Yemen Celebrates World Population Day


During the press conference, Dr. Ahmed Borgi, Secretary General of the National Population Council, called on giving youth more attention giving the fact that youth representation is significantly increasing as the number of youth in Yemen has increased in 2014 to 8.8 million consisting 33.8% of the total population. He stressed on the importance of paying attention to youth in terms of health, education, rehabilitation and capacity building so they could productively contribute to economic and social development process.

Dr. Borgi shed light on the positive results demonstrated through the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey indicating that such positive indicators fall in line with goals of the National Population Strategy in terms of decreasing the maternal mortality, birth rate, and fertility rate.

**FOOD SECURITY SURVEY SHOWS 10 MILLION YEMENIS STILL STRUGGLE FOR FOOD**

Preliminary findings of a new survey by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) show that while food security has improved in some areas, over 10 million Yemenis – more than 40 percent of the population – don’t know where their next meal will come from.

Around five million people were found to be severely food insecure, suffering from levels of hunger where external food assistance is generally required and the prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five is beyond the international benchmark of “critical.” The Comprehensive Food Security Survey, which is usually held every two years, also shows that Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates in Yemen are serious across most of the country and at emergency levels in some areas. The survey is carried out with the support of Yemen’s Central Statistical Office and funding from the United States government.

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Dutch contribution to support Sana basin water management

On behalf of the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ambassador Jeroen Verheul, signed today, at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), in Sana’a, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative in Yemen, Dr Salah Hajj Hassan, the Contribution Agreement for the execution of the "Decentralized supply and water use management in the Sana’a basin to sustain water resources and rural livelihoods". A project formulated upon the request of the Government of the Republic of Yemen.

Similarly, the Project Agreement was signed by, H.E. Dr Mohamed Saaed Al-Saadi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, H.E. Farid Ahmed Mogawar, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, H.E. Abdul Razaz Saleh Khalid, Minister of Water and Environment and the FAO Representative in Yemen.

This three year project of a value of USD 4 934 507 aims at reducing groundwater abstraction in the Sana’a basin towards more sustainable levels, in a way that does not negatively affect rural and urban livelihoods. Water resource management is one of the key strategic priority areas in the FAO Yemen Plan of Action 2014-2018. This project will also be implemented as part of FAO's Regional Water Scarcity Initiative which aims at developing strategies towards a more effective use of ground, rain and surface water based on cost/benefit analysis.

The main outcomes of the Project will consider that (i) farmers, organized in Water Users Associations (WUAs), are aware of the consequences of the present depletion rates, a situation that may worsen under the influence of climate change, and are prepared to take action towards sustainable groundwater development;

(ii) water-efficient and climate-smart crop production systems that are crucial to reduce groundwater abstraction are implemented through "integrated water resource management" principles and crop production improvements;

(iii) WUAs are empowered to negotiate sustainable groundwater management plans, and mechanisms are in place for such negotiation processes, with the support of relevant government institutions.

The Ambassador of the Netherlands recalled the long history of cooperation between Yemen and the Netherlands, particularly in the water sector. Ambassador Verheul underlined the need to strengthen Yemeni capacity to manage water resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Verheul said: “One project is already underway through Alterra, providing stakeholders in sustainable water management with reliable information on water use and available water resources. Reliable information should be publicly available to enable all to make the right decisions. The project we are signing today is the second activity, now focussing on the vulnerable Sana’a basin. Empowering farmer groups to sustainably manage their precious water resources is the main focus of FAO’s work with water user associations in this basin. Taking a critical look at wasteful irrigation practices and crop selection (in particular the water consuming Qat plants) is integral to the project we are launching today. We hope to be able to start a similar activity in Tihama basin in the very near future.”

Their Excellencies, the ministers, praised the importance of the project to maintain the groundwater in the Sana’a basin and thanked the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Food and Agriculture Organization on the positive role they play in this crucial aspect.
Almost 70,000 severely malnourished children in Yemen under the age of five will receive assistance over the next year with support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO).

Acute and chronic malnutrition remain a major problem in Yemen. By 2014 an estimated 1,060,000 children under five are expected to be acutely malnourished and approximately 280,000 severely acutely malnourished. These children are at high risk of death. Chronic malnutrition has been a long standing challenge in Yemen due to a combination of under development, conflict and political instability. The rate of stunted growth among children is 50% with critical implications for a child’s physical and cognitive development.

“The additional support announced today will make a vital difference in consolidating the gains made in tackling acute malnutrition over the last two years and further scale up our efforts in reaching every child” says UNICEF Acting Representative, Jeremy Hopkins. “Keeping the momentum will require sustained funding and a multi-sectoral approach, including but not limited to access to safe water, hygiene promotion and girls education”, Hopkins emphasized. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPH&P), UNICEF, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), is ensuring a coordinated response to address severe and moderate acute malnutrition, especially in areas of greatest need.

The funds released today will also support the training of health workers in community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) and integrated management of childhood illnesses; as well as the rehabilitation and extension of water and sanitation facilities in 100 nutrition facilities in the targeted governorates. These interventions specifically target the governorates of Al Hodeida, Hajjah, Aden, Lahj and Taiz which have the highest levels of acute malnutrition in Yemen, above the global emergency threshold of fifteen per cent.

“To be able to reach all those at risk we call on other donors to join us in addressing this forgotten crisis and make a difference,” said Hervé Delphin, ECHO Head of Unit for European Neighbourhood, Middle East, Central and South-Western Asia.

Over the last two years, ECHO has contributed to reach some 350,000 severely malnourished children with immediate and life-saving interventions and established over 1600 outpatient therapeutic feeding centres, from a mere 300 in 2011.
FOOD SECURITY SURVEY SHOWS…

Levels of food insecurity across the country showed a slight decline from 45 percent to 41 percent, since the last similar survey in 2011, but there were huge variations among different governorates. In the northern governorate of Sa’ada, almost 70 percent of people were food-insecure, compared with fewer than 10 percent in Al Mahra in the east. Rural areas are worst affected.

Similar disparities are evident in malnutrition rates in different parts of the country, with Global Acute Malnutrition rates ranging from critical, denoting an emergency, in the western coastal governorates of Taiz, Hodeidah and Hajja, to serious or poor in almost all other governorates.

“I am saddened by these continuing high rates. WFP’s new operation, which will feed six million people, aims to address the problem,” said WFP Yemen Country Director Bishow Parajuli. “We are now focusing more on building sustainable livelihoods and resilience, so that people are able to help themselves.”

Parajuli added that food insecurity had an impact on the country’s stability: “For the political process to succeed, people need to be able to live normal lives and not have to worry about where their next meal is coming from,” he said.

Twelve governorates have critical levels of stunting, a condition caused by chronic malnutrition, where children fail to grow properly over time and never reach their physical and mental potential. Worst-affected is the governorate of Al Mahweet, west of Sana’a, where more than 60 percent of children are stunted, or short for their age. Seven governorates have serious levels (between 30 and 39.9 percent) and two are classified as poor (20-29.9 percent).

“Children remain the most vulnerable in terms of food insecurity and malnutrition in Yemen,” said Jeremy Hopkins, Acting UNICEF Representative in Yemen. Of the estimated 4.5 million children under the age of five, more than 2 in 5 are stunted while almost 13 percent are acutely malnourished.”

There is an urgent need for an integrated response in addressing malnutrition. “UNICEF will continue to partner with WFP in ensuring a coordinated response to address severe and moderate acute malnutrition, especially in areas of greatest need,” Hopkins emphasized.

There was some improvement in food security and a decrease in hunger levels in Ibb, Sana’a, Mareb and Rayma but a severe deterioration in the central governorate of Shabwa, from nearly 38 percent food insecure in 2011 to more than 57 percent in 2014.

The data was gathered from all 22 of Yemen’s governorates, based on more than 10,500 household interviews and measurements taken from some 14,000 women and 13,500 children.
Hajjah WASH activities receive Dutch contribution for scale-up

Sana'a, a cost sharing agreement was signed between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and UNDP represented by Mr. Jeroen Verheul, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, and Mr. Paolo Lembo, UNDP Resident Representative for an amount of 500,000 euros dedicated to Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH).

During the ceremony, youth beneficiaries from Arhab conflict-affected areas showcased their successful WASH businesses resulting from the pilot (2012-2013) implemented by UNDP and ZOA/the Netherlands.

Arhab area has a severe shortage of water and is dependent on a few wells for drinking water. In the course of the fighting since 2011, most of the area’s drinking water wells were destroyed and local infrastructure was damaged. Since then, residents have not had sufficient water in their homes for basic needs such as drinking, cooking, laundry and bathing.

The youth explained how their engagement in UNDP's 3x6 approach for sustainable employment has improved their economic situation and on the same mitigated the WASH challenges in their area.

Noman Al-Shami, 30 year old, said that the vocational training he received through ZOA in WASH allowed him to acquire new skills and secure more income for his family. Moreover, he was able to solve the issue of access to clean water in his community by rehabilitating a cistern. “My life and the life of my people have improved because of my participation in the project,” says Al-Shami.

“It is quite assuring to observe youth empowered economically in this critical transition period for the people of Yemen. They are acting as peace catalysts as well as to mitigate the aftermath of conflict in their communities,” says Paolo Lembo, UNDP Resident Representative.

The event was attended by Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, UNDP Country Director, Mr. Ameen al-Gudami, Deputy governor and General Secretary of the Local Council Authority in Hajjah, Mr. Haytham Jubari, a representative from the office of Hajjah governorate, Ms. Zumreta Jahic, First Secretary of the Netherlands Embassy, Mr. Abduladheem Alhamdi, CBO and Arhab local council representative, Dr. Virginia Keng, Country Representative of ZOA International, Mr. Ahmed Alkarandal, from Social Fund for Development in Hajjah, Mr. Abdul-Khaleq Sherhan, from the General Authority for Rural Water Supply Projects, Ms. Gabool Al-Mutawakel, Silatech Country Representative, and representatives from WASH cluster and other UN officials.

The Netherlands contribution is dedicated to scaling up this successful experience to Hajjah Governorate. Mr. Jeroen Verheul, the Netherlands Ambassador, stressed on the vital importance of improving access to safe water and hygiene practices for the Yemeni people. “Empowering youth Yemenis in Hajjah governorate is a center of the project objective of which we are signing today,” Mr. Verheul said. “We are looking forward to a successful collaboration of all stakeholders towards this this shared goal. Combining vocational training and sustainable access to precious resources as water will underpin the positive completion of Yemen’s political and economic transition.”
The Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme

1. With the present memorandum, we are seeking your assistance in circulating information on the United Nations – The Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme. The main objective of the Fellowship is to provide advanced education and training in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea, and related disciplines, to government officials and other mid-level professionals from developing States. We are pleased to note that during the last ten years, 100 awards have been made to nationals of 60 States.

2. Successful candidates will undertake their research/studies in two consecutive phases: the first, lasting three months, with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS), Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations in New York; and the second, lasting six-months, with a participating academic host institution. The Fellowship Selection Committee is currently scheduled to convene in October 2014 to award ten fellowships for the 2015 session, and successful candidates will be expected to begin their placements by the end of the first quarter of 2015.

3. The Fellowship application deadline is 12 September 2014, and candidates should forward their applications directly to DOALOS. Additional information, including the application package, detailed application instructions, and a list of participating host institutions, is available on the Fellowship website: www.un.org/depts/los/nippon.

4. The continued wide publicity and support provided by the UNDP Resident Representatives, the UNIC Directors and the UNEP Directors in the past years has continued to contribute to the success of this Fellowship Programme, and DOALOS would therefore be grateful if you could once again bring to the attention of relevant Governmental and non-Governmental agencies the above information regarding opportunities afforded by the United Nations – the Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme.

5. We appreciate your continued support to DOALOS’ capacity-building programmes. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.
Jamal Benomar and the Fine Art of Making Peace in Yemen

Jamal Benomar, the UN special adviser on Yemen who in April started his fourth year on the job, isn't keen on talking about himself. He "hates" being profiled by the press, a colleague says. He seems far happier talking about the minutiae of the political transition he is overseeing. Yet with the departure of his friend and colleague Lakhdar Brahimi, who stepped down as UN special envoy to Syria at the end of May, Benomar has become the lone survivor of the UN's Arab Spring diplomatic middlemen. As such, the man and his methods are likely to be subject to growing scrutiny in the coming weeks and months.

UN diplomats have not had much luck in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. But in Yemen, the region’s poorest and most fragile state before 2011, the political transition process set in motion by Benomar in 2011 is moving forward albeit increasingly unsteadily. Could Yemen, and Benomar, be the success story the international community so desperately needs? Or has its peace plan simply delayed the inevitable turmoil?

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon first dispatched Benomar to Yemen in April 2011. His arrival came roughly a month after what is now known as the “Friday of Dignity,” when security forces opened fire on a peaceful demonstration killing an estimated forty-six people. Following the defection of Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a onetime enforcer for then-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, to the side of antigovernment protestors, the country was inching towards chaos.

Quickly entering the national consciousness as the country’s arbitrator-in-chief Moroccan-born Benomar, a onetime political refugee who now holds British citizenship, aroused interest among anti-government activists. They were surprised to discover that, in his youth, the envoy had been not so different from them. "When I arrived, people Googled my name and a lot of stuff came up," he says. "I was a student activist. I distributed leaflets; I organized and took part in peaceful demonstrations against the government. We had this dream, that we wanted a different country. More prosperous, more democratic."

Over three decades after his activism landed him in prison and twenty years since he made his escape to UK, Benomar was watching another movement for change unfold from a very different viewpoint. Working from the executive suite of the upscale Movenpick hotel, perched atop a hill overlooking Sana’a, he shuttled from place to place as fighting in the capital reached fever pitch. Yet rather than call for radical or instant change as he might have done as a younger man he advocated a step-by-step process based on dialogue.

The special adviser honed his attitude towards peacemaking over almost three decades of work, first as an academic, then at the UN. Since joining the international body in 1994, he has worked on some of the world’s thorniest conflicts including Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Iraq. While preparing for a series of peace talks in Iraq in 2003, he authored a paper that distilled his thinking on the peacemaking process. He argued that it was important to allow elite groups ousted by internal conflict or external intervention to continue to play a role in national politics and advocated an interim power-sharing agreement between the main parties involved in conflicts as the best way of ensuring short-term stability. He placed a broadly inclusive national dialogue at the heart of any peace process.

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

message on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

26 June 2014

Drug abuse and illicit trafficking have calamitous consequences for the world’s efforts to deliver greater prosperity and equality for all. There are up to 200,000 preventable deaths each year from overdoses. Illicit drugs spawn criminal violence and weaken a state’s essential institutions.

Countries emerging from conflict or escaping economic decline can be overwhelmed when illicit drugs pour across their borders. The United Nations, working across peacekeeping, law enforcement, health, human rights and other related areas, is strongly committed to helping them repel illicit drugs and prevent spill-over from becoming takeover.

On the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I urge the international community to strengthen its efforts to confront illicit drugs as an integral element in building a safe and sustainable future.