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



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UNFPA GCC co-sponsors Oman Women Summit



Backed by its mandate to support women empowerment efforts in the GCC countries, and aligned with its strategy that promotes gender equality and combats gender-based violence (GBV), UNFPA GCC office welcomed to co-sponsor the first Oman Women Summit, in partnership with major private sector entities and academic institutions in the country. The summit was held on the 24th of October 2018, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), to mark the annual Omani Women's Day in October. The summit paid tribute and celebrated women's achievements and accomplishments.

The summit was attended by women achievers from Oman and across the region, and focused on empowering women through debate and knowledge-sharing. The concourse of those talented women was a platform to exchange experiences, opportunities and challenges on the theme #Oman4Her. Female speakers from Oman, Italy, Sweden, Dubai, Kuwait and Bahrain inspired the attendants with their visions and reflections. Participants and speakers were engaged in meaningful discussions about their aspirations and challenges. The summit not only celebrated those achievers, but also provided attendees with an opportunity to connect and network to support each other.

"It was a great opportunity to learn from women in our region, and identify their needs, aspirations and hurdles they face on daily base to attain their dreams," Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative said. "At UNFPA we have been always working to support innovative initiatives and go into partnerships with non-traditional partners to influence adolescents and young women positively in order to unleash their potentials and empower them," he added.

The second Regional Adolescent and Youth Health Conference organized in Oman



In a remarkable joint initiative, UNFPA GCC, along with several partners including UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO), National Youth Committee of Oman, the International Association of Adolescent Health (IAAH), co-sponsored the 2nd Adolescent and Youth Health conference, which was organized by the Ministry of Health (MoH). Oman was chosen to host this second Adolescent Health Conference in the Arab region, which was held on 22-24 October, 2018 in Muscat and attended by a large number of participants from national and international/regional institutions, universities, INGOs and government entities working on youth and adolescents health issues.

The conference aimed to create and raise regional awareness by supporting community based programs and to ensure that the health care providers are able to prevent and face the unmet needs of the adolescents and youth population in the Arab region.

Given its distinguished work in this field, UNFPA was invited to share its experiences and best lessons learnt. Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC Representative provided an opening speech addressing the challenges faced by adolescents in the region and UNFPA's mandate and efforts to address their needs. Mr. Samir Anouti, UNFPA Arab States Regional Advisor on Youth/HIV&AIDS was selected to be the keynote speaker in the first plenary session. UNFPA was also represented by Mr. Salah al-Saleh, UNFPA GCC Programme Analyst and Ms. Leana Islam, UNFPA Jordan Emergency Youth Officer, who made a presentation titled "Multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder partnership for young people in humanitarian action - Ensuring access to essential services, participation, capacity, resources and data" on the second day.

Y-Peers Oman had a booth assigned by the Ministry in the exhibition which was organized on the margin of the conference, so they can have a chance to promote UNFPA mandate and Y-Peer network activities in the country. UNFPA GCC office had a frequently-visited pavilion, where many promotional materials and publications related to youth and adolescents were exhibited and shared with the public.

UNFPA joins the government of Qatar in its celebrations of the National Population Day



In a national event that was widely covered by the Qatari media outlets, UNFPA took part in the celebrations of the Qatar Permanent Population Committee (PPC) marking the annual Qatar National Population Day on 31st of October 2018. The celebration was presided by HE the Minister of Development Planning and Statistics Dr. Saleh al-Nabit, Chairman of PPC. Qatar Population Day 2018 was held under the theme "One year after the Launch of Qatar Second Population Policy 2017-2022" with the attendance of a large number of officials in Qatar and representatives from entities that are implementing the policy.

In a speech during the celebration, UNFPA GCC Representative Mr. Asr Toson said that Qatar places a great importance to the issues of population and development in line with the global trend and the development agenda 2030. He praised the country's interest in population issues at the regional and international levels and mentioned the history of co-operation between UNFPA and PPC in developing the population policies of the country. He added that Qatar's population policy 2017-2022 reflects a strong interest in population and development issues, which was also indicated in the Qatar National Vision 2030 to serve as a clear road map for the future of the country and welfare of its nationals and residents.

On 1st of November, and following this event, the PPC held its first Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on exchanging ideas and opinions for the population and development forum which will be held in 2019. The EGM was also attended by UNFPA GCC staff.



Y-Peers Oman mark the 10 days of activism with several dynamic activities



Planning was the key for several successful events conducted by Y-Peer Oman to take part in the 10 days of activism campaign and to promote the mandate of UNFPA in the country. On 2nd and 4th of December they celebrated the World Aids Day, when they organized awareness sessions discussing about the HIV/AIDS with 120 female students (15-17 years old) in two public girls' schools in Muscat. The girls were so active in the discussion which raised their awareness on how stigmatism affects the community negatively and the methods of virus prevention. This activity was followed by another visit to Zainab bint Khuzaimah girls' school in Buraimi governorate. The Y-Peers, school nurses and adolescent girls discussed several topics including the definition of AIDS, the rights of the patients in the community and the efforts and services of the ministry of health to detect and treat the infected patients. On 5th of December, the Y-Peers organized shadow-puppets theatre training for 27 girls at Grade 9 in some schools in Buraimi. The trainees learnt how to make puppets step by step, theatre structure and lightening, and storytelling techniques, to improve their communication skills. On the next day, the Y-Peers held an event for almost 50 Grade 11 girls to raise their awareness on early marriage risks, benefits of pre-marriage testing, and the related medical services offered by the Ministry of Health. Y-Peers ended the 10 days of activism by shooting a video, describes the hashtag #standUp4HumanRights to lionize the Human Rights Day, and which was posted on all social media accounts of Y-Peer team and its members to target almost 600 people.



UNFPA GCC holds the ICPD @25 consultation with the Kuwaiti national stakeholders and participates in the 2nd UNSPF Workshop

To support the Kuwaiti government in its efforts to achieve the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) related indicators and Cairo Declaration commitments, UNFPA GCC, represented by Mr. Asr Toson, UNFPA GCC representative, Ms. Shaima Aly, programme & communication coordinator and Dr. Francoise Farah, the UNFPA Population Expert, held on 10th of October 2018 the ICPD @25 consultation with the national stakeholders in order to introduce the Kuwaiti government officials to the objectives of the Regional Conference on ICPD@25 held in Lebanon on 30 October-1 November, which marks the 25th anniversary of the ground-breaking ICPD held in Cairo in 1994, and its Programme of Action (PoA). The presentation made by the UNPFA expert focused on the history of the ICPD, the Population dynamics and sustainable development; and demographic changes in the region, as well as the population equality gaps, social inclusion and rights. He stated that the regional review and conference will serve to strengthen linkages between the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, enhance integration of population dynamics into development planning and reaffirm commitment to implementing the ICPD PoA in the region.

Before that UNFPA GCC staff attended the second Strategic Partnership Framework (SPF) Validation of priorities & reinvigorated delivery mechanisms for results on 7-9 October 2018. The workshop's objective was to guide the undertaking of all UN agencies working in support of Kuwait to implement the development strategic priorities in consistency with the Kuwait National Development Plan, Kuwait Vision 2035 and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The workshop gathered several resident UN agencies representatives and staff in Kuwait, non-resident agencies staff, NGOs directors and government officials, and was led by Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi, the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (GSSCPD) of Kuwait and Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh UN resident coordinator in Kuwait. At the end of the workshops, the attendants were able to finalise outcomes, indicators, and targets for priority areas aligned with New Kuwait Vision 2035 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Identify and elaborate catalytic new services and products to respond to complex multi-sector challenges and priorities; and agree on efficient delivery mechanisms to achieve results.

An animating Retreat Day for UNFPA GCC Staff in Muscat

It was the time to renew commitment, re-energize and pep-up the team of UNFPA GCC as every year, therefore, a plan was set to hold the annual office retreat on 15th of November. The goal of this day was to enliven the spirits of the team members through several team-building, brainstorming and ice-breaking activities that enhances the work environment friendliness and fervor.

A trainer from a reputed training agency in the country designed and offered the team building and stimulating activities of the day, which were performed in an elated and amiable atmosphere at the Crown Plaza hotel in Muscat. The retreat exercises focused on transforming the reality and achieving success by having an optimistic vision and upbeat perception about the future. They also addressed the importance of good planning, time management and co-operation among the team work members to achieve the required results and deliver the ultimate goals.

At the end of the day, the UNFPA GCC staff were ready to resume their duties with a lot of inspiration and enthusiasm.



Y-Peers Oman hold a Premarital Check Workshop



In close co-operation with the Department of Women and Child Health of Ministry of Health (MoH) Oman, and given the importance placed on adolescents and youth health in the country and the well-being of the new generations, Y-Peers Oman organized on 8th of October an innovative workshop aimed at training the Y-Peers to advocate and campaign about the necessity to conduct premarital check up for the new couples to identify any hereditary or genetical defects that may affect the fetuses. The presentations were given by specialized physicians, including Dr. Raya Al- Kimyani, head of the pre-marriage medical examination section, Dr. Kareemah Al-Hanai, a consultant on pediatric diseases and tumors, and Dr. Moza Al Busaidi, genetic guide at the National Center for Genetic Health. 9 Y-Peers attended the workshop and were introduced to several relevant issues, such as the national program of premarital medical Check and the diseases that are detected through this test, the availability of tests and the right time to do the check, definition of genetic diseases (sickle cell anemia and thalassemia) and counseling for genetic diseases.

"It was very interesting to know about the necessity to conduct premarital check," said Asila Al-Harrasi, Y-Peer leader. "We learnt a lot about the genetical diseases in our community and the methods to prevent them before marriage," she added.



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

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