

# GCC Sub-Regional Office



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## UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits Oman



UN SG Mr. Ban Ki-moon meets UNFPA GCC Representative Mr. Asr Toson and other UN agencies staff in Muscat

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, made an official visitation to Oman on 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2016. High profile with complex schedule of meetings coupled with an extensive logistical arrangements, the visit was coordinated by two selected UN agencies, UNFPA, represented by UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and UNICEF of Oman. The visit strengthened UNFPA visibility in Oman and provided a platform to bring its mandate to the forefront of media coverage.

During Mr. Ban's second-time visit as a Secretary-General to Oman, he met with H.H. *Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister* for the *Council of Ministers*, and H.H. *Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah*, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs. During the meeting with Mr. Abdullah, the UN Secretary-General extended his appreciation to the efforts exerted by Oman government in the peace making process in the region. The parties discussed establishing a UN Green House in Muscat, where all UN agencies can operate

## Population Development

*“I am really here to salute Oman’s contributions to our global community – and in particular your commitment to the cause of peace and to the Charter of the United Nations.”*

from one unified place, which will substantially reduce the operational costs, and ensure coherence and better coordination among the existing agencies. The Minister suggested that a team from UN and Ministry should meet to discuss the details and establish a concrete proposal for the government in this regard. The parties also discussed the cooperation aspects between Oman and the UN and means of enhancing them.

On the first day of his visit, Mr. Ban also met with Oman UN Staff at the Diplomatic Club, Muscat. The meeting started with UAE, UN Resident Coordinator (RC) Mr. Frode Muring, who welcomed UN Secretary-General and the attending staff members. The RC thanked the UN Secretary-General for his essential contribution to the success of the UN globally, the recent 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Followed by the welcoming note, UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA and WHO representatives gave short presentations on the work done by the respective UN funds and agencies. UNFPA-GCC representative, Mr. Asr Toson, addressed in his presentation the key achievements attained through the close collaboration with the government, including the technical support provided in population and development and in reproductive

health as well as the assistance offered in gender equality and youth development.

Mr. Ban urged Oman UN Staff to lead by example. “I will count on UN staff for efforts to build a safer, more sustainable future for all. Together, we can address today’s threats and seize the great opportunities of our era,” Mr. Ban said.

During his visit, the Secretary-General addressed the National Defense College of Oman, where he spoke about conflict prevention. He thanked Oman for its key role as a bridge builder for peace, as well as for its recent financial contribution for conflict prevention. He also thanked the Sultanate for helping the United Nations digitize its audiovisual archives, being a prime mover of this critical undertaking for the UN, its history and its past. “Oman is helping us digitize the audiovisual archives of the United Nations. Thanks to you, audiovisual documents dating back to our founding 70 years ago, and that tell the story of the United Nations, will be preserved for all time,” Mr. Ban said.

He added, “I am really here to salute Oman’s contributions to our global community – and in particular your commitment to the cause of peace and to the Charter of the United Nations.

I commend your country’s unique role of bringing people together – of facilitating dialogue and finding common ground.”



UNICEF Muscat Oman senior personnel Ms. Farasha Al-Akbary delivers an honor shield to the UN SG

## UNFPA-ASRO Regional Advisor-Population & Development visits Oman

UNFPA has been engaged in assisting and providing Technical Assistance (TA) to the governments in the areas of Population and Development, Reproductive Health, Youth and Gender issues, integrating a human rights based and culturally sensitive approach. Given its mandate, UNFPA cooperates with and assists governments with respect to the formulation, adoption and implementation of their population policies and development strategies.

Based on the coordination and facilitation provided by UNFPA's Sub-regional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries, UNFPA ASRO is developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat), which will provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration between the Parties in areas of common interest. The MOU aims at establishing a "collaboration", enhancing the mutual exchange and cooperation with GCC-Stat, and advancing the population and development agenda in the GCC countries based on the national priorities, in cooperation with UNFPA.

In order to develop this MOU, Mr. Luay Shabaneh, the Regional Advisor-Population & Development for Arab States at UNFPA-ASRO, visited Oman on 7th of February 2016, where he met H.E Mr. Saber Bin Saed. Al-Harbi, Director General of GCC-STAT. The two parties discussed

the proposed cooperation, which will provide technical assistance to GCC-Stat and facilitate the implementation of joint projects in the common interest areas. The MOU aims also at exchanging and transferring of best practice; research and studies; advocacy activities that enhance the role of both Parties in attaining the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.

At the sideline of his visit to Oman, Mr. Shabaneh met with Mr. Yaqoob Al Zidjali, Acting Director of Social and Population Statistics at the National Center Statistical Information (NCSI), where they discussed the aspects of co-operation. Then, he paid a visit to Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), where he met with several staff members headed by H.H. Dr. Mona bint Fahad Al Said, Assistant Vice Chancellor of International Cooperation at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). Mr. Shabaneh discussed the technical support provided to Sultanate of Oman and the importance of population statistics and timely population related data and indicators.

## Health & Women

### UNFPA GCC co-operates with WHO and Oman MoH to develop IEC plan of action on Birth Spacing Program

The joint review of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted in 2013, as well as the results of their joint qualitative study implemented in 2015 to strengthen the birth spacing program, indicated that there is a considerable degree of misconception regarding the birth spacing program persisting among the population. They also referred to some barriers to the utilization of contraceptives, both at service and community levels.

Therefore, UNFPA GCC and WHO in Oman agreed to implement a Joint Program Review Mission (JPRM) during this year, focusing on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Plan of Action on the Birth Spacing Program. According to this plan of action, WHO, supported by UNFPA, has commissioned a consultant to perform this mission in May and June 2016. The consultant will review the latest IEC Plans, assist in developing a new plan for the next 3 – 5 years, conduct an IEC training for community nurses, health educators and community support group volunteers, and submit a final report including recommendations for action.

The goal of the Birth Spacing Program adopted by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Oman is to improve the health of mothers, children and families, and reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. The objectives of the program are to provide a choice of safe and modern

methods to clients, and to provide the necessary skills to the health providers in order to ensure quality service delivery, as well as to raise awareness of the benefits of spacing for the well-being of mothers, children and their families. The program is highly supported by the Ministry's international partners (WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF), which provided technical, logistical and financial assistance. For promoting birth spacing, national communication plans were developed by the Department of Family and Community Health, in coordination with concerned departments at the MoH and representatives from all governorates. Moreover, several mass awareness campaigns are conducted yearly all over the Omani governorates to promote birth spacing.

*“UNFPA GCC and WHO in Oman agreed to implement a Joint Program Review Mission (JPRM) during this year, focusing on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Plan of Action on the Birth Spacing program.”*

## Statement on the Occasion of International Women's Day: Step It Up for Gender Equality

For millions of women and girls around the world, gender equality and the full enjoyment of human rights remain elusive.

For instance, nearly 14 million children are forced into marriage every year; that is 37,000 girls being denied their fundamental human rights every single day! Every day, 7.3 million babies in developing countries are born to mothers who are 17 or younger. One in three women is subject to gender-based violence, and 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation.

Today, on International Women's Day, I call on all countries to take action to protect the rights of women and girls and to rectify long-standing gender inequality.

Gender equality and equal protection of human rights, including the right to reproductive health, are important in and of themselves. But they are also a means to achieving internationally agreed-upon social and economic objectives, including the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the international community in September 2015. These goals emphasize the achievement of gender equality, good health and quality education for all and the elimination of poverty.

For more than four decades, UNFPA has helped improve women's health and advance their rights. The Fund will continue pushing the health and rights agenda through 2030, when the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved, and beyond, until all women and girls everywhere are on an equal footing with men and have the power and the means to exercise their basic human rights.

**UNFPA's Executive Director,  
Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin**

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## Y-PEER Oman participates in Muscat Festival



Y-PEERs receive and educate the public in 2016 Muscat Festival

*“The Y-PEERs used interactive games and tools that introduced information to the visitors about the signs and symptoms of drug abuse and appropriate manner to deal with drug abusers”*

Y-PEER Oman participated in the Muscat Festival, which was held on 5/01/2016-13/02/2016. During the Festival, and in co-operation with the National Committee for Narcotics & Psychotropic Substances (NCNPS), the active Y-PEERs informed the visitors about the current situation related to drug misuse, and raised awareness among the youth at the Festival. The Y-PEERs used interactive games and tools that introduced information to the visitors about the signs and symptoms of drug abuse and appropriate manner to deal with drug abusers, as well as the preventive measures against drug abusing. The awareness activities included information about treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, as well as health and lifestyle information. They also focused during the activities on the family role in protecting youth from drugs. The Y-PEERs offered awareness pamphlets including related useful information and souvenirs to the public participants.

This successful participation was preceded by orientation training to the Y-PEERs, which was held on 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2016, by UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, Sub-regional office for the Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC) Countries, in collaboration with National Committee for Narcotics & Psychotropic Substances (NCNPS). The objective of this training was to build knowledge of the Y-PEERs on drug issues and equip them to represent NCNPS during the Festival.

Y-PEER is an international youth-to-youth network of volunteers supported by UNFPA that has evolved into the largest grassroots network globally addressing the most pressing needs of young people within the framework of national needs and cultural context. Y-PEER is a network of more than 2,000 non-profit organizations and governmental institutions. It has over 33,000 young members from 59 countries who work in many areas pertaining to youth participation and empowerment.



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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