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United Nations Population Fund
Sub-Regional Office for GCC Countries

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State of World Population 2014: Report Launch

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UNFPA, The United Nations Population Fund GCC Sub regional office, launched its annual publication, State of the World Population Report (SWOP) 2014, a flagship report on the status of youth, across the Arab region in January. In Oman it launched during the Annual Muscat Festival in the presence of large young people at Naseem Gardens along

with Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER). There are about 1.8 billion world-wide, or about 18% of the world population of 7.3 billion young people aged 10 to 24 years. It is expected that this figure will continue to grow to reach nearly two billion by 2050, commented UNFPA GCC Representa-

be the inheritors of the new development agenda, they will also be the ones implementing it in the years to come," he said. "That is why it is imperative for us to include adolescents and youth in drafting and following the agenda, as well as ensuring that it meets the concerns of their generation globally."

According to the report, developing countries with a

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significant proportion of young people in the population can achieve a sharp acceleration of economic growth if they are to make significant investments in education and health of young people and protect their rights.

Yet, in a world of adult concerns, young people are often overlooked. This tendency cries out for urgent correction, because it imperils youth as well as economies and societies at large. Youth in today's large numbers may be improperly seen as a daunting challenge, a drain on scarce resources, or properly seen as the potential architects of a historic

transformation in human well-being.

Young people matter. They matter because an unprecedented 1.8 billion youth are alive today, and because they are the shapers and leaders of our Global future. They matter because they have inherent human rights that must be fulfilled.

To support the empowerments of young people in GCC countries, UNFPA together with the various government departments and directly working with Y-PEERs. Network members distributed a SWOP executive summary, USBs, book markers and other merchand-

dise along with a leaflet on UNFPA mandate during the launch as part of Edutainment activities like theatre performances, fortune pot question and answer and group discussions along with games and quiz were organized by the network at Naseem Gardens.

Motivated young people during the launch shared 'Youth of Oman has high potentiality in all sectors like hospitality, Banking and in engineering industry, recent decades Omanisation has given more strength, enabling atmosphere in young people's hand and especially to the women.

Young People orientation on comprehensive health

UNFPA GCC Organised a comprehensive health orientation to Y-PEERs in collaboration with Ministry of Health (MOH) and HIV AIDS Section at UNFPA office on 20th of January, 2015. The half day orientation facilitated by Dr. Mohammed Amin, MOH, who has been working with adolescents and youth for several years.

The objective of the orientation was to deliver comprehensive HIV response competency building among Y-PEERs, so adolescents and young people have the knowledge and life skills needed for a healthy and productive future.

Y-PEERs provide services that respect other peers Right, confidenti-

ality and do not judge, stigmatize or discriminate against them while sharing information such as STI, HIV and AIDS to their fellow young people. Y-PEERs through activity and by their nation presence create awareness on the trained topics.

Comprehensive Health Education, the Fund promotes comprehensive health education for both in- and out-of-school adolescents by promoting supportive national policies and health education is complemented by the use of information communication technologies such as the Internet and social media, improving young people's access to reliable information in Oman through Y-PEERs networks.

The Y-PEER, or youth peer education initiative, active throughout the region, trains hundreds of young people to be advocates for and sources of factual information on comprehensive health, and to act as mentors to their peers on these important life-shaping issues was stressed by UNFPA's programme Analysis Mr. Sal Al-Saleh during the session

On Central to this is UNFPA's ongoing work supporting youth policy development and implementation, and collecting and analysing data to form evidence-based policies and effective programming for National Youth Commission and Ministry of Health.



UNFPA & Y-PEER interacting during the training

International

59th session on the Status of Women

The UN Commission on the Status of Women concluded its 59th annual session with an agreement by UN Member States on steps to boost its efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

The fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9th to 20th of March 2015. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world attended the sessions.

Governments attending the meeting agreed on new working methods for the Commission to continue setting standards related to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and strengthen its role in global policy-making and coordination of actions around implementation. They affirmed the commission's central contributions to shaping the landmark post-2015 sustainable development agenda slated for adoption by a global summit of heads of state and government in September.

As the primary UN body for advancing intergovernmental commitments to gender equality and follow-up to the Beijing Platform, the Commission will further align its work to the Economic and Social Council and the new UN High-level Political Forum. This will strengthen efforts to integrate gender equality across all global debates and actions on sustainable development.

Since a large number of government ministers now attend the Commission, Member States agreed to create a ministerial segment starting at the next session in 2016. It is expected to heighten the visibility of current concerns, and offer opportunities to demonstrate high-level political commitment to accelerated progress towards gender equality, empowerment and the full realization of women's human rights.

Congratulating the Member States, civil society and the UN system for "a forceful, dynamic and forward-looking session", UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said in her speech, "We are all aware that there are no shortcuts to realizing gender equality, the empowerment of women and the hu-

man rights of women and girls. Based on the road we have travelled, we know that there are more challenges ahead of us. We know we must continue to work, systematically and relentlessly, to bring about transformation in our families, societies, economies, and political and public spaces," she added.

Governments agreed to sharpen focus of the Commission's annual review theme. Moving forward, case studies will demonstrate lessons learned in implementing commitments made in previous Commission sessions. The Secretary-General will issue a targeted report on progress on the theme, drawing on national data and other inputs. The process will help close gaps between promises made and measurable change, and offer concrete evidence of how international norms can be translated to make a major difference in the lives of women and girls.

In the lead-up to the session, a record-breaking 166 countries have also undertaken national reviews on the status of women, and rich contributors from civil society have been generated. These reviews, coupled with the UN Secretary-

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General's report on Beijing implementation, will be a central focus of CSW59, where leaders will review progress and formulate concrete recommendations to step up their efforts to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment touches

the lives of all women and girls worldwide

The 59th session included a range of high-level roundtables and panels on critical topics ranging from scaled-up financing for gender equality, to responsibilities of men and boys, to

improved gender-disaggregated data.

Discussions on lessons from the Millennium Development Goals will further shape the post-2015 development agenda.

International Women's Day 2015

During the past 20 years, we have witnessed remarkable advances in promoting the human rights and dignity of women and girls and their full and equal participation in society.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing bolstered progress for women's rights to make their own choices about their bodies and their futures.

For the first time, world leaders proclaimed comprehensive health and reproductive rights as human rights integral to gender equality and women's dignity and empowerment. These rights are essential for the enjoyment of other fundamental rights, for eradicating poverty and for achieving social justice and sustainable development.

On 8th March, the International Women's Day, we celebrate the progress we have made. And, we pledge to redouble efforts to complete these unfinished agendas. We will not stop until we cross

the finish line and realize equality between girls and boys and women and men.

Together, we have come a long way. Today, more girls are going to school, more women have joined the labour force, and more women have access to comprehensive health services, including birth spacing. As per the data published by Oman National Centre for Statistics and Information, percentage of working women in Government sector were 36.8% and in private 18.5% in 2009 and in 2013 it has grown up to 44.3% Government and 20.9% private sectors. Positive progressing trend also exhibited in Oman as illiteracy rate 18.4% in 2010, which is further reduced by various measures up to 12.9% in 2013. (Source: NCSI Statistical Year Book 2014)

The similar trend is also seen around education, health and empowerment of women in GCC countries. Maternal death has been cut in half and there is increased action to protect the health and rights of adolescent girls, a long overlooked popula-

tion.

Yet, while these trends hold great promise, overall progress has been slow, with stagnation and even regression in some contexts. No country in the world has achieved gender equality, and discrimination in the law persists in many countries. Women's rising education attainment and workforce participation have not been matched with equal prospects for advancement and equal pay.

Comprehensive health and reproductive rights are essential to sustainable development and must be at the centre of this new universal agenda.

When a woman can exercise her reproductive rights, she is better able to enjoy other freedoms and opportunities—from education to employment to full participation.

Last year, more than 120 world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action to improve the lives of people, particularly women and girls, and protect our planet.

UNFPA's Global Senior Management Meeting

UNFPA's Global Senior Management Meeting (GSMM) held on February 25 to 27, 2015 in Tunis. The purpose of the meeting is to celebrate progress, assess the UNFPA's strategic direction in light of UN reforms, including emerging Post 2015 development agenda and the results of the ICPD beyond 2014 review. This meeting offered an important opportunity to move the agenda forward from Cape Town and to accelerate implementation in the emerging post 2015 landscape. The meeting expected that the outcome of the global meeting will subsequently feed into the upcoming midterm review (MTR) of the UNFPA Strategic Plan (SP) 2014-2017.

The ED also outlined his vision and expectations for 2015 and beyond, noting progress and momentum from the field.

"This is a critical time in UNFPA. We have a great deal to accomplish and our mission has never been more

urgent. Ensuring that we are all working together effectively is of utmost importance, and that is what this meeting is intended to achieve" Dr. Babatunde said. "We need to thank them for their good work." Colleagues from the field were thanked and their efforts acknowledged by the participants GSMM with a round of applause.

UN Tunisia Resident Coordi-

The three daylong GSMM had the following specific objectives:

Take stock of the first year of implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, to celebrate progress, and identify challenges and propose mechanisms to address them.

Assess UNFPA's strategic direction in light of UN reforms including the emerging post 2015 agenda and the results of ICPD beyond 2014 review to identify possible gaps.

Arrive at a potential coherent revised articulation of UNFPA's strategic positioning and concrete steps to improve/accelerate implementation of the Strategic Plan in line with the emerging SDGs.

Provide an input for the MTR linking the ICPD review with the evolving post 2015 development agenda.

The moderator Diene Keita facilitated the panel discussion on progress, challenges, recent developments & emerging trends and the report of analyses and achievements of UNFPA in 2014;

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Panel discussion during GSMM 2015

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particularly the progress towards the goal and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2014-17. The discussion also highlighted the successful positioning and promoting, at the global stage, the agenda of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and ED vision 2015+, Global staff survey and leading effectively on advocacy and polit-

ical engagement were some of the key sessions during the three days meeting.

The GSMM included presentations, panel discussions, knowledge fair and group work to assure colleagues had the opportunity to discuss, reflect and report back on topics. The meeting had contributions of external speakers to inspire, motivate and challenge the group members.

Dr. Babatunde gave thanks and highlighted key substantive and operational challenges and opportunities at the closing ceremony, such as taking advantage of big data, using open data and better use of data for advocacy and policy dialogue.

Every Woman, Every Child initiative

UNSG's Every Women Every Child (EWEC) Launched by the UNSG during the UN MDG Global Summit in September 2010, EWEC is a global movement that mobilises and intensifies international and national actions to address the major health challenges facing women and children around the world. The movement put a Global strategy (2010-2015) into action that presented a roadmap on how to enhance financing, strengthen policy and improve services on the ground for the most vulnerable. Key stakeholders of the strategy met in November 2014 to reaffirm their commitment to accelerating progress and agreed that the Strategy should be updated to ensure alignment and complementarity with the emerging SDGs. The vision was that the renewed Global Strategy will present a common agenda for 2016- 2030 and will be launched with a first five-year implementation plan at the UN GA in September 2015.

Given the high burden of maternal and under-5 deaths that takes place in fragile settings in conflict and natu-

ral disasters, there is a push for the updated Global Strategy to be extended to explicitly reach Every Woman and Every Child in Every Setting.

Under the Patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation (FDF) and President Of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and with the sponsorship of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan, in the presence of Ms. Kate Gilmore, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, convened an experts meeting on 10 and 11 February 2015 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The meeting, hosted by the Supreme Council's Secretary General Her Excellency Reem Abdullah Eisa Al Falasi, focused on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent health (RMNC&A health), in humanitarian crises with the purpose of formulating policy recommendations to be incorporated in the next global strategy of the United Nations Secretary

General's "EWEC" initiative.

The Abu Dhabi Declaration was drafted by the meeting of experts and it is recommended as offering the basis for RMNC&A health, and wellbeing across the development and humanitarian continuum, over the life course and for EWEC wherever they may be.

Donors must balance emergency aid that helps pregnant women, new mothers and their children at the time of crisis, and more sustainable assistance leading to development. HE Reem Al Falasi, secretary general of the UAE's Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood (SCMC), said: "We seek to strike a better balance between an emergency approach that responds to urgent needs, and longer-term investment that can contribute to sustainable development.

"That is precisely why the United Nations, EWEC initiative is so important to world efforts for the health and well-being of women and children, today and tomorrow." Ms. Al Falasi was

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speaking on behalf of H.E Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, president of the SCMC. She added “We are committed to helping and supporting women who need access to quality maternal health care that can help save their lives and their babies, wherever they are. “We are committed to the health and welfare of newborns, children and adolescents and we know this means providing them with quality services in all circumstances, so that they may grow into healthy adults.”

The two-day event was looking at ways to give women access to quality maternal health care. It presented policy recommendations for the next global strategy in the UN’s EWEC initiative. Those attending include representatives from UN agencies, governments, education bodies and philanthropists. It was organised by the UN Population Fund and the SCMC. The focus is on reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health in areas affected by conflict and disasters.

Princess Sarah Zeid of Jordan, who led the meeting, said the discussions were intended to boost international support for people in crisis-hit areas of the world. “Our aim is to identify how we can improve and redouble our efforts so that our support and interventions are better adapted to the new realities of protracted humanitarian situations, the upsurge in conflicts in several regions, and increasingly limited levels of overseas development aid, largely caused by the global economic downturn of the



last few years,” she said.

“These regrettable developments are bringing an untenable impact on the lives of those who can least afford it, namely mothers, newborns, children and adolescents.” The meeting aims to implement the UN’s Millennium Development Goals this year, and discussed new goals to strengthen resilience and fast response and recovery from crises.

Sherin SaadAllah, Resource Mobili-

zation and Partnership Adviser and Mollie Fair, Humanitarian Specialist from UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (ASRO), were present in the meeting to support focusing on humanitarian challenges for the renewed UNSG’s Every Women, Every Child Global Strategy and to serve as a member of a panel on ‘Whose help do we need? Along with other key Partners.

UNFPA Participation in Muscat Festival 2015

Youth

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, participated in the annual Muscat Festival 2015 and supported the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER), the Y-PEER, has begun from the 22nd of January 2015 at Naseem Gardens.

A group of the Youth Peer Education Network (Y-PEER) volunteers trained on health issues and civic subjects by MOH expert and engaged by UNFPA GCC conducted activities that attracted visitors at the Muscat Festival through

their theatre performance, question and answer interactions, group discussions along with games and quizzes during the weekends. Y-PEERs are a network of young peers specializing in raising awareness on substance abuse and other health issues among the youth, who work closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The participation spanned for three weekends, and the first two weekends were met with enthusiasm, especially for

youth who were eager to learn more about the network and what they are about. The UNFPA Y-PEERs corner, which is within the MOH awareness generation tent, was alive with the Y-PEER "Edutainment" activities, and found young and old alike interacting with the activities the Y-PEER's had set. The 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



Y-PEER Network member interacting during Muscat Festival

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where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

Y-PEER Oman Focal Point in-charge, Mr. Mazin Al Araimi, to address the existence of taboos as an obstacle for information dissemination, and ignorant/judgmental behaviour as a strong contributor to the discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS, our network disseminates messages on stigma and discrimination attached with HIV through inno-

vative paintings. Many visitors like to wait and read the messages on the paintings and mostly these messages are in bilingual, as we have a large migrants working and living around Muscat.

This collaboration has been following successful partnership programmes taking place since 2008 between the MOH and MOH HIV division and the UNFPA. The Month long activities were extremely successful and reached a large base of the population, both

nationals and internationals that frequent the festival during this time.

This year the UNFPA aimed and establish new partnerships with Government counterparts and expand the mandate of the network, which focuses on issues most relevant to youth, by partnering with the various sections of the MOH.



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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