

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- OBITUARY: 1
INSPIRING QUOTES TO MOURN
THE LATE DR. BABATUNDE
OSOTIMEHIN, UNFPA EXECU-
TIVE DIRECTOR
- UNFPA REGIONAL DIRECTOR 2
FOR ARAB STATES ATTENDS
THE DOHA FORUM AND SIGNS
A TRUST FUND AGREEMENT
WITH QPPC DURING HIS MIS-
SION TO QATAR
- UNFPA GCC PROVIDES TECH- 4
NICAL ASSISTANCE TO MINIS-
TRY OF HEALTH (MOH) IN
OMAN & LAUNCHES A TOT ON
THE Y-PEERS TRAINING MANU-
ALS FOR HEALTH EDUCATORS
AT THE MINISTRY
- OMAN Y-PEERS PARTICIPATE 5
IN A BEACH ACTIVITY UNDER
THE AUSPICIOUS OF MOH
- Y-PEER OMAN HOLDS PEER TO 6
PEER EDUCATION TRAINING
AND IFTAR IN RAMADAN
- HOPE, HEALING, AND DIGNITY 7
FOR ALL
- STATEMENT OF UNFPA EXECU-
TIVE DIRECTOR DR. BABA-
TUNDE OSOTIMEHIN ON THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END
OBSTETRIC FISTULA, 23 MAY
2017



United Nations Population Fund
Sub-regional Office for the GCC Countries



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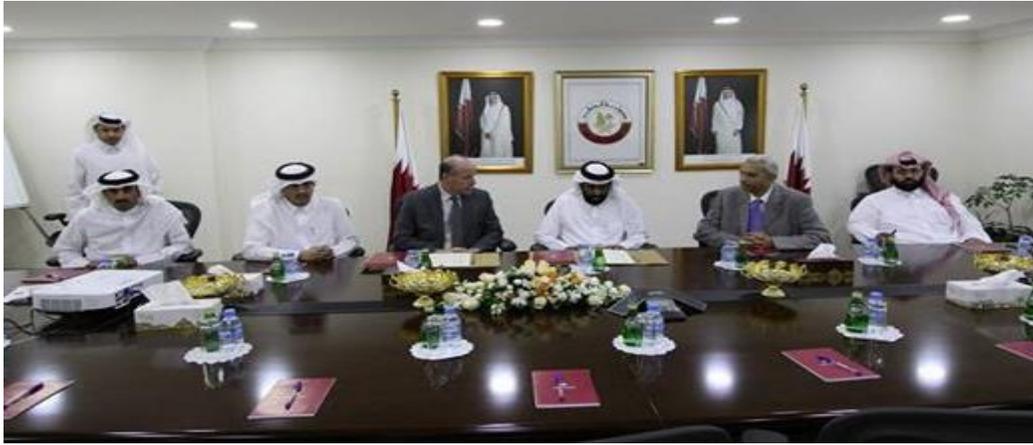


“For women to reach their full potential and be more economically productive, they must be able to exercise their right to decide for themselves when or how often to have children. Upholding this right will lead to improvements in health and produce an array of benefits: greater investments in schooling, greater productivity, greater labour-force participation and eventually increased income, savings, investment and asset accumulation.”

“Isn’t that what we all want? For every girl everywhere to be able to go to and stay in school; to be free from child marriage, teenage pregnancy and violence; to know and be able to exercise her rights, including her right to sexual and reproductive health; to be able to realize her full potential and help us build a better world. I know that’s what we all want. That’s what the 2030 Agenda is all about. And I know, together, we can make it happen”.

*Late Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA Executive Director
(1949-2017)*

UNFPA Regional Director for Arab States attends the Doha Forum and signs a Trust Fund Agreement with QPFC during his mission to Qatar



Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States, and Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative discuss the bilateral agreement with H.E Minister of Planning & Statistics of Qatar Dr. Saleh Al-Nabit and senior

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States, represented UNFPA, as a guest speaker at the 17th Doha Forum, which was held on 14-15 May 2017, under the patronage of HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani. This year's high level forum flagged the theme "Development, Stability and Refugee Crisis" and was organized by Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

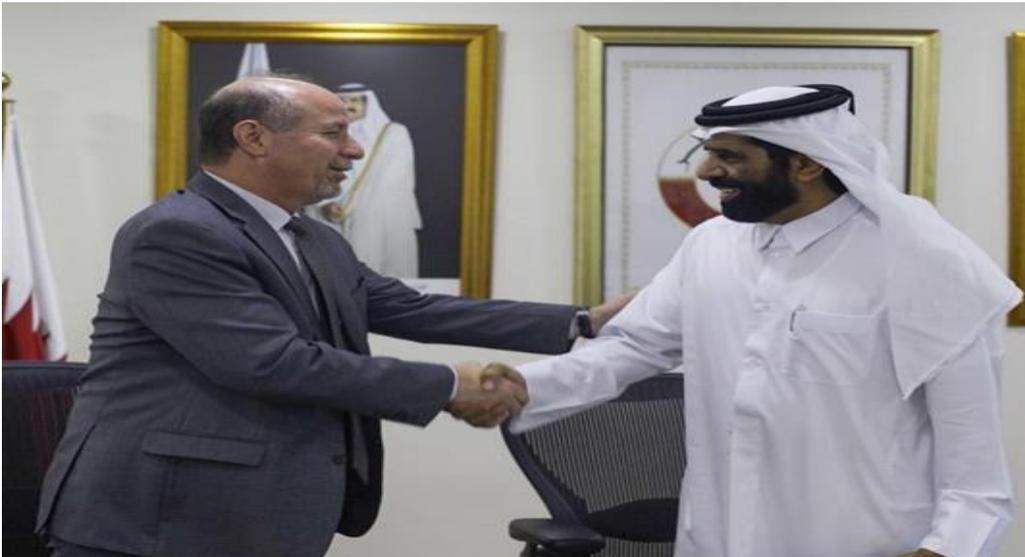
The Regional Director's speech, which was well received by the participants, highlighted UNFPA's mandate and humanitarian interventions. The speech was given in the session of "*The Role of Civil Society and Charity Organizations and in dealing with the Refugee Crisis*". A round of Questions and Answers followed the speech, when Dr. Shabaneh addressed questions related to UNFPA's role in humanitarian crisis and its achievements in serving the refugees in several areas such as Zaatari camp in Jordan, among others. There was also an opportunity to flag UNFPA Quality Control (QC), Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms that are applicable to all its activities including those in humanitarian context.

On the margin of the Forum, the Regional Director for the Arab States had a live interview with *AlJazeera network*. In the interview, he focused on the significance of the forum and UNFPA's participation this year. He also pointed out UNFPA's mandate to provide reproductive health services to the vulnerable female refugees in the areas of conflicts and surroundings.

On other hand, and during his mission, Dr. Shabaneh signed a two-year trust fund agreement between UNFPA and Qatar Ministry of Development Planning & Statistics. H.E Minister of Planning & Statistics Dr. Saleh Al-Nabit represented the Ministry in signing this new trust fund agreement. Under this agreement, UNFPA sub-regional office for the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries will provide technical assistance to the Ministry in areas of Population and Development for the next three years.

Worth-mentioning that UNFPA started providing technical assistance to the Ministry, represented in the Qatar Permanent Population Committee (QPCC), since 2005 when the first Trust Fund Agreement was signed.

Furthermore, the Regional Director held a meeting with the Qatari UN Secretary General Humanitarian Envoy Mr. Ahmed Al Meraikhi. The meeting was very informative and constituted an opportunity for both parties to strengthen the relationship for further co-operation. The Regional Director updated Mr. Al Meraikhi on UNFPA humanitarian work. The UN SG Envoy voiced his appreciation to UNFPA's humanitarian and development role in the region and expressed possibility to visit UNFPA hubs in Arab countries with refugees crisis, in the near future.



Reached agreement sealed with a handshake between Dr. Luay Shabaneh, UNFPA Regional Director for the Arab States and Dr. Saleh Al-Nabit, H.E Minister of Planning & Statistics of Qatar.

UNFPA GCC provides Technical Assistance to Ministry of Health (MoH) in Oman & launches a ToT on the Y-Peers training manuals for health educators at the Ministry



School nurses and health educators from MoH and MoE attend the workshop organized by UNFPA.

The five-day workshop, which started on 7th of May, was supported by UNFPA, and aiming at launching the Y-Peers manuals in the school system in Oman. The curriculum consists of seven manuals, including Y-Peer Educators Manual, Y-Peers Manual, road safety, tobacco abuse, violence among youth, nutrition, and life skills manual. The initiative came in consistent with the Ministry's strategy to promote healthy life style among youth and in compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that place youth at the core of the development.

The training, which received massive media coverage from all major local newspapers in Oman, is intended to develop the communication skills of the trainees, so they are well prepared to address the most persistent youth issues in the country and promote the Y-Peer approach among the school students so they are fully equipped with the communication and leadership skills to be effective Y-Peers who are able to convey the related knowledge and information to their school mates and friends using the Y-Peer innovate methodologies.

The 21 attendants of the workshop were school nurses from Ministry of Health and health educators from Ministry of Education (MoE), who came from seven governorates in Oman: South Al Batinah, North and South Sharqiyah, Ad Dhahirah, Al Wusta and Musandam, and Muscat. They were trained on educating youths in their respective governorates, so that young women and men can adopt the Y-Peer methodology and spread awareness and knowledge about the most important youth related issues. UNFPA provided an experienced consultant to conduct this intensive training on the Y-Peer manuals, which were distributed on the workshop participants. The books printing process was supported by UNFPA GCC.

UNFPA GCC Y-Peers Participate in a Beach Activity under the Auspicious of Ministry of Health (MoH)

On 6th of April 2017, MoH Community Based Initiatives (CBI) Department organized an outdoor beach activity in form of a walkathon, stage performances and various sports games. The goal was to raise awareness about different topics in relation to healthy life style, i.e. nutrition, sports, available services in Oman. Supporters were from government and non-government sector, including private sector and non-profit organizations.

UNFPA GCC, represented by the Programmes Analyst Mr. Salah al-Saleh, participated in the event, as part of its 2017 Annual Work Plan (AWP). UNFPA GCC provided an information stand and supported the Y-PEER Oman network that was handling the "sports corner". UNFPA GCC and the Y-PEER conducted some Yoga sessions, beach football, beach volleyball and other games. The Y-Peers disseminated information about healthy life styles, UNFPA's youth related programmes and activities. The success of the event is ascribed to the enthusiasm of the Omani Y-peers and their friends who participated actively in the event. This gala comes under the Government's Cross-sectorial five years Physical Activity Plan of Action, since the MoH is leading this year's Physical Activity Campaign with the technical assistance provided by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Non-communicable Diseases (NCD) Task Force. The event took place from 3:30 to 7.00 PM at the Al-Athaiba beach park, under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Omar Almarhoon, Minister of Civil Service. The activity was visited by an estimate of 200 visitors.



Oman Y-Peers participate in the Beach Activity organized by MoH under the national physical activity campaign to promote Healthy lifestyle

Y-Peer Oman holds Peer to Peer Education Training and Iftar in Ramadan



The Y-Peer Network Oman and UNFPA Sub-Regional Office for the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) Countries conducted two days Ramadan Iftar/Introduction workshop on 14th and 15th of June for the new members, who recently joined the network. The workshop venue was generously offered by the Omani Women Association in Muscat given its continuous co-operation with UNFPA GCC.

20 young participants joined the training including Y-Peer Oman's Focal Point, Ms. Asila Al Harasi, who facilitated the training. The training programme included several activities, such as teambuilding session, ice breakers, trust building and fostering speaking and communication skills. These two days gathering provided an opportunity to the new comers to learn more about the Y-Peer vision and the UNFPA's mandate and mission. The workshop was a great opportunity to the participants to organize and brainstorm about the Y-Peer foreseen participation in the next Khareef Salalah festival starting in July and the areas of engagement on national level. At the end of the workshop, the evaluation showed that the participants learned a lot about the Y-Peer Network and the training was another success story scored by Y-Peer Oman.



Hope, Healing, and Dignity for All

Statement of the late UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin on the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, 23 May 2017

Over the past year, I witnessed the total transformation of two women's lives. Jumwa, from Kenya, was successfully treated for obstetric fistula at the age of 83, after living with this terrible and treatable condition for 66 years. Alice, from Malawi, was treated at the age of 77, after living with fistula for 50 years. I have no words to describe the sense of hope, healing, and restored dignity that this treatment provided, first and foremost to these two women, but also to their loved ones.

While these are stories of hope, they are also stories of a tragedy – the tragedy being that both women ever suffered from fistula in the first place. They should never have endured the decades of discomfort and shame that could have been so easily prevented. The time has come to put an end to this suffering wherever it occurs.

The theme of this year's International Day to End Obstetric Fistula, "*Hope, healing, and dignity for all*", is, at its heart, a call to realize the fundamental human rights of all women and girls everywhere, with a special focus on those most left behind, excluded and shunned by society.

Ending fistula is a high priority for UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, and it is a key step on the road to achieving the world's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Fistula has been virtually eliminated in the world's wealthier countries, so we know that it can be eliminated in every country. Strong health systems and greater efforts to address the underlying issues that perpetuate it, including poverty, gender inequality, early marriage and childbearing, and lack of education, are crucial.

Working with our partners in the Campaign to End Fistula, we have made progress towards eliminating fistula through prevention, treatment and social reintegration. UNFPA has supported more than 85,000 fistula repair surgeries since 2003, and more than 15,000 cases in 2016 alone.

But much more needs to be done. More than two million women still live with the condition, and 50,000 to 100,000 develop fistula every year. It doesn't have to be this way. With strong political leadership, investment and action, we can end this scourge in our lifetime.

Please join us in standing with the world's poorest, most marginalized women and girls. Together, I am confident that we mobilize the support and commitment needed to transform their lives into stories of hope and healing and rid the world of fistula once and for all.



United Nations Population Fund
Sub-regional Office for the GCC Countries

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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!