2014 Children situation analysis report launched in Yemen

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and UNICEF in collaboration with the Situation Analysis (SitAn) Steering Committee launched on Tuesday the 2014 Situation Analysis of Children in Yemen Report.

After fifteen years of the previous Analysis, the Report showed that the children constitute over 50% of Yemen's population. It highlighted that girls are disadvantaged in many ways, topped by early marriages and drop out of school.

"Many girls are forced into early marriages. Fewer girls than boys are enrolled in school. More girls than boys drop out of school. Very few women go on to become teachers, health staff, court officials or police. One in three maternal deaths is of adolescent females." The report showed that the lack of female medical staff in most health facilities reduces the women access to medical services, especially for adolescent girls.

"Though there has been some progress in legislation and policy development in Yemen, this has not yet translated into the fulfillment of the rights of children, especially girls," says Julien Harnois UNICEF Representative. "What is needed is country wide community dialogue and empowerment in addressing social norms and values detrimental to certain girl's rights to ensure a sustainable response in addressing harmful traditional practices."

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UNV launches Youth Volunteering Award in Yemen

The Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future project, under the umbrella of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, is launching the “Youth Volunteering Award” competition for young volunteers of Yemeni nationality, aged between 18 and 29 years.

The Youth Volunteering Award is part of a regional competition launched in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco, and Yemen. Three winners from the five countries will be selected.

This competition aims to recognize young volunteers’ efforts and achievements, while informing the general public on the impact and importance of volunteering and highlighting the contributions of volunteers in peace and development, through short stories or videos that illustrate the "success stories" of participants. This competition is open to young Yemeni aged between 18 and 29 years.

“Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development.” said Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Director. “This competition will highlight the volunteerism spirit and activities in Yemen while raising awareness on the role of young volunteers in the development of their country.”

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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the European Union and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, have officially launched a new €6 million (Euro 6.0 million) programme to improve food security information system (FSIS). Funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), the Food Security Information Systems development Programme will run for three years (2014-2016). The programme will be implemented at national level and in the six governorates of Abyan; Albeida; Al Dale’e; Lahej; Hajjah and, Hodeidah. The official launch of the programme was held under the auspices of the Minister of Planning and international Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Said Al-Saadi, and in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, H.E. Eng. Farid Mogawar. The launch of the programme was also presided over by the Minister of Fish Wealth, H.E. Awadh Al-Socatre and the Minister of Water and Environment, H.E. Abdo Razaz Saleh.

The event brought together representatives from various government Ministries and departments, senior government officials from the governorates, donor representatives, UN Agencies and NGOs. The following international organizations attended the function: GIZ, USAID, USAID/FEWS NET, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ACF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Oxfam GB, and CARE International.

“No food security decision or policy can be appropriate if it is not well informed. The new programme will strengthen the capacity of government line ministries in the collection and analysis of food security information. This means that policies and strategies will be not only more inclusive but also better implemented and monitored”, said Salah Hajj Hassan, the FAO Representative in Yemen. “FAO has implemented with success similar projects in Somalia, Sudan, Bangladesh and will harness its global experience and expertise to support the programme in Yemen”, he added.

The programme, which has a focus on food and nutrition security data and information systems, institutional capacity building and coordination mechanisms, will also provide policy and programme decision support for the Higher Council for Food Security of the Cabinet.

“The Food Security and Information System, which builds on the previous ECHO funded Integrated food security phase classification (IPC) activity, is in line with the government of Yemen’s national Food Security Strategy, and will provide timely and reliable food security information to support policy and programme formulation.” said Suleiman Mohamed, the FSIS Chief Technical Advisor.
Nutrition remains a major challenge with high levels of stunting, wasting and underweight, cutting across both rich and poor. According to the new report which was jointly launched by the Ministries of Planning and International Cooperation and Social Affairs and Labour, in collaboration with UNICEF, almost half of all children under the age of five in Yemen are chronically malnourished; fifty one per cent of these are amongst the poorest, whilst twenty four per cent are amongst the richest.

The National Social Protection Monitoring Survey is the first survey of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa Region. The survey has two key objectives, the first is to monitor social protection and living conditions of poor and vulnerable households in Yemen; and the second is to provide evidence on the impact of the public cash transfer programme administered by the Social Welfare Fund (SWF). The Report provides national data on a range of issues from housing; water and sanitation; education; child health and nutrition; child protection; and food security to work, income and livelihoods.

Around half of the Yemen’s estimated 23 million population lives below the poverty line. “The importance of the NSPMS comes from the fact that it provides the data necessary for the Government to formulate a comprehensive and adequate social protection programme to better tackle poverty and social inequities in Yemen”, says Dr. Mohammed Al-Sa’adi, Yemen’s Minister of Planning and International Cooperation.

Other key findings include:

In the education sector, the poorest children are less likely to be in school. The Report reveals that only 48% of the poorest children are enrolled in basic education compared with 88% of the richest children; 38% of the poorest girls are enrolled in basic education compared with 88% of the richest girls and absenteeism due to the need to work is the highest among children from the poorest quintile.

In the area of child protection, Birth registration rates have decreased from 22% in 2006 to 15% in 2013. Only 1% of the poorest children under 5 years are registered compared to 51% of children in richest households.

Access to safe and clean water for drinking and domestic use is a fundamental human right. However only 6% of the poorest households are using improved sanitation facilities compared to 97% of the richest. Similarly, 36% of Yemenis in the poorest households have to walk more than 30 minutes to access water, compared to only 1% among the richest.

As the world commemorates the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child this year, crossing the finish line, in addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for countries like Yemen, would require quadruple effort at all levels, to ensure the fulfilment of the basic rights of every child, especially the most vulnerable.
Workshop on refugees issues concluded in Aden

A workshop on refugee protection and mixed migration has been concluded in Aden city, organized by the United Nations high Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

For two days, about 45 participants got acquainted with the principles of human rights and role of the UNHCR at the international level and the government's as well in dealing with refugees' issues, in addition to procedures should be taken in that regard.

Yemen Bears the Burden of the Third-Largest Number of Refugees

Under the slogan “One Family Torn Apart By War Is Too Many”, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) celebrated the World Refugee Day.

As of the end of 2013, Yemen hosts over 240,000 refugees, the majority of whom are from Somalia and receive prima facie refugee status. In April 2014, UNHCR recorded 8,356 new arrivals and all were Ethiopian.

Johannes Van Der Klaauw, UNHCR representative to Yemen, said that the conflicts in Syria, South Sudan, Iraq, and central Africa increased the number of refugees in Yemen. “Since we celebrated World Refugee Day last year, 2.5 million Syrians have become refugees and 6 million more are displaced within the country. In the last week more than 500,000 Iraqis have been forcibly displaced from Mosul alone,” he said.

According to Klaauw, Yemen shares the responsibility for hosting the third largest refugee population in the world, the Somalis. There are over 230,000 Somalis in Yemen who are part of a population of more than 1.1 million living as refugees around the world.

UNHCR representative to Yemen added that last November the Yemeni Government organized a regional conference on Asylum and Migration which involved a multiplicity of UN agencies, NGOs, and 14 governments from the Horn of Africa and Gulf States region. The result was the Sana’a Declaration. “This declaration recognized the need for a refugee protection system across the region as well as addressing the root causes that result in the flight of refugees.”

In his part, Salem Amir al-Aidaroos, Deputy Foreign Minister, said that Yemen was committed to receiving refugees from various countries around the world, especially countries of the Horn of Africa as a commitment to ethical and humanitarian values and not because it is a signatory to international conventions.

He explained that there are around 750,000 illegal refugees living in Yemen, sharing work, school, hospitals, and living.

“Yemen does not call for payments from the international community to Yemen or direct support, but urges the international community to assume its responsibility to humanity and morality in dealing with the problems of refugees from the root; it is unreasonable that the problems of Somalis remain without any solutions despite, their presence for more than 24 years,” he added.

Klaauw also called on the international community to assume its responsibility towards refugees in various countries around the world and to contribute to addressing the problems of the countries that are sending refugees.
UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund in Yemen, the Ministry of Public Health and Population and the Central Statistics Organization launched the results of 2013 Yemen National Health and Demographic Survey. The survey shows that Yemen has made impressive strides forward in the areas of maternal mortality, total fertility, contraceptives prevalence and antenatal care.

“It is very encouraging to see the hard work of the Ministry of Public Health and Population, along with UNFPA and other partners, rewarded by such good progress in key reproductive health indicators. This shows the impact of our work in reproductive health, which includes support to community midwives, family planning services and lifesaving care to women during deliveries”, said UNFPA Representative to Yemen, Ms. Lene K. Christiansen.

The survey collected data, fertility and fertility preferences, knowledge and use of family planning methods, maternal and child mortality, child feeding practices, nutritional status of women and children, awareness and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation/cutting, domestic violence, obstetric fistula and disabilities. Data for this survey was collected from a nationally representative sample of 19,517 households.

Maternal mortality in Yemen declined significantly over the recent past years and pregnant women are receiving antenatal care, postnatal visits and improved delivery services from skilled providers. The survey revealed that the maternal mortality ratio is estimated to be 148 maternal deaths per 100,000 births for the past two years compared to 365/100,000 birth in 2003.

60% of women surveyed for the 2013 YNHDS received antenatal care from a skilled provider (doctor, nurse, midwife or auxiliary midwife) compared to 43% in the 2006 DHS. The survey shows that the percentage of births delivered by a health professional has increased in the recent past, from 36% in 2006 to 45% in 2013; the percentage of births in a health facility has also increased from 24% in 2006 to 30% in 2013. The survey highlighted an impressive increase in the use of contraceptive methods; the proportion of currently married women, who are using a modern method of contraception, has increased by 50% in the past seven years (from 19% in 2006 to 29% in 2013). Married women reported a considerable drop in the use of traditional contraceptive methods, as the use of traditional methods has decreased by half (from 8% in 2006 to 4% in 2013). The fertility rate in Yemen has also dropped significantly from 6.5 births per woman in 1995-1997 to 4.4 births per woman in 2013.

“Through its programmes in Yemen, UNFPA has contributed substantially to improving availability and coverage of reproductive health services, and improving their quality, in particular to provide safe delivery services to women to make sure that women have access to a well-equipped health facility where a trained midwife can help deliver the baby, without a risk to their lives”, the UNFPA Representative explained.

Despite the many gains in key indicators, the survey shows that there are still persistent health concerns in Yemen. For instance, the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting has not changed in the past 16 years: 20% in 2013 compared to 20% in 1997. The survey provides a set of data and statistically sound estimates of social indicators which will be used by policy makers, researchers, NGOs and academia.

The 2013 Yemen National Health and Demographic Survey was carried out by the Yemen Ministry of Public Health and Population and the Central Statistical Organization with technical and financial support from UNFPA and other development partners.
WB grants $50 mln to improve access to basic services in Yemen

The World Bank's (WB) Board of Directors has approved a $50 million grant to support the government's efforts to improve access to basic services for the underserved communities.

The International Development Association (IDA) grant, the Bank's fund for the world's poorest countries, will supplement an ongoing program that has increased school enrollment, especially for girls, improved access to water, boosted agricultural productivity and incomes, provided better public health services and promoted mobility through rural road improvements.

According to a WB press release, the additional funds are destined for the Community and Local Development Program (CLDP), a core component of the Social Fund for Development Phase IV Project (SFD IV) covering the years 2011 to 2016. While expanding access to basic services, the program also empowers local communities by putting them in charge of identifying infrastructure projects that address their specific needs. A pipeline of 563 CLDP sub-projects has been prepared, 70 percent of which were selected through community demand.

"Meeting the basic needs of Yemenis is vital for sustaining the country's political transition," said Wael Zakout, World Bank Country Manager for Yemen. "The Social Fund for Development has proved to be an effective organization, continuing to function throughout the crisis, and its system of autonomous, regional offices allows it to operate in the entire country – even in remote areas with limited government presence."

Along with encouraging voice and participation in the selection of sub-projects, the program will support the national priority of decentralization. The CLDP includes an Empowerment for Local Development Program designed to build the capacities of communities and local authorities to implement the sub-projects they identify.

"Several of the activities funded by the program have also been developed to promote inclusion," said Mira Hong, World Bank Task Team Leader for the project. "The needs of girls and women are a primary focus, for instance, with increased access to schools and reproductive health services. More than half of the health and education professionals that have so far been trained through the program are women."

To date, SFD IV has created 24 million days of employment and benefitted 4.5 million Yemenis, with women representing 2.5 million. The total budget for the six-year project is US$1.2 billion, of which IDA has financed US$85 million, and the government along with 12 other donors has committed US$760 million. The additional US$50 million grant from IDA is also intended as a catalyst to attract more donors.

In January 2014, the Bank's active portfolio in Yemen consisted of 32 projects (including recipient-executed trust funds) with about US$900 million in net commitments, focused on increasing access to basic social services, improving infrastructure, and enhancing governance and institutions.
The multilingual essay contest

The contest, launched in October 2013, invited university and college students to write an essay on global citizenship in one of the six official UN languages, which must not be their mother-tongue, or the medium of instruction of their education.

With the help of an international panel of judges, assembled by UNAI and ELS, we have finalized a total sixty winners – ten from each language category.

These finalists are from 26 countries and include college freshmen as well as Doctoral candidates, and their fields of study ran the academic gamut, including all of the arts and sciences, medicine, pharmacy and dentistry, engineering, law, business, finance and management, agriculture, architecture, communications and linguistics and translation.

At the invitation of the ELS Educational Services Inc., these sixty winners will travel to New York to participate in a 5 day Global Youth Forum from 23 – 27 June.

They will work in their language teams to create action plans around principles from the United Nations Academic Impact. On June 27, they will present these plans at a special meeting at United Nations Headquarters, marking the start of the 70th anniversary year of the United Nations Charter.

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2014 children situation analysis….

According to the report, Yemen remains one of the most water-stressed Arab countries, with rapid decline in water resources and just over half (53%) of households have improved sanitation facilities. Open defecation remains the practice in at least 20% of households and almost half (47%) of schools are built without any water, sanitation or hygiene facilities.

It also revealed that Nutrition remains a complex mix of emergency and chronic underdevelopment. 43% of under-5 children in Yemen are underweight and 19% are severely underweight, the highest rate in the world. Between 2009 and 2011, the proportion of Yemeni households suffering food insecurity grew from 32 to 45 %, with the proportion in extreme insecurity almost doubling (12 to 22 %, 27 % rural); with national poverty levels at fifty four per cent.

"One tool that is useful for improving the situation of girls and other vulnerable children is cash transfers," Mr. Harneis emphasized. "We have found that cash transfers can be used to; increase school attendance, improve nutritional status and increase the use of health centers. Whether these transfers are means tested or are universal they have shown themselves to be an effective safety net for societies most vulnerable," Harneis concluded.

Launching the Report, the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Mohammed al-Sa'adi stated that "The results from this research are a wakeup call to the dire situation of children in Yemen and this must inform and frame programme development and implementation by all players for the wellbeing of children."

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UNV launches Youth Volunteering…

The competition was official launch on 7th of June 2014 and would end on 6th of July 2014. The applicant should read and follow the guidelines and to fill an application form. You can find the application form on the right rail or visit UNV's Yemen Facebook page. The competition is under the auspiciousness of the Arab Youth Volunteering for a Better Future, a UNV-led regional project that seeks to support youth to effectively engage in the development processes of their countries through volunteerism. It is part of the project’s efforts to strengthen the capacity of youth organizations.
MESSAGE ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

5 June 2014

“Raise Your Voice, Not the Sea Level”

World Environment Day 2014 falls during the International Year of Small Island Developing States, declared by the United Nations General Assembly to raise awareness of the special needs of this diverse coalition as part of the global discussion on how to achieve a sustainable future for all.

The world’s small island nations, which are collectively home to more than 63 million people, are renowned as prized destinations: places of outstanding natural beauty, vibrant culture and music appreciated around the globe. While small in total, the land size of small island nations does not reflect their importance as stewards of nature’s wealth on land and sea. They play an important role in protecting the oceans and many are biodiversity hotspots, containing some of the richest reservoirs of plants and animals on the planet.

Despite these assets, Small Island Developing States face numerous challenges. For a significant number, their remoteness affects their ability to be part of the global supply chain, increases import costs – especially for energy – and limits their competitiveness in the tourist industry. Many are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – from devastating storms to the threat of sea level rise.

Small Island Developing States have contributed little to climate change. Their combined annual output of greenhouse gases is less than one per cent of total global emissions, but their position on the front lines has projected many to the fore in negotiations for a universal new legal climate agreement in 2015. Others are leaders in disaster preparedness and prevention or are working to achieve climate neutrality through the use of renewable energy and other approaches.

Small island nations share a common understanding that we need to set our planet on a sustainable path. This demands the engagement of all sectors of society in all countries. On World Environment Day, millions of individuals, community groups and businesses from around the world take part in local projects – from clean up campaigns to art exhibits to tree-planting drives. This year, I urge everyone to think about the plight of Small Island Developing States and to take inspiration from their efforts to address climate change, strengthen resilience and work for a sustainable future. Raise your voice, not the sea level. Planet Earth is our shared island. Let us join forces to protect it.