat festival, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, sub-regional office for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries and Y-PEER (Youth Peer Education Network) Oman participated in the 2015 Salalah Tourism Festival (STF) from the 13th to 21st of August 2015, in collaboration

and tourist seasonal destination. Over the years, it has earned a reputation as being one of the best summer destinations in the Middle East.

As part of the preparation activities, the Y-PEER Oman network organized a full day training for 10 members at the MOH HIV/AIDS Section venue in Muscat

date, Y-PEERs nature and work, and raised awareness about HIV/AIDS prevention. Their stand was a highlight at the festival due to their enthusiasm and fun methodology used to outreach to their audience; such as their established “Edutainment” mode which combines education and entertainment.



Y-PEER Network member interacting during Salalah Tourism Festival

with the Ministry of Health (MoH) HIV/AIDS section.

STF is an annual festival held in the Omani city of Salalah starting from mid-July to the end of August. The city is famous for its beautiful weather and nature during the autumn (Khareef) season; making it a popular va-

on 13th of August. On August 14-21, nine trained Y-PEERs took part in 2015 STF and raised awareness among their peers at “Itin” Festival Ground.

UNFPA and Y-PEERs advocated during the nine days at the festival about UNFPA’s man-

Members grabbed attention of visitors by presenting a shadow technique theater performance of a young person with HIV and the triggered stigma reaction of his surrounding environment. Followed by the play, a young female Y-PEER facilitated the discussion about the play’s plot

continued.. and the characters behavior, stigmatizing their peer, and lead a questions and answers (Q&A) session utilizing educational billboards of HIV/AIDS facts and figures prepared by MOH HIV/AIDS Section. Both, the play and Q&A session were met with high interest and achieved the target of educating the present audience due to the addressed topics of HIV/AIDS and its various ways of correct & false perception of transmission. To assess the visitors' awareness about HIV/AIDS, the network members conducted a short survey based on a MOH questionnaire.

The Y-PEERs also used innovative methods like games, posters, banners, paintings, question and answer sessions etc., in order to educate the youth about "Youth Civic Engagement" to commemorate the 2015 International Youth Day. Network

members also undertook various topics of concern like road safety, drug and environmental issues during the festival. The activities were interactive and educational, delivered in genuine 'edutainment' Y-PEER methodology. Y-PEERs also held competitions and distributed prizes at the festival venue.

The Y-PEERs actions focused on raising awareness of the network, MOH and UNFPA mandate in general, highlighting its presence in the GCC and how the public can get involved to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

"Our network disseminates messages especially on HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination through innovative activities" said Y-PEER Oman

Assistant Focal Point, Ms. Hanaa Said Sulaiyam Al Senadi. Furthermore, she added, "the activities were extremely successful and reached a large base of the population, both nationals and expatriates that frequent the festival during this time."

It is worth mentioning that the Y-PEER is a youth network, of young people from more than 700 non-profit organizations and government agencies in more than 50 countries, initiated by UNFPA on the use of an integrated approach to working with young people, with the active participation of young people themselves. The international network was established by an interdepartmental group on youth, development and protection of the UN and with the support of UNFPA, which supported the young people in their need to train young people on health.



Y-PEER Network member interacting during Salalah Tourism Festival

## Population Development

# UNFPA-ASRO signs a Memorandum of Understanding with DIFI

In June 2015, UNFPA, the United Nation's Population Fund, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science and Community Development. The MoU was signed by Mr. Mohamed Abdel-Ahad, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States Regional Office (ASRO), and H.E. Noor Al-Malki Al-Jehani, the Executive Director of the DIFI.

UNFPA mission is to assist governments with respect of formulation, adoption and implementation of their population policies and development strategies. Additionally, the Organization has in-depth expertise in the field of development and cooperation in Reproductive Health, Gender, Population and Development integrating a human rights based and culturally sensitive approach. Meanwhile, DIFI supports QF's mission to contribute to human development and productive change by contributing to the global knowledge base on issues facing the Arab family, encouraging knowledge exchange, ensuring prioritization by policy-makers, and pro-

moting Qatar's transformation into a successful knowledge-based economy.

From this perspective, UNFPA and DIFI share a desire to establish a productive collaboration, with the aim of promoting and enhancing mutual cooperation and addressing Arab family issues. Thereupon, the MoU was made to emphasize the common goals between UNFPA and DIFI, since both parties are aiming at promoting more sustainable economic and social development based on principles of human rights and family, towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Upon this MoU, UNFPA and DIFI will work jointly to engage the civil society in order to raise awareness on the importance of the family and unacceptable practices such as child/early marriage, empowering women and involving men and powerful stakeholders through advocacy and policy dialogue. "The partnership will utilize UNFPA's international experience and DIFI's strong research capacity and regional outreach to technically support

DIFI's flagship report on the 'State of Arab Family'. DIFI's study is based on the lessons learned and best practices from UNFPA's 'State of the World Population' report; transferring experiences from a global to a regional level", says Mr. Mohamed Abdel-Ahad, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States. H.E. Noor Al Malki Al-Jehani, Executive Director of DIFI, stated "The MoU will provide opportunities for capacity building, exchange and transfer of best practices, research and studies. It will also provide a framework for working with UNFPA on joint projects and advocacy activities that will enhance the role of both organizations in attaining human and sustainable development goals in the region."

Eventually, the planning, implementation and monitoring of the proposed collaboration requires that the parties work together intently, while maintaining effective mechanisms for regular consultation and joint coordination meetings and activities, which will build the capacities of both organizations and develop the mutual aspects of cooperation in their areas of mandate.





**United Nations Population Fund**

Sub-Regional Office for GCC Countries

**UNFPA, 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!**

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