

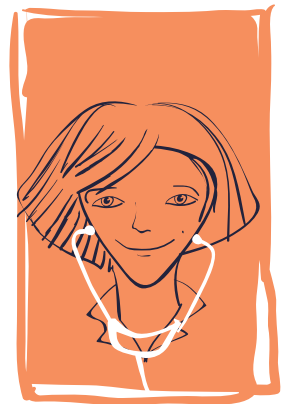
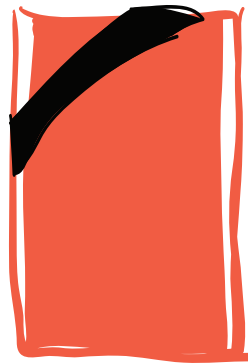
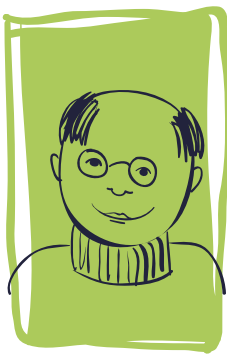
Voices of Change

UNDP in the Arab States

2011-2015



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



FOREWORD BY THE ADMINISTRATOR

I am very pleased to introduce this report on UNDP results in the Arab States region. This year, rather than reproducing the results we present in our report to the Executive Board, *Voices of Change* presents a set of people-centred accounts, demonstrating the positive impact UNDP's work has had on people's lives across the Arab world from 2011 through the beginning of 2015.

UNDP makes a difference, and we have asked some of the people whose lives we have touched to tell us how. Their stories point the way ahead for UNDP's work in the region, and underscore the importance of investing in people as the world moves towards a post-2015 development agenda.

The voices in this report have been strengthened by the joint efforts of donors, UNDP, and national counterparts.

I look forward to the next report where we will hear more voices of change from across this dynamic region.



Helen Clark
UNDP Administrator



INTRODUCTION BY THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

This is more than a report about UNDP in the Arab States. It is our attempt to give the floor to people in the countries of the region who have lived through the transitions, the triumphs and the setbacks of the past four years.

I urge you to listen to the women, men and youth of our region. They tell a tale of struggle, of joys but also of hardship. We are privileged to have accompanied them for part of this journey.



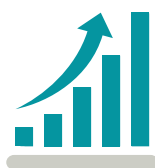
Sima Bahous
Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States



Jordanian women receive job-training with UNDP support in Jerash, Jordan. In 2014 alone, UNDP support for vocational training in Jordan targeted nearly 3000 youth.



The Region in figures:



370

370 million people,
up from 220 million
in 1990 *



\$7,700

\$7,700 GDP per
capita, up from
\$2,003 in 1990



76%

76% adult literacy rate,
up from 54% in 1990

* All development data in report refer to most recent data available. Source: Arab Human Development Report database.

TOWARDS SHARED, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The vision of the Regional Bureau for Arab States of UNDP is to **support the sustainable eradication of extreme poverty and significant reduction of inequalities in the span of a single generation in every Arab country.**

At the time of drafting this Report the Arab States region is going through a period of uncertainty with direct bearing on how we move toward that vision. New opportunities for transformation have emerged across the range of UNDP's areas of work since 2011, and many important achievements have been registered. New risks and crises have also come to the fore and many policymakers across the Arab States and around the world are rightly concerned for the future.

However there are grounds for optimism. With the tremendous expansion of voice and participation across Arab societies in recent years, and with the strong embrace of new knowledge and experiences, the Arab States are now presented with an unprecedented opportunity to change for the better. Success will depend critically on recovering from crisis where needed and nurturing positive momentum where it exists. It will also require moves towards more inclusive social, economic and governance systems

and major steps on the long path to resilience and sustainability.

The complexities of the recent period have challenged the Regional Bureau for Arab States of UNDP to rethink development in the context of the Arab world today is pursuit of an integrated development agenda, one that spans sustainable development, inclusive and effective governance, and resilience — the three areas of work of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Empowerment of youth and women are at the heart of this agenda.

In this context UNDP has worked hand-in-hand with our national, regional and global partners to reinvigorate our strategic directions and carry forward a set of major initiatives to address priorities that are pivotal for the region's future. As we have done so we have also moved into alignment with the new Strategic Plan while ensuring, through consultation with programme and donor partners, that our efforts are calibrated to the deepest needs of the region for today and the road ahead.

As we embark upon the road ahead UNDP proposes the following seven-point agenda for strengthening human development across the Arab States region:

1. Supporting the long wave of democratic change

New opportunities for more inclusive development have emerged across the Arab States as several countries have embarked upon transition and others have pursued reform in varied contexts. Recent advances such as the 2014 Constitution and democratic elections in Tunisia prove that progress towards more participatory and representative societal arrangements is possible across this region.

As the leader within the United Nations system on supporting transparent, accountable and effective governance, UNDP provided strong support across the region in this context. Marshalling our local and regional presence and global knowledge, we supported nationally-led processes of change such as elections, national consultations and constitution-drafting in countries including Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya. We also lent expertise and support to processes of reform in countries such as Morocco and Jordan, the fight against corruption in several Arab countries including Tunisia and Lebanon, and increased engagement with civil society as key development stakeholders across the region.

As we scan the Arab countries today however it is increasingly clear that the broad process of change sweeping the region is being tested, as many countries encounter new challenges on the long path to more inclusive governance. Indeed as processes in many countries have become increasingly fraught, and in some cases have collided with crisis, some analysts have begun to lose hope.

However at UNDP we remain optimistic. We will continue to prioritize support for more inclusive governance for development results, with a focus on development of institutional capacities and mobilization of regional networks in support of authentic change that ensures more equitable and effective participation and access to government services, grounded in the vision that effective governance is a key factor of broader development progress.

2. Responding to the Syria Crisis and supporting a broad base for resilience

At the time of writing there is a broad international consensus that the Syria crisis is not only a humanitarian crisis but also a crisis of development for Syria and neighboring countries. In Syria the crisis has rolled development back by some four decades, and over the four years since the crisis started we have seen the country plummet from middle income status to one where 4 out of 5 people are in poverty. Moreover, as refugee flows out of the country continue unabated, the crisis is having unprecedented social and economic impacts on host countries in the region, straining basic services and social fabric, and

threatening to rollback hard-won development gains.

The Syria crisis comes alongside other points of instability across the region, from the increasingly volatile situation in neighboring Iraq, to instability in countries that have embarked on transitions of varying types, to the unfinished process of peacebuilding and stabilization in Sudan, to the still-nascent project of state reformation in Somalia, and to the continued challenges facing Palestine. All told, the Arab States region is in dire need of renewed capacities and refreshed support for rapid, effective and enduring conflict prevention and mitigation, crisis recovery, institutional development, and maintaining social cohesion. That is, the region is in need of rapid building and rebuilding of **resilience**.



In Syria the crisis has rolled development back by some four decades, and over the four years since the crisis started we have seen the country plummet from middle income status to one where 4 out of 5 people are in poverty.

To strengthen resilience in a time of crisis, UNDP has supported the creation of nearly 20,000 jobs in Syria in rubble removal, reconstruction, sewing, food preparation and other areas.

Here, Mohammed, the sole breadwinner in an internally-displaced family of four, prepares traditional sweets in a UNDP-supported livelihoods programme in Homs.

UNDP has responded to these multiple crises by emphasizing the criticality of developing resilience-based approaches in crisis settings — responses that connect across the UN System and with partners to more clearly articulate the link between humanitarian, early recovery and medium and long-term development.

In particular, UNDP has exercised leadership along with sister agencies in articulating the need to respond to the Syria crisis in a comprehensive and integrated fashion, one that meets immediate humanitarian needs such as for water, shelter, and security, but also meets needs for livelihoods, education, health and social cohesion.

This comprehensive approach is at the heart of the UN's major frameworks for responding to the crisis: The Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP), focused on work inside Syria; and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which responds to the needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in neighboring countries.

These plans, launched at the *Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation*, in December of 2014, represent UN firsts for their integrated and sub-regional approach, and point the way to more effective and efficient responses to protracted crisis in the future. As events unfold in the region, UNDP will take lessons from this experience to ensure that our interventions are always strongly linked with those of our sister agencies, and strive to pay due attention to immediate, medium and long-term needs as realities on the ground require.

At the time of writing, UNDP is preparing along with OCHA, UNHCR and the Government of Kuwait for the Third International Pledging Conference for Syria, where all agencies hope for a strong response from the international community that allows for a scaled-up response to the Syria crisis across the humanitarian and development dimensions.



In Algeria, a farmer harvests vegetables following a UNDP-supported project to restore *fogarras*, traditional underground irrigation systems.

3. Pursuing tangible progress on development

While much attention has been drawn to important processes of transition and critical situations of crisis across the Arab world, it is increasingly clear that both the root causes and needed solutions around the region revolve equally around social and economic progress.

This is why support for progress towards **sustainable development pathways** remains of paramount importance for UNDP.

Countries pursuing transition in the Arab region have suffered rollbacks of key areas of development including poverty and unemployment amid uncertainty and in the context of an overall regional and global slowdown.

This is especially pronounced in countries in crisis.

Stability however is proving to be no guarantee for progress, as countries in the region which enjoy relative calm are also struggling to keep up with socio-economic needs.

In this context over the years to come UNDP will expand its cooperation in support of development pathways that seek to eradicate extreme poverty and achieve significant reduction in inequalities, including through expanding access to basic services and boosting productive capacities that create jobs and boost livelihoods for youth and the excluded. We will carry the message along with regional partners that even in a challenging political context it is imperative to address unemployment, social protection, and structural transformation while safeguarding the

rights of women and youth, including in situations of conflict.

One key aspect of this work will be the promotion of a climate resilience agenda, tackling water, food, and energy security. Insecurities in these areas have proven in recent years to not only slow overall development but also to contribute to social tensions and instability. In this sense the push towards environmental sustainability is a key component of the UNDP vision for a more peaceful and prosperous region.

4. Embracing women's empowerment and gender equality

Across all of our work in the Arab States region we seek to support faster progress in reducing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment.

Across the Arab world today women are at the forefront of a wide variety of national experiences, from transition, to coping with crisis, to recovery from conflict, to drafting constitutions and to leading social change.

However gender inequality remains deeply rooted and pervades all dimensions of life across the Arab world. Women and girls have made impressive gains in education over recent decades, but this advance has not as yet translated into measurable progress in the economic or political spheres: the Arab region is still marred by the world's lowest female labor force participation rate and the lowest proportion of women in parliament. Early hopes that popular uprisings would rapidly usher in a new era of gender equality have proven illusory. The task now is to both support advances on women's empowerment agenda, gender responsive policies and also work with partners to

prevent rollbacks where they begin to appear on the horizon.

To move forward rapidly on these fronts UNDP has kept women's empowerment and gender equality at the forefront of all of our work around the region and in every outcome area of the UNDP Strategic Plan, with notable results such as improving access to health services for 27,000 women in Somalia, supporting over 300,000 women in Egypt to obtain national ID cards, and training over 500 women in Jordan to gain productive employment. At the regional level, UNDP also supported the elaboration of the *Algiers Declaration on Women's Political Participation*, and will support implementation through a regional initiative called *Fostering Inclusive Participation and Effective Contribution of Arab Women in the Public Sphere*, or *Mosharaka* in Arabic.

5. Leveraging youth empowerment as a key to transformation

The Arab world is at a critical window and the better future the region is seeking can only be grasped if youth are positively engaged.

Currently 54% of the population of the Arab region is under the age of 25. Such a youth bulge can be an opportunity for development transformation, but only if societies transform to accommodate the productive capabilities of growing ranks of youth.

It is for this reason that UNDP has prioritized support for practical policies and initiatives to better engage youth across all areas of development. To take one example of the impact of this focus, between 2012 and 2014 UNDP helped create 300,000 jobs for youth across the Arab region.

27,000

UNDP has improved access to health services for 27,000 women in Somalia

300,000

UNDP has supported over 300,000 women in Egypt to obtain national ID cards

500

UNDP has provided training to over 500 women in Jordan to gain productive employment.

UNDP has also taken a leading role within the R/UNDG working with and coordinating sister UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes in the joint prioritization of youth as part of regional strategies and planning frameworks.

However much more progress is needed for the youth of this region, and UNDP is currently developing a *Regional Youth Action Plan* in order to strengthen our support at this pivotal time. The Action Plan will outline practical approaches to implementing the UNDP Global Youth Strategy – which itself was launched in Tunisia in March 2014 in an acknowledgement of the particular importance of this issue across the Arab Region.

54%

Currently 54% of the population of the Arab region is under the age of 25. UNDP believes that this youthful population provides the Arab countries with a unique **opportunity** for progress.

6. Championing new ideas for positive change

Perhaps more than any other multilateral organization, UNDP has a strong record of thought leadership with the Arab States region.

Of particular note in this regard is the *Arab Human Development Report* series, which since 2002 in five editions has brought fresh insight to development analysis that is framed within universal principles and solidly-grounded in regional perspectives. For more than a decade, this series has brought together independent scholars and analysts from every part of the Arab region to promote solid, fact-based understandings of major trends, emerging challenges and broad directions needed for a better future on areas such as governance, women's empowerment, knowledge and human security.

Over recent years UNDP has complemented these flagship analyses with policy reports, including the *Arab Water Report*, launched in Bahrain in 2013, and the *Arab Knowledge Report*, a series undertaken in partnership with the *Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation*. These reports, technical in nature and drafted by experts and practitioners from the Arab Region, have been leveraged across UNDP country offices in support of policy

reform in their respective areas. However as the region continues to go through its most pivotal moment yet, at the time of preparing this document UNDP is undertaking a new edition of the *Arab Human Development Report*, to be launched in the summer of 2015, on the topic of *Youth*. Taking a broad scan of the moment and potential roads ahead, the report will provide evidence-based arguments and concrete policy recommendations for putting youth empowerment front-and-center in the overall push for a future of sustainable human development, peace and prosperity across the region.

7. Catalyzing a new era of partnership

As the Arab States region has embarked towards a new era, so too has the overall context within which UNDP and our partners are working together.

Over recent years the international community has seen a blurring of the lines that for long shaped traditional cooperation, with long-standing definitions separating donor and recipient wearing thin, with a significant broadening of the overlapping spheres of policy advice and financial assistance, and with a multitude of actors coming together around prospects for shared value and the necessity of mutual accountability for results.

UNDP has embraced these changes and has taken a leadership role across all areas of partnership, helping to draw together the work and methods of both long-standing and newer partners, expanding our engagement with the private sector and civil society, and redoubling our focus on tracking and communication of results.

In years to come we will build on this foundation, and we will also continue and deepen our engagement with our long-standing partners through increased communication of results and engagement in high-level



policy dialogue.

We stand ready to upgrade our cooperation with the private sector, in particular in areas that relate to inclusive development and job creation. We will continue to work with civil society actors not only as implementation partners but also as policy advisers.

Last but not least, UNDP will also build upon our solid cooperation with the League of Arab States, ensuring that in programming and policy advice we are, together, more than the sum of our parts.

Immediate priorities in this regard include continuing to build up the Crisis Center we have established along with the League, and continuing to support Arab positions on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is our hope that continuing to deepen this substantive regional partnership can increase the joint impact on our work for the betterment of the Arab countries and the people of the Arab States region.

Engineers install solar panels at Bashir El Rayyes school in the Gaza Strip, part of a local renewable energy generation project that improved the livelihoods of 107,000 people.



The Region in figures:



70

70 years life expectancy at birth, up from 65 in 1990.



85%

85% of population with access to improved water source, up from 82 in 1990.



45%

45% of adults with formal employment, up from 42 in 1990.

UNDP IN THE ARAB STATES – CHANGING LIVES FOR THE BETTER

1. Sustainable Development Pathways

UNDP assists our partners across the Arab States region to design and implement development pathways that tackle the connected issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion while transforming productive capacities, sustaining social and natural capital and lowering risks arising from shocks. Our aim in this area of work is to help improve the resource endowments of the poor, and boost their prospects for employment and productive livelihoods.

We aim to do so in a disciplined way, building on the most promising parts of our portfolio and offering strong connections to issues of environmental sustainability, governance and resilience. This requires thought leadership; advice on “big-picture” reforms; capacity-building; action to boost employment and livelihoods, especially among youth and women; and greater attention to effective risk management. It also includes working with stakeholders across the region to address critical challenges stemming from food and water insecurity as well as exposure to global systemic risk. This section presents some examples of our work in this area.

1.1 TUNISIA

Snail Farming Paves a Trail for Success

In the small village of Boumeftah, in eastern Tunisia, inside a greenhouse where stacks of wooden frames stand in straight inclines like domino pieces, Nesrine Barhouma, 27, bends slowly to check soil moisture without disturbing her snails.

In recent years, worldwide demand for snails for use in high-end cuisine has skyrocketed. Low in fat and high in protein, snail is growing as an alternative to more common sources of meat.

In Tunisia, unemployment among 18-29 year olds has reached 30 percent, and the majority of unemployed university graduates are women. But as the country transitions to democracy, entrepreneurial Tunisian youth are charting new paths to generate income and contribute to the country’s economic growth.

“At the start, no one believed it,” Nesrine recalls. “I really had to fight to convince my loved ones that I had the necessary skills and desire to move forward. Young entrepreneurs must first fight prejudice.”

After two months of training, through the UNDP-led *Employment Generation for Youth in Tunisia* project, Barhouma learned the necessary skills to improve her negotiations with banks.

The project she participated in is part of a transition strategy focused on democratic governance, poverty reduction, and recovery which was framed after 2011 and has fed into the UNDP Tunisia Country Programme for 2015 to 2019. Funded largely by the Government of Japan, the project aims to promote and increase self-employment for youth through access to professional and entrepreneurial training with emphasis on environmental sectors.

Within the scope of the project, over 700 young people were trained in entrepreneurship in agroforestry, eco-tourism, waste management and renewable energies, and 328 eco-projects were launched. Twenty-one such projects were selected to receive in-depth coaching to help the young entrepreneurs finalize their business plans. These projects are projected to generate 250 jobs in Tunisia.

With support from UNDP, several young snail farmers, including Barhouma, have forged a cooperative through which they receive expert support to develop their business beyond Tunisia. “It’s very important to feel like you have support around you,” said Nesrine. “This helps you get through the moments of doubt. Through our joint efforts, we learned how to create a new dynamic and even define new horizons for the sector.”



700+

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With training from UNDP in Tunisia, Nesrine set up a successful snail farming business.

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1.2 ALGERIA

Weaving a Future out of Sand Palaces

In Charouïne, groves of trees stand in stark contrast to the sandy dunes and dangerous cliffs that surround this small Saharan town in the Province of Adrar, Algeria.

Aïcha, 28, had already envisioned a few ideas for the eco-hotel that she wanted to establish in her hometown of Charouïne.

Uncertain of how to turn her plans into reality, however, Aïcha was convinced her hotel would remain a dream.

Until, that is, she participated in the *Community Development in the South* project led by UNDP in partnership with the Government of Algeria. The project aims to empower and engage

"It was like pulling me out of my grave with this project," said Aïcha. "I have learnt to feel useful, hone my skills, to work and to earn my own living."

marginalized communities in towns like Charouïne and neighboring Timimoun by providing training and opportunities for sustainable economic development.

"Thanks to UNDP, I received training on tourism which covered issues like hygiene, marketing, eco-tourism and customer service," says Aïcha, her dreams reflected in her luminous smile. "I was thrilled at the opportunity to travel to other cities and learn from their achievements."

Charouïne is home to 30,000 inhabitants dispersed in three communities and 37 *ksours*, as villages encircled by ancient walls are known. Often facing disadvantages, women and young people in town do not have much to look forward to outside the crumbling walls of their *ksours*.

"I gained my strength from being surrounded by other women who, like me, have come out to learn to write and read and craft," she says. "They even provided us with a nursery to leave our children in while we learn."

As part of the project, Aïcha was also trained in pottery and micro-enterprising. She was invited to travel to Ghardaïa and Ouargla, two southern cities that have become tourist attractions for their local products and artisanal wares.

"It was like pulling me out of my grave with this project," said Aïcha. "I have learnt to feel useful, hone my skills, to work and to earn my own living."

1.3 KUWAIT

Religious Leaders for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

In partnership with the Ministry of Awqaf in Kuwait, UNDP implemented a two year project beginning in 2012, entitled *Religious Leaders for the Promotion of Inclusive and Sustainable Development*, aimed at increasing the capacity of religious leaders to contribute to positive social dialogue on human rights and inclusive development in all aspects of life. This was done through providing a platform for religious leaders to explore developmental and human rights challenges in Kuwait, increasing awareness of the inherent harmony between the core principles of religion and human rights, and the identification of a core group of religious leaders committed to promoting inclusive development principles.

The project involved a series of technical meetings and workshops drawing together over 500 religious leaders, both men and women, to build capacity and awareness for leadership on positive development change at the local level.

Working closely with government counterparts, UNDP also helped religious leaders to create 81 breakthrough development initiatives.

Already 31 are under implementation at the local level, and one has been mainstreamed into the Ministry of Awqaf's overall workplan.

To multiply impact, the project also included efforts to train trainers, so that religious leaders can expand the base for sustainable development in their communities now and well into the future.

1.4 MOROCCO

Harvesting Light for a Brighter Future

In the southeast corner of Morocco, Tafilalet, the largest Saharan oasis in the country, sits amidst sandy dunes where eco-tourists come to enjoy its historical treasures and famous dates. Over mint tea, the nomads of Tafilalet generously offer their guests from abroad a glimpse into nomadic life and its warmth, despite the harsh living conditions that prevail outside their tents.

Even with the area's natural beauty and rich historical heritage, the people of Tafilalet struggle every day with water scarcity and the consistent degradation of arable land. A great number of local youth see fit every year to leave the area in search of a better future.

Recognizing the need to safeguard the future of Tafilalet, UNDP launched a comprehensive sustainable development project entitled *Programme Oasis Tafilalet* along with the Moroccan Ministry of Environment, Social Development Agency, and Territorial Planning Agency, and international partners including France, Monaco, and Japan. The aim of the project is to augment traditional agricultural approaches with sustainable practices, including through using new technologies such as solar pumps and drip irrigation, and training local farmers on sustainable soil use.

In the oasis town of Fezna, 25 farmers from the *Borj Kaissat* cooperative have been equipped with a solar pumping station in order to save five acres of land from desertification. This successful initiative was then duplicated in four other oases, ensuring that 250 farmers benefited from the installation of a windmill and solar energy for irrigation. Over 1,300 palm trees were planted with this support.

"The partnership between the program, the town of Fezna, and the local population shows how we can complement each other," said Moussa Slimani, Mayor of Fezna. "From infrastructure enhancement to environmental education and cultural preservation, it has been a boost to local development."

In the towns of Izif and Tafroute, more than 5,000 people benefited from the establishment of two eco-friendly collective laundries, which provide stable jobs for women, as well as new classrooms for literacy and handicraft-making courses.

A focus on eco-tourism has also transformed dilapidated towns

such as Ksar el Khorbat into great ecological attractions.

At 6 pm, Mounir Maamri and Massoudi Ibtissam prepared to leave for home after a long school day. Following the installation of solar streetlights in Fezna, the *Maarakate Al Bathaa* middle school students no longer fear the desert darkness that used to engulf them as soon as they left the premises.

The solar-powered lighting project is a unique public-private partnership initiated by UNDP, the Fezna Commune and a consortium of three companies in the energy sector. Solar panels light eight kilometers from the centre of

the village to the school and houses, providing safety in a sustainable manner.

"We used to dread going to school," says Maamri. "Now that we know that the streets are lit all the way home, we have more confidence and we have no excuse to stay home."

In early 2015 UNDP and the Moroccan Ministry of Environment were selected for the *Green Apple Award* for environmental best practice given by the United Kingdom-based *The Green Organization*. The award recognized the Fezna project as a model to be considered across Africa, the Arab States and other regions of the world.

"We used to dread going to school," says Maamri. "Now that we know that the streets are lit all the way home, we have more confidence and we have no excuse to stay home."

5,000+

people have benefited from UNDP's eco-friendly work with the government of Morocco, including these two girls who now walk home from school in the safety provided by solar-powered street lights.



UNDP Support for a Regional Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The quest for dignity, peace, prosperity, justice, sustainability and an end to poverty has reached a state of urgency across the Arab world.

Since the year 2000 the Millennium Declaration and subsequently the Millennium Development Goals have inspired action towards the promise of a better future.

However progress towards the values and targets reflected in these frameworks have been mixed, and in recent years many Arab countries have indeed slid backwards on their paths.

In this context UNDP has redoubled efforts to support the achievement of the MDGs while also facilitating a strong contribution from the Arab Region in the global process towards a post-2015 development agenda.

Over the course of 2013 and into 2014 UNDP worked closely with United Nations Country Teams to facilitate fifteen national consultations on priorities or implementation for the post-2015 agenda, bringing together the breadth of concerned agencies, funds and programmes of the UNDG with stakeholders including civil society, experts and government counterparts to

share their views for the future development agenda. UNDP also organized a regional Arab Development Forum on priorities for the post-2015 agenda and supported additional regional consultations along with R/UNDG members, the Economic and Social Council for Western Asia, and the League of Arab States.

What has come forward clearly through these consultations is that the Millennium Development Goals have been exceedingly relevant for the Arab States region, however that the future development agenda needs to more strongly reflect issues such as inequalities, participation, peace and security, a fuller expression of gender equality and women's empowerment and the interdependencies of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. UNDP thoroughly documented these views and has been pleased that they have been well reflected in the global debate including in the reports of the United Nations Secretary General.

As countries come to a consensus for the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP will continue to support the priorities expressed by so many across the region, and will stand ready to support strong implementation and monitoring of the framework that Member States ultimately decide, with high hopes that the Arab states region can move forward sustainably towards the brighter future people across the region rightly demand towards 2030 and beyond.

1.5 SOMALIA

Small Grants Go a Long Way to Break Stigma

Safia*, 35, is a busy entrepreneur and single mother in Somaliland's capital city of Hargeisa. With the help of a small-business grant and training provided by UNDP, she runs a small clothing company to support her two daughters and young son. Although she is looking ahead at a growing business, Safia faces one very serious challenge—many people discriminate against her on the basis of her status as HIV-positive.

Discrimination towards people living with HIV and AIDS has closed many doors for Safia, and makes life extremely difficult for her and her children.

"I don't get angry when people attack me verbally," said Safia. "But I become very sad when my children are called names and abused."

Stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS remains a serious challenge to combating the disease. Over the past five years, UNDP Somalia has been simultaneously working on strengthening government capacity to protect the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, raising awareness and training religious leaders, as well as enhancing the capacity of judiciary institutions to protect their rights.

Before UNDP's *Small Grants Initiative*, Safia struggled to make ends meet. The lack of economic opportunities available

to her meant that she could not cover her family's basic needs, and they were falling deeper into poverty.

Just when she was beginning to lose hope, Safia found out she was going to receive a US\$500 small-business grant. She knew her life was about to change.

"I was very happy when I was told that there was a grant for me," she said. Working through local partners, UNDP provided Safia with training on setting up a small business, designing a marketing strategy and business plan, basic accounting, and ideas on how to spend her grant.

Empowered with these new skills, Safia established a small clothing business. Together with her sister, she

* Some names and identifying details throughout this report have been changed to protect privacy

is now importing clothes to sell in her community in Hargeisa. Safia's business is growing, and her success has given her confidence.

According to 2012 UNAIDS estimates, 31,000 people are living with HIV and AIDS in Somalia—over half of them women. Research shows an undeniable link between poverty and HIV and AIDS. The impacts of the disease often increase poverty and social deprivation. Affected people are often ostracized and lose out on access to jobs, education, and housing.

By increasing access to economic opportunities and providing valuable career training, UNDP helps people living with HIV and AIDS raise themselves out of poverty. UNDP works with Somali institutions and stakeholders to understand and respond to the development implications of the disease, recognizing that action outside the health sector can contribute significantly to better health outcomes. For UNDP's HIV and AIDS project, this means providing viable options for entrepreneurs like Safia.

By the end of 2013, 120 people living with HIV and AIDS received income-generating grants, technical assistance and advocacy support from UNDP, benefiting as many as 7,000 people.

Despite the challenges, Safia is full of hope and won't let discrimination or fear control her life. She is making a brighter future for her family, one day at a time.



In Palestine, with support from the Islamic Development Bank, Sweden, Japan and New Zealand, UNDP has supported 9,650 families to improve their livelihood through the "DEEP" initiative—including some who have used grants to start schools.

1.6 STATE OF PALESTINE

Kindergarten Restores Peace to a Palestinian Family

Ahmad Karaweh was among the many fathers in Gaza who due to difficult circumstances, struggled to make ends meet. Hana Zeidan, his wife and mother of their five girls, decided to venture outside the traditional role of housewife and the two created a project to pull the family out of poverty.

"I wanted a project that would first provide for our family," she said, the bright flower patterns on her headscarf reflected in her hopeful eyes. "We also wanted to provide job opportunities for

the needy and for fresh graduates who can't find any jobs out there."

A kindergarten was then conceived, and together, Hana and Ahmad surveyed the community to understand the market needs.

"We had the idea but we didn't have the means to realize our project," said Zeidan. "We went to UNDP's *Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme* and they supported our project. Our life was forever changed."

The Programme, also known by the acronym DEEP, is one of UNDP's largest projects in the region. It is funded for the most part through a

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9,560

In Palestine, the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme has supported more than 9,650 families to improve their livelihoods.

strategic partnership with the Islamic Development Bank, however, due to its track record of success, recently Sweden, Japan and New Zealand have started to contribute. It is implemented by UNDP together with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Planning and Labour, along with a network of national NGOs. With the support of DEEP, Hana and Ahmad were able to meet the needs of the community and create a kindergarten to school 50 kids. The nursery also gives work to two teachers, one cafeteria worker and one accountant, in addition to Zeidan. To date, DEEP has provided support to more than 9,650 families to improve their livelihoods. Ranging from the Karaweh family's successful kindergarten, to helping a young woman in the West Bank set up her own photo and video studio, the programme has successfully responded to a wide spectrum of professional aspirations that reflect an urgent need for Palestinians to regain control over their livelihoods.

DEEP is currently a \$120 million programme that is implemented in more than 350 cities, villages, and refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Through the first phase of the programme, DEEP generated over 23,000 paid and sustainable jobs—47 percent of them for women. The second phase will reach approximately 8,000 poor families in Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

Through DEEP, participating families are not only improving their livelihoods,

but also beginning to perceive themselves differently — as agents and drivers of their own wellbeing.

"I feel our relationship is much better," said Ahmad, as his proud grin widens.

1.7 EGYPT

Bedouin Handicrafts Go Global

The 61,000 square-kilometre Sinai Peninsula is widely recognized for the hospitality of its people, their knowledge of the land and their great artistic skill. The Bedouins of Sinai have long weaved the beauty of their land into traditional colourful garments and accessories.

Despite the artistic character and up-and-coming tourist economy in the southern Sinai resorts, social difficulties in the northern region of the peninsula remain high. Poverty afflicts more than 45% of the inhabitants of the northern and the rural population, including Bedouin groups who are among the most disadvantaged.

Yosra El Sayed, a 25-year-old mother of two, has a unique talent that clearly

shows in the high-quality products she makes in the traditional Bedouin style. In spite of this, her small handicraft shop had been struggling to stay afloat amidst stiff competition from the big bazaars of Beer El Abed in northwest Sinai. Without the necessary management and enterprise-development skills, her business could not live up to its full potential.

Determined to acquire the means to grow her business, in 2009, El Sayed enrolled in a three-week training course at the *Beer El Abed Community Development Association* in Sinai, tailored especially for medium, small and micro enterprises employing information and communication technologies to enhance productivity and competitiveness.

The programme is the product of a collaboration between UNDP and the Egypt Information and Communication Technology Trust Fund, with support from Canada's International Development Research Centre, the Government of Japan, the Islamic Development Bank and Microsoft Egypt.

Yosra is one of 9,000 small-business owners who received training on

Women in Egypt working in a UNDP-supported textile facility. Working with local authorities, UNDP helped create 130,000 jobs in Egypt in 2014.



“For me, the programme was a huge leap forward,” says Yosra. “Before, I was merely fighting for survival. Now, beyond my wildest dreams, I am competing in a global market, outside the local area here in Sinai.”

how information and communication technologies can make their enterprises more efficient, better connected, and more competitive.

The programme supports Egypt’s socio-economic development by raising awareness on the development potentials of information and communication technologies and making them more accessible and affordable, and is currently being implemented across 21 of Egypt’s 27 governorates.

“For me, the programme was a huge leap forward,” says Yosra. “Before, I was merely fighting for survival. Now, beyond my wildest dreams, I am competing in a global market, outside the local area here in Sinai.”

Six months after her training, El Sayed got the opportunity to market her products through the *Ayadina* Web portal, part of the *Kenana Online* group of portals that specialize in supporting medium, small and micro enterprises through online marketing. *Kenana Online* is itself the product of another collaborative effort between UNDP and the Egypt Information and Communication Technology Trust Fund. El Sayed’s efforts have finally paid

off. She completed her first deal to export Bedouin products to Italy, and received a substantial payment. The deal marked her biggest sales ever and earned her a foothold in the Italian market.

The project is part of UNDP’s broader support for job creation, vocational training, and small-and-medium-sized enterprises, which, in 2014 for example, led to the creation of over 130,000 jobs in close collaboration with institutions including the Egyptian Social Fund for Development.

9,000

Yosra El Sayed is one of 9,000 small-business owners in Egypt who received training on how information and communication technologies can make their enterprises more efficient, better connected, and more competitive.

1.8 SAUDI ARABIA

Creating Common Grounds to Benefit Humanity

She took a few hesitant steps towards the podium. Even with her back to her audience, she could still feel their eyes following her steps. She could see the lights flash as dozens of cameras raced to capture her every emotion. She was worried about how she looked! It might seem vain for a Saudi medical student who wishes to break through religious and traditional barriers and become a stem cell therapist. But Nour Alsaati knew that at that very moment, she was not just representing herself. Twenty-two years old and full of aspirations, she was speaking to this international audience in a Beijing hospital on behalf of all Saudi youth.

In September 2012, Nour Alsaati was selected to be part of a delegation of 20 Saudi students on a trip to China as part of UNDP’s Youth Exchange Programme. More than 200 students have participated in such forums on subjects ranging from biodiversity to architectural identity to technology for development, as well as renewable energy. For Alsaati, it was the lure of exposure to medical research in China that inspired her.

“Through dialogue we worked on initiatives that could lead to further advancement in medical research in our countries to benefit our people and humanity in general,” she said.

With youth at the heart of UNDP’s work in the Arab region, this programme aims to foster South-South relationships by providing a platform for students in varying fields to bridge cultural and geographical gaps and benefit from new experiences.

The Government of Saudi Arabia has shown a strong commitment to engage youth in development dialogue and raise their leadership capabilities to



Young women in Saudi Arabia participate in an International Women's Day Event.

better shape the future of their country. Established in 2010 with UNDP support, the Saudi International Youth Dialogue Forums series has been successful in creating common ground for young people across the globe.

"It wasn't straightforward at first," said Alsaati, recounting the cultural barriers that stood in the way of her initiative to push innovative approaches to medicine. "Despite our different backgrounds and the lack of a common language, I was able to persuade my colleagues with my views. After all, it turned out we all wanted the same thing –a better, healthier future for humanity as a whole."

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2. Inclusive and Effective Democratic Governance:

UNDP assists countries to maintain or progress towards peaceful and democratic governance, including now as many countries across the region have been faced with large-scale changes or have confronted specific challenges such as reforming constitutions, organizing transparent elections or maintaining social cohesion.

We have also supported institutions to adapt to changing public expectations and deliver clear benefits to citizens, whether in terms of better services, improved access to resources needed for employment and livelihoods, or greater security. In designing our work, we bring together our ability to advocate, advise, promote dialogue, support consensus and strengthen institutions. We will also seek to leverage the strong connections that exist between democratic governance and progress towards sustainable development pathways and resilience.

The Region in figures:



13

13 of every 100 parliamentarians in the Arab States region are women, up from approx. 3 in the year 2000.



9

9 Arab countries have formal national anti-corruption strategies, up from 4 in 2010.



Since 2011 UNDP has provided support for a wave of new elections and reformed electoral institutions across the Arab world, supporting millions to vote in the first democratic elections of their lifetimes.

2.1 STATE OF PALESTINE

Young Palestinians Prepare for Democratic Governance

On 30 September, 2013, 47,000 Palestinian youth set off to elect their representative in the country's first Youth Palestinian Legislative Council, a mock parliament. In preparation, young candidates had sat for a series of workshops to learn campaigning skills and hone their political agendas.

In the West Bank and Gaza, years of occupation and political stalemate have resulted in a decline in civic and political participation—especially amongst young people.

This new initiative, led by UNDP and the *Sharek Youth Forum* in the West Bank and Gaza, offers young people aged 18-25 an opportunity to participate in democratic political processes and make their voices heard. Members of the *Forum* have travelled to various communities, conducting workshops on such topics as the separation of powers, social responsibility, lobbying and advocacy, and information about the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government.

"This youth parliament is the voice of young Palestinians," says 22-year-old Bilal Al-Azzar, an electrical engineering student at Al Najah University in the West Bank. "We went through the same process as the real Palestinian Legislative Council—same elections regulations, committees, sessions."

Before the elections in September 2013, more than 23,000 young Palestinians—39 percent of whom were women—turned up to vote at the first electronic polls in the region, and 132 were elected as members of the youth parliament. By simulating the Palestinian Legislative Council, young people not only learned how to make their voices heard about issues that affect their lives, but also took part in training that one day may help them to become the country's future leaders.

"We joined this council to give youth a chance to participate in political decision-making processes," said Athar Hab El Reeh, a candidate for the mock parliament who was attending a workshop in Ramallah on e-voting, political debate and campaign management. "There is an obvious absence of young representation in the Palestinian National Council and the

lack of transparency around youth-related issues needs to be addressed."

2.2 LIBYA

Women Activists Advocate for the Future

On 21 January, 2015, a group of 35 Libyan women activists from diverse backgrounds representing all regions of Libya agreed, for the first time in the context of the Libyan conflict, on a joint statement affirming their demands for a peaceful, democratic and unified Libya.

The statement came at the conclusion of a two-day workshop convened in the Tunisian capital, Tunis, which discussed issues related to Libya's security and peace in support of the Libyan Political Dialogue in Geneva. Participating women activists aligned their diverse perspectives in an effort to ensure that their collective voices for peace are well heard at the national, regional and international levels.

The women activists acknowledged that the current dialogue process represents "a last opportunity" to resolve many of the problems that Libya faces today and to bring peace to the country.

Amira Jlidi, a legal expert among the group stressed the "need for the help and support of the international community, the United Nations and international organizations to include constitutional provisions in the Libyan Constitution which is being drafted at this time in order to guarantee the rights of women gained through international agreements and treaties as well as local laws."

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the International Foundation for Electoral

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Activists discuss priorities for restoring peace and human security in Libya, in a workshop supported by UNDP.

Systems collaborated to convene and facilitate this meeting, with support from the European Union and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Several participants in the meeting were members of the *Arab Women Peace and Security Network*, a network created by UNDP and the Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR), which has brought together over 300 women leaders across the region to advocate for full respect of the human rights of women in situations of conflict, and full engagement of women peacemakers as societies move to recover from crisis or engage in reform.

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2.3 IRAQ

Expanding Access to Justice

Dila* sits in the back seat drifting to the tunes of a melancholy song. Her long black hair flows freely revealing what used to be flawless skin, but is now a patchwork of scarred flesh. A tear trickles down her cheek. She wipes her face with an injured hand.

"I didn't take a bad turn in life," she tells the curious taxi driver after a moment of awkward silence following his questioning. "My sister wanted to end her suffering from a bad marriage. I tried to save her but I failed and in the process, and I was injured myself."

In her attempt to save her sister, Dila suffered serious injuries. Subsequently, her husband divorced her outside of court, took their son away and denied her alimony. Unaware of her rights and with no means to pursue legal action, Dila had nowhere to go.

A public announcement on television gave Dila hope. She rushed to the legal help desk in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and through their services her case was brought to court. Dila gained custody of her child and secured appropriate alimony and child support.

In cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and implementing partners, including *Heartland Alliance* and the *Women's Empowerment Organisation*, UNDP

Iraq established three legal Help Desks in Erbil, Sulaimaniyah and Duhok, as part of its *Access to Justice for Vulnerable Iraqis* Programme. Helpdesk teams comprising four lawyers and a social worker each receive daily visits from locals who have no access to legal resources or means to seek justice.

The programme is part of what has grown to be a nation-wide legal-aid programme in Iraq, which in 2014 provided services to over 6000 people through offices in six cities and seven refugee camps across the country.

Momentarily sheltered from harsh glares on the streets, Dila puts her head back. Though shy at first, she dares to smile. "I really like this song," she says.

Regional Lens:

UNDP Support for the Fight against Corruption in the Arab World

In 2013-2014, through its regional project on *Anti-Corruption and Integrity in Arab Countries* (ACIAC), UNDP enhanced the ability of government and non-government practitioners to design and use assessments to identify reform needs. In **Morocco**, ACIAC provided advice on the design of the country's first national anti-corruption survey and enabled **Lebanon, State of Palestine** and **Tunisia** to identify legislative deficiencies in corruption criminalization, law enforcement and international cooperation. Altogether, 11 Arab countries now have functioning anti-corruption agencies, up from 4 in 2010.

ACIAC also facilitated open and participatory policy dialogues, conducted specialized trainings, and provided legislative drafting assistance for the implementation of the *UN Convention against Corruption*. In **Lebanon** and **Tunisia**, UNDP supported the formulation of legal texts that, inter alia, criminalize illicit enrichment and enhance the effectiveness of asset declarations by public officials.

In partnership with the *Siemens Integrity Initiative*, ACIAC supported the establishment of a regional community of governments, businesses and civil society representatives, mobilized to promote integrity in the private and public sector. This multi-stakeholder community informed the development of specialized materials to empower SMEs for action against corruption, and the creation of resources to integrate anti-corruption in the curricula of law schools across the Arab region. These materials will be disseminated and sustained by local business associations in **Egypt, Morocco** and **Tunisia** and by law schools in **Morocco, State of Palestine, Qatar** and **Tunisia**.



Support for access to justice is a major part of UNDP's work across Iraq.

6,000+

In 2014 the *Access to Justice for Vulnerable Iraqis* Programme provided services to over 6000 people through offices in six cities and seven refugee camps across the country.

* Some names and identifying details throughout this report have been changed to protect privacy

2.4 TUNISIA

Winners Even When They Lose

Prior to 2011, Azza Badra, Thurayya Sithum, Bushra Hmeida and Sumaya Al Arounony had very little in common. But in March 2011, Badra, a sociologist; Sithum, a homemaker; Hmeida, a lawyer and human rights activist; and Al Arounony, a university student, set off on a shared path.

These four Tunisian women had one destination in mind — a seat in their country's first democratic elections for a National Constituent Assembly (NCA) a few months later.

"When Tunisians took to the streets back in 2011, I knew I should take an active part in this historic moment to rebuild my country," said Badra, whose campaign logo showed the number 51 representing the percentage of women in Tunisia. "It's a simple question of statistics. Women form the majority of the Tunisian population."

Together, the four women charted their political goals inside the university classrooms all summer leading up to the first NCA elections, which marked the establishment of an Interim Government and the roll-out of a constitution-drafting process. This was the onset of an inclusive, democratic future in Tunisia.

The *Summer University Programme* was one of three components of UNDP's electoral support project, which started in March 2011 at the request of Tunisia's Interim Government.

Some 160 women were nominated by their parties to attend a course organized by UNDP to train female candidates in electoral campaign strategies, campaign management and communicating successfully with voters and the media. Despite their different backgrounds,

"I had never even voted before," said Al Arounony, 22, a second-year information technology student and one of the youngest candidates in the 2011 elections. "Through the UNDP summer programme, I learned how to conduct interviews, how to do door-to-door campaigning; I basically learned all the tools needed to communicate with my constituents."

the four women had one common challenge to overcome: None had never designed a political campaign strategy.

"I had never even voted before," said Al Arounony, 22, a second-year information technology student and one of the youngest candidates in the 2011 elections. "Through the UNDP summer programme, I learned how to conduct interviews, how to do door-to-door campaigning; I basically learned all the tools needed to communicate with my constituents."

Around 4,000 women ran for the first time in the October 2011 elections. With a new electoral law that guaranteed more equitable gender representation in candidate lists, the heightened interest among women was a palpable energy ready to be harnessed.

"I am convinced that women have the capacity to restore credibility to the political process," said Hmeida, who like

her three peers, was nominated by her party to attend the UNDP programme. "We women can bring a more human side to politics."

Believing in the urgent need to bring women's voices to the table while drafting Tunisia's first democratic constitution, Hmeida sees her career path and her future aspirations converge. "We have to participate in drafting a constitution that best reflects the aspirations of the women of this country," she said.

"When I decided to participate in the elections I had no knowledge of the processes, until I attended UNDP's *Summer Programme*," said Thuraya Sithum. "Even if I lose the seat, I still win," concluded the former housewife. "Today, as all Tunisians can choose between so many candidates, we contribute to the nascent democracy in our country. Already we are all winners."

2.5 YEMEN

The Right to Vote*

"Together we build it... Together we protect it... We give it and it gives to us back... We can envision a better future when our skills, our talents are channeled to build our country with our very own hands."

...the lyrics of the song roll out against a backdrop of beautiful Yemeni scenery.

This seven-minute piece, performed by a group of well-established young talents in Yemen, was produced jointly by UNDP and the EU to raise awareness on electoral processes, and ways forward for a more inclusive and democratic Yemen.

To promote voter awareness and engage all sectors of society in elections processes, UNDP embarked on an ambitious multimedia campaign including internet and mobile, public transportation vehicles and other strategic high-visibility media to reach millions of Yemenis even within communities that face daily security risks.

But the struggle to expand the space for political participation for all communities including youth and women remains pebbled with many challenges.

Elham Sarhan wears a badge of courage underneath her headscarf—a small bump on her forehead after she was hit by a rock during an awareness-raising tour in January 2012, just one month prior to the Early Presidential Elections.

Despite her injury, Sarhan pressed on to other training sessions, her conviction never waning.

"Nobody stops me," said Sarhan. "This isn't just a job, this is a rights issue. I take these issues personally, not just because I'm a woman, but because they are human rights as well as women's rights."

Sarhan's scar reflects the complex struggle for women's rights in Yemen. More than 65 percent of rural women are illiterate, and many face discrimination or abuse. "Education is key," said Sarhan on her unrelenting and creative campaigning efforts. "Women need to be empowered."



Yemeni youth participate in a dialogue about national challenges.

"Nobody stops me," said Sarhan. "This isn't just a job, this is a rights issue. I take these issues personally, not just because I'm a woman, but because they are human rights as well as women's rights."

* This story was written before the new phase of crisis that accelerated in Yemen in 2015. Currently UNDP is reviewing programming to support the Yemeni people and institutions to build resilience in accordance with changing circumstances.

2.6 TUNISIA

Finding Justice in Transition

When the former president fled on 14 January 2011 under the tremendous pressure of popular demonstrations, he only closed the first chapter of the story of the new Tunisia.

Tunisians moved confidently along the route of democratic transition, selecting a new president, electing a constituent assembly and drafting a new constitution to shape their future.

Yet breaking with the past required not allowing the old regime to escape accountability for the crimes it committed against the Tunisian people.

Ibtihal Abdellatif, 43, a high school history professor, is one of more than 4,000 women and 11,000 men living in Tunisia who came forth with formal grievances against the old regime. Ibtihal is also the president of the Tunisian Women Association.

"I deeply suffered and most of the people around me are victims of the old regime, whether directly or indirectly," remarked Ibtihal sadly. "Reinstituting justice is a first step to address the past and build the future," she asserted.

In line with the Government's prioritization of responding effectively to that need, UNDP placed "transitional justice" high in its response strategy to support the transition in Tunisia.

"Pursuing transitional justice involves inquiry, reconciliation, and warranting accountability," said Samir Dilou, Spokesman of the Government and Minister of Human Rights and Transitional Justice. "It will not be simple to achieve. It may be painful. But, we are determined to make it work."

The approach entailed articulating operative processes and procedures of transitional justice into ongoing comprehensive efforts of judiciary reform, to ensure concrete and sustainable results.

According to Najet Ben Salah, Justice Reform and Transitional Justice officer in UNDP Tunisia, integrating the perspective of victims with international standards for transitional justice requires working on both sides: the demand side, engaging victims themselves and civil society organizations representing their interests; and the supply side, strengthening capacities of independent commissions and specialized legal services.

"Only a genuinely participatory and competent process of transitional justice can pave the way to a durable national reconciliation," asserts Najet.

Tunisians were unfamiliar with the concept of transitional justice and public opinion was torn between two emerging stances: one calling for accountability and reconciliation, and another calling for accountability and maximal prosecution of perpetrators.

To sensitize the public about the ends and means of transitional justice,

Sumaya Al Arounony casting her ballot in the Tunisian constituent assembly elections. UNDP has supported this and subsequent elections processes, which have given young men and women a first chance to shape a process of democratic change.



including truth, accountability, asset recovery and reparations, institutional reform to prevent recurrence and national reconciliation, UNDP collaborated with the Tunisian Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice, International Centre for Transitional Justice and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to launch an intensive outreach campaign.

UNDP launched an intensive public information campaign through television, radio and social media to set the stage for a national dialogue on transitional justice, engaging victims and civil society organizations representing them, through nationwide local consultations. The campaign included six informational TV spots explaining different aspect of transitional justice that aired with high frequency, in prime time over a one month period, and reached more than 4.7 million viewers. Audio versions of the spots aired on national and regional radios across the country and several leading bloggers launched their own social media initiatives based on the spots.

“To allow Tunisians to turn the page of the past with minimal cost, we decided to hold community consultations to allow people to directly articulate their needs, hopes and expectations of the new

independent body that will be created to oversee the investigation of grievances and establish the truth concerning them,” explains Minister Dilou.

Over a short period of a few weeks UNDP helped organize 24 consultations in all governorates, involving over 4000 people from all over Tunisia.

A national commission selected regional committees comprising over 120 judges, lawyers, law professors, notaries, and bailiffs, alongside journalists, sociologists, psychologists, and representatives of the martyrs and wounded of the Revolution to lead the consultations with the victims.

Regional consultations gathered recommendations on the nature and mandate of the anticipated independent investigation body and conducted surveys to build consensus around articles a new transitional justice law, with UNDP support. The draft law has been submitted to the national assembly for promulgation.

“I believe that we are on the right path to know the truth and heal our wounds,” said Ibtihal. “Only then will we be able to reclaim our dignity and respect as citizens and go on with our lives.”

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2.7 BAHRAIN

Extending the Line of Empowerment

In September 2013, UNDP Bahrain, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, launched the first-ever *National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities* (NSPD), which covers six themes —health, inclusive education, accessibility, awareness and media, economic empowerment, and legislation. The development of the NSPD spanned almost two years in a rights-based approach that included all major stakeholders such as civil society organisations and persons with disabilities.

Understanding disability as a human rights and development issue allows for recognition that persons with disabilities are equal citizens and must enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. This implies that resources must be employed in such a way as to ensure that every individual has equal opportunities for his or her full and effective participation and inclusion in society. Persons with disabilities should also have equal obligations within society and should be given the support necessary to exercise their responsibilities. The NSPD commits society to guaranteeing that persons with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and in a way that fully recognizes their place in society.

The NSPD for the Kingdom of Bahrain takes note of the current situation with its strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in order to make sure it responds to the most relevant concerns and builds on the successful implementations made so far. It contains statistics and disaggregated data, including data on age and gender. In this respect it will stand as a vision for the future and serve as a key reference for policy makers and practitioners working with and for persons with disabilities.

III. Resilience Building

Responding to crisis in the Arab States region presents UNDP with a unique set of wide-ranging challenges.

In Syria, the tragic loss of human life, coupled with the impact of destruction of the country's infrastructure, resources and economy, continues to push back human development achievements.

The influx of thousands of Syrian refugees to neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq destabilizes an already vulnerable region. This dynamic comes atop and interacts with a broad range of long-standing and newly-emerged crises, from the continuing struggle of the Palestinian People for full statehood, to incomplete recoveries from crisis in Iraq and Somalia, to new patterns of violence and fragility in Libya and Yemen.

In addition, the Arab region is home to fourteen of the world's twenty most water-stressed countries. The impact of climate change such as drought in Djibouti, erosion of coastal shores in Tunisia, and restrictions on access to water resources in the Gaza Strip are causes for grave concern.

UNDP has successfully advocated for a more creative and inclusive approach to crises across the region. In particular, along with sister agencies we have led a strategic shift towards planning frameworks that allow for humanitarian and development responses to be mutually supportive and complementary.

Recognizing the diversity of challenges that confront the region, UNDP has responded by putting in place a set of tailor-made interventions to address these and other issues that have gripped the region in recent years.

3 Million+

lives touched in UNDP's response to the Syria crisis—in Syria and neighboring countries.

300,000

jobs created for Arab youth, with UNDP support

Fatima harvests tomatoes in a UNDP-supported greenhouse in Tartous, Syria. UNDP's support for the agricultural sector in Syria has benefitted 800 families — part of an overall livelihood support effort that has created nearly 20,000 jobs as a means of building resilience and safeguarding development.



3.1 JORDAN

Supporting Youth Employment in a Time of Strain

Yahia Yousef al-Deques looks to the future with confidence. At eighteen years old, he has just completed a month of on-the-job training with electronics company LG. Yahia graduated last December from a vocational training programme established through a UNDP youth empowerment project in partnership with Jordan Career Education Foundation (JCEF). He and other graduates of the programme were then offered placements with large manufacturers such as LG and Petra.

"I benefited from the programme," says Yahia. "I learned lots of things. It has really helped me. Now I am a qualified technician in heating, ventilation and air conditioning. I am happy."

Yahia was not always so optimistic, however. Coming from a large family with five brothers and sisters, he left school at age sixteen to find work. Unemployment is a major challenge in Jordan, particularly for young people. Overall, the unemployment rate is around 13 percent, with more than 65 percent of those without jobs under the age of forty.

The problem of youth unemployment is hugely exacerbated by the ongoing influx of refugees from Syria. Numbering nearly 600,000 in Jordan alone, most settle in the country's poorest areas, such as the Balqa region, where Yahia and his family are from.

After working intermittently in supermarkets and then as an electrician, Yahia came across an advertisement for the UNDP-supported vocational training scheme. He successfully completed two interviews, and began the training with engineers from the Asala Foundation, under JCEF's supervision. In addition to technical education, participants



Yahia Yousef Al-Deques at a vocational training programme supported by UNDP. UNDP has increased its youth employment efforts in Jordan as the country has generously hosted a record inflow of refugees from Syria.

undertake supplementary courses on topics such as succeeding at work, building self-confidence and effective time-management.

The strength of programmes such as this lies in the combination of vocational and life-skills coaching. This dual approach means that young Jordanians are offered continuing support through the scheme and as they look for jobs. Within UNDP's overarching strategy that pulls together a range of actions aimed at tackling unemployment in Jordan, the private sector plays a

key role in supporting youth from disadvantaged groups into jobs.

Despite the difficult situation in already-vulnerable communities bordering Syria, UNDP's work in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq is providing lasting opportunities for young people affected by the spillover of the conflict.

Yahia is now putting his new skills to good use — and is hoping that his training at LG can lead to a promising technical career.

"I benefited from the programme," says Yahia. "I learned lots of things. It has really helped me. Now I am a qualified technician in heating, ventilation and air conditioning. I am happy."

3.2 YEMEN

3x6 Approach in Arhab: Empowering Youth and Easing the Impact of Conflict on Communities*

Three years ago, Anas Ramdan, 23, thought that his life was doomed and his family, at any moment, would flee from their hometown of Bani Ali the Arhab District, where an armed conflict took place during the 2011 uprising.

"I was frustrated and afraid of the future—of what will happen to us," says Anas who was at that time unemployed and had ceased his university studies due to financial need. Today his business is making a good profit.

"As most of the locals rely on the few wells and rain, I am the only one in the whole area to have a water trunk to give them water when needed," he adds with enthusiasm.

Anas was one of the beneficiaries in Arhab supported through the *3x6 approach* of UNDP's *Youth Economic Empowerment Project*. This approach, funded by the governments of Japan, the Netherlands and South Korea, engages youth in employment, helps them save part of their income, and then provides training so they can start their own businesses.

Arhab was targeted because it is a war-ravaged area that witnessed armed conflict between tribesmen who took opposing sides during the upheavals of 2011.

North of Sana'a, Yemen's capital city, Arhab was facing a water shortage and depended on only a few wells for drinking water. Most of the area's wells were destroyed in the fighting, and local infrastructure was damaged. Since then, residents have not had

sufficient water in their homes for drinking and other basic needs such as cooking, laundry and bathing.

In a bid to tackle this problem in one of the hardest-hit areas, UNDP piloted its *3x6 approach* in Arhab to provide sustainable livelihoods for the poor communities as a peace dividend, while addressing the water crisis.

"I am really happy. I feel that I have a profession and I feel confident of securing an income for myself and my family," says Ali Mohammed al-Hobari, 24, one of the youth involved in the project.

Empowering youth to find a job is not an individual gain. The youth enrolled in the area harness the training and the skills they acquired to support their war affected area.

"In our village, due to the armed conflicts, most of the water pumps are damaged or destroyed. I have decided to establish a mechanical pump repair workshop," says Nasseb Ghanem, 28.

Mohammed Yahia, a local council member, believed that the project

35,000

By the end of 2014, UNDP's support through the *3x6 approach* had benefited 35,000 people in Yemen.

has contributed to the stability of the area by qualifying the youth with the needed skills. "Supporting youth and the community's water issue will minimize the migration outside the area," he concluded.

As youth unemployment continues to be a major challenge facing Yemen, UNDP is replicating and adapting the *3x6 approach* in other areas around the country. By the end of 2014 this support had benefitted 35,000 people across the country.

Note: This story was written in cooperation with the *Yemen Times* Newspaper

"I am really happy. I feel that I have a profession at my hand and I feel confident of securing an income for myself and my family," says Ali Mohammed al-Hobari, 24, one of the youth involved in the project.

* This story was written before the new phase of crisis that accelerated in Yemen in 2015. Currently UNDP is reviewing programming to support the Yemeni people and institutions to build resilience in accordance with changing circumstances.

In their own words

"I am a divorced mother with a four-year-old daughter. I was married when I was 14. After my father died, my mother and uncle decided that the best option for me was to get married as soon as possible. Their bet on a man to secure my life was not the right decision; on the contrary, it became a great burden in my life. I had to work when I was 17 as a cleaner to secure milk for my infant daughter.

I was moving from one casual job to another until I got involved in the 3x6 approach with UNDP. I saved money from painting school buildings and then started my business in making perfumes and incense. I have learned to be strong and to improve my life. I know that someone my age should be attending school and should not be getting married in the first place. Therefore, I am continuing my studies in law. I realized that I can be as strong as men and I can do any job. Since I have learned how to paint, I am not hesitant to take it as a profession.

I am also teaching students in some private schools to make a living and provide a better life for my child.

My family does not look at me favorably as I am taking on challenges that go against the set conservative role for women. I have also learned how to say no! I know that despite the negative image my family formed about me, when my daughter grows up she will be proud of her mother. She will be proud of my strength to support and to secure a better future for both of us."

Nour*, 20, Yemen.

* Some names and identifying details throughout this report have been changed to protect privacy



A fruit and vegetables vendor in the Marj Market in the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon. UNDP helped revitalize the market in order to support communities seeking to cope with the economic fallout of the Syria crisis.

3.3 LEBANON

Reviving Al-Marj Market and Stimulating the Local Economy

The Al-Marj market has been a trading post for produce and other goods for decades in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. Recently, however, it fell into disrepair. Residents muddled through muddy streets during the rainy season. The marketplace did not have access to electricity and lacked proper stalls for traders to display their goods. "The land was full of mud and pebbles," recalls Najah Abu Taha, a Lebanese farmer and vendor at the souq. "Customers would not come when it rained. There was no sewage system."

UNDP undertook a project to renovate the Al-Marj market as part of efforts with national and local public institutions to respond to the impacts of the Syria crisis in the region, with a focus on helping communities cope with immediate needs, recover from setbacks, and sustain recovery through development gains over the long-term. Renovation of the market benefited the host community and stimulated the local economy for Lebanese and Syrians alike.

Today, buyers and sellers flock to the bustling site. The mud has been replaced by asphalt, and electricity is now available. Vendors now sell goods to communities from all over the Bekaa Valley.

"The renovations made by UNDP to this market encouraged people from all over the villages to visit it," said Abed al Rehman Alsayed Issa, a 26-year-old Syrian in Lebanon. "This increased our income. We have fifteen members in this family, and we all live off of this business."

The market hosts 1,000 square meters of shops, built to benefit more than fifteen surrounding villages. UNDP helped improve the livelihoods of both Syrian refugees and Lebanese citizens, increase economic activity in the area, and create new careers.

Despite these promising results, challenges remain vast as refugees continue to pour out of Syria at a rapid rate. Thus far UNDP has provided support to 500,000 people in Lebanon struggling to cope with the changing conditions. Amidst the crisis across the border, the renovation of the Al-Marj market offers a glimmer of hope.

"Before the improvements were made, people couldn't access the market," said Taha, the farmer and vendor. "But today, the market is considered a traditional market with remarkable positive changes in the business. I have more customers and I am making more profit."

500,000

UNDP has supported over 500,000 people in Lebanon to cope with the impacts of the Syria crisis.

Regional Lens:

Supporting Institutions for Better Resource Management and Sustainable Development

Through its Water Governance Programme for Arab States (WGP-AS) and Arab Climate Resilience Initiative (ACRI), UNDP-UNDP has promoted inclusive resource management policy processes nationally and regionally, and supported locally-driven solutions to water and energy management in countries across the Arab States region.

Supported by the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency, the Drylands Development Centre, and the Coca-Cola Every Drop Matters initiative, the WGP-AS has guided water ministries in five countries towards the adoption of integrated water management principles within national planning processes and most recently has brought regional analysis and exchange into broader policy advocacy through a widely distributed report, "Water Governance in the Arab Region: Managing Scarcity and Securing the Future", launched in 2013.

At the local level, WGP-AS has strengthened community governance, with focused involvement of youth and women in the design of water management and conservation initiatives in Yemen, Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia. Through pilots such as agricultural income generation from fog harvesting, or improved sanitation in schools for girls through greywater reuse, or the rehabilitation water networks, the WGP-AS has demonstrated the potential of non-conventional water supply systems to improve drinking water, sanitation, and both urban and rural livelihoods for thousands in the region. The design of these pilots were also instrumental in highlighting the importance of stakeholder participation and community awareness to the sustainability, maintenance and ongoing quality of water services, especially in arid areas.



A farmer works on a traditional beehive in South Darfur. An estimated 5,000 families are benefitting from UNDP's support in marketing traditionally-produced honey.

3.4 SUDAN

Beekeeping Fosters Economic Recovery in Darfur

In the small village of Kubum, in South Darfur, traditional manmade hives called *tangels* grace the treeline. Home to over 10,000 internally displaced persons, Kubum has recently become a hotbed of beekeeping among young people, ex-combatants and women. In an isolated community like this one, the availability of local materials to make tangels has also helped encourage villagers to be involved.

"I have been working with tangels for 26 years," said Haj Ibrahim, a resident of

Kubum. "I take some hay and tie it with rope, before coating it with mud and putting it on top of a tree for three to four months. The bees then enter the tangel and produce honey."

In an effort to improve productivity and provide sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable communities affected by conflict, in 2011 UNDP piloted the *Honey Value Chain Project*. The project provided a start-up grant of 1,000 traditional beehives to beekeepers through beekeepers' associations in Darfur. Keepers then shared collective responsibility of the hives from production through harvest. The project also organized regular fairs in Kubum to introduce new farmers to beekeeping management techniques,

providing them with a vital opportunity to market and exchange ideas and experiences in a community of local producers.

As a result, the number of members in beekeeping associations in South Darfur has increased from below 60 to more than 1,000 demonstrating a strong interest and commitment to beekeeping within the community. An estimated 5,000 families are currently benefiting from the project. And in 2014, UNDP's support for traditional agriculture in Sudan created 4,000 jobs and strengthened the livelihoods of 32,000 people.

3.5 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Local Leadership in Sustainable Energy for All

The Dubai Supreme Council of Energy (DSCE) unveiled the first-ever edition of its new *State of the Energy Report for Dubai*. With sustainable energy emerging at the top of the global development agenda, and 2014 set to launch the *International Decade of Sustainable Energy*, a key challenge will be to move from global dialogue to local action.

The inaugural report stands as an example of this effort, one of the world's first sub-national reports to capture trends and opportunities in the drive for a sustainable energy future. Developed in partnership with UNDP and the Dubai Carbon Centre for Excellence, the *State of the Energy Report* highlights the drive by Dubai to emerge as a centre of innovation, investment and technology in the Arab region.

To assess trends towards sustainable energy goals, the report brings together 50 leading thinkers on sustainable energy solutions to highlight specific trends and challenges in areas such as models for energy governance and low-carbon strategies, new financing models, catalysts and incentives for solar energy expansion, reducing energy intensity through end-use energy efficiency measures, and clean technology applications for green buildings and sustainable transport. Contributors include leading figures from the UAE and Dubai Government, UNDP, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Middle East Solar Industry Association, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Masdar Institute, to name a few.

UNDP is currently working with countries across the Arab region, from Palestine and Iraq, to Egypt, Tunisia and Sudan, to expand the use of renewable

energy as a source of social, economic and environmental *triple-wins* in development.

3.6 LEBANON

Charting a Safer Trail for Lebanese Mountain Farmers

In the small village of Halta, south east of Lebanon, a herd of sheep grazes peacefully across the mountainous land. A young man of fourteen balances himself atop his donkey, his pace in sync with that of his sheep. He raises his voice in a folk song about his land and its treasures. His voice is full of pride despite the fact that it was on this very land that he lost his leg more than six years ago.

"I was with the goats—me, my brother, my sister and my cousin," recalls the young man, Mohamed Abd El Aal who was barely six when he lost his leg. "My siblings walked in front of me and, as I followed, I stepped on a landmine and fell in the oak bushes."

Grazing and agriculture remain Halta's main means for livelihood. Every morning, dozens of farmers brave the mine infested hills hoping to work and make it back home safe, one day at a time.

But Lebanon remains littered with hundreds of thousands of unexploded ordnance, including cluster munitions. These items continue to kill and maim people in Lebanon and hinder development and reconstruction efforts.

UNDP's current support to the Lebanese Mine Action Programme, which is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Defense and Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC), aims to strengthen the capacity of the LMAC to effectively manage humanitarian mine clearance operations.

The *Support to Lebanon Mine Action Programme* developed the Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) and the Regional Mine Action Centre into an organization with improved quality management norms and with the capacity to manage all pillars of mine action according to international and national standards. With further support from local NGOs to boost national capacity, the project limited the dependency on international advisors and support and increased the efficiency of clearances in Lebanon.

The landmine, cluster munition and other explosive remnants of war problem in Lebanon is still a huge one that threatens the lives and livelihoods of the Lebanese population. Through the proposed project, UNDP continues to support the LMAC to improve the recovery conditions and reinvigoration of Lebanon in its most affected areas. This will also contribute to inclusive development by reducing inequalities and increasing the standard of living of the population. By the end of 2014, with UNDP's support the percentage of cleared areas in Lebanon has reached 70%, up from approximately 50% in 2011, and the country is on pace to reach its goal of being mine-free by 2020.

"Whatever life's wrath brings upon us, we stay here and never leave our mountain," said Mohamed. The soil of Halta is more precious than gold."

2020

With the support of UNDP and other partners, Lebanon is on pace to reach its goal of being mine-free by 2020.

3.7 SOMALIA

Making Peaceful Livelihood a Favorable Choice

In the town of Bosaso, in the northeast of the Bari region of Puntland, the waves are deceptively calm. On its sandy shores, barefoot children endure the scorching heat. They raise their hands in celebration, cheering as a ball shoots straight into a makeshift soccer goal. A few skiffs carelessly float by. Everyone in town knows —the boats are waiting. They carry young Somali pirates to loot the next big target crossing the Gulf of Aden —usually an oil tanker.

Young men living in Bosaso are no strangers to piracy on the shores of this major port town. Past wars, insufficient public and social services and dwindling resources have all converged to cripple the future of a young and disillusioned generation of Somalis.

Mohamed Jama and Abdikarim Ibrahim are two young Somali residents of Bosaso. Their paths have been twined by poverty, vulnerability and the lure of quick money.

"I grew up as an orphan in Bosaso. Being an orphan meant that you were doomed from the start. You had no one to stand up for you or take care of you," said Abdikarim Ibrahim, 21. "I had to do whatever I could to survive."

Jama, 27, has already served three years in Bosaso prison for piracy. After three failed attempts to rob ships in the gulf, his despairing mother turned him in to authorities.

"You turn to piracy when your future becomes bleak," Jama said. When he left he found himself at a crossroads. Instead of falling for the lure back to piracy, he chose instead to participate in a UNDP- supported reintegration programme.

Part of a joint UNDP, UNICEF and ILO *Youth for Change* (Y4C) initiative, the programme provides a holistic approach

"I am not some helpless person who things just happen to. I matter and have control over my life," he said.

"I am not a voiceless orphan —I am a contributing member of society."

to reintegrate at-risk youth back into the community.

Over 70 per cent of Somalia's population is under the age of thirty, and the unemployment rate for youth in Somalia is 67 per cent—one of the highest rates in the world. Many vulnerable young people are lured into conflict or end up engaging in piracy as a means of survival.

UNDP's joint Y4C programme supports youth rehabilitation, which takes place through non-formal education tools and training on basic social skills, peace building, rule of law, civic education, and literacy and numeracy classes. This support and guidance helps young people explore their options—opening up their choices, changing their attitudes, and helping them realize their potential.

As part of the programme, vocational skills training—in fields such as artistry, welding, and plumbing — are provided to help youth secure viable livelihood options.

Skeptical at first, Jama approached the programme without much hope.

"At the initial stage it seemed to be similar to any other humanitarian project, providing only short-term opportunities, such as access to food and employment," he said. "But through the social and legal rehabilitation I feel I have gained skills that I never had before. I believe now I have a chance for a brighter future. Social skills have been factored into my life and I have socially grown up."

UNDP works to strengthen Somali institutions and promote development. To this end, all social rehabilitation and reintegration activities are in line with the local Government's priorities towards poverty reduction and increased security. By the end of 2014, over 2,175 people benefited from UNDP's social rehabilitation and integration programmes.

Through the youth rehabilitation project, Abdikarim was able to gain the confidence he needed to make a change.

"This programme changed my life, not because it provided me with money but because it changed the way I think about myself," said Ibrahim, who now works for a solar electricity company that operates throughout Somalia's Bari region.

"I am not some helpless person who things just happen to. I matter and have control over my life," he said. "I am not a voiceless orphan —I am a contributing member of society."

2,175

By the end of 2014, over 2,175 people benefited from UNDP's social rehabilitation and integration programmes in Somalia.

3.8 DJIBOUTI

Introducing New Crops to End Famine

Under the blazing Djiboutian sun, the cracks that cast their web across the land, covered with hardened volcanic rock, extend as far as the eye can see. Here in the plains of Petit and Grand Bara, traditional pastors and farmers are no strangers to harsh conditions. Continuous droughts have left an already vulnerable population dangerously exposed.

“Rain water is getting scarcer,” says one young mother, her long orange scarf losing a futile battle against the scorching winds to keep her baby under cover. “We have very little to feed our goats. And what we find is of bad quality too. Soon we will lose our herds.”

With no means to sustain their crops, feed their livestock and nurture their own families, many farmers and local pastors migrate to cities in search of better livelihoods. Once there, they find themselves ill-equipped to vie for dwindling opportunities in unfamiliar urban settings. They end up living in slum-like dwellings with little access to employment or resources.

As famine continues to threaten the Horn of Africa, UNDP Djibouti works closely with the Government to

give rural communities hope and a chance to escape poverty. Addressing pressing challenges imposed by the effects of climate change including a prolonged drought, in 2012 UNDP launched a project to develop agro-pastoral land and train farmers in cultivating techniques, diversifying crops, composting and water and soil conservation.

With the availability of agricultural inputs such as water, fertilizers, seeds and livestock, with improved capacities, farmers are able to prevent famine. “I can now sell onions, tomatoes, watermelons, pepper, and goat’s milk. Enough to feed my family and generate income,” said Maro Igueh, a farmer who lives in a village in Grand Bara. “I now have fencing, expanded canals for irrigation and more agricultural equipment. Things have improved for me. I am ready to face any possible rainfall shortage,” she added.

The project benefits more than 100 families in its immediate vicinity by first providing sustainable infrastructure for water supply, and training local farmers and pastors on the climate appropriate ways to cultivate their land. Building on their ancestral resilience, local farmers and pastors have not just secured food on their tables, and sustenance for their herds, they also sell their surplus to nearby markets and use their

5,500

UNDP's *Emergency Drought Response* cash-for-work programme provided immediate emergency employment to 5,500 households.

generated income to increase their production and better their livelihood. They consider this project a solid step out of imminent extreme poverty and a way out of forced migration from their ancestral land.

UNDP's *Emergency Drought Response* cash-for-work programme provided immediate emergency employment to 5,500 households through rehabilitation of water-harvesting infrastructure and has restocked livestock to 500 households. The programme targeted a total of 36,000 people, including the most vulnerable rural and urban households through food vouchers.

While droughts cannot be avoided, famines can. Building resilience and capacities for sustainable agricultural practices, farmers will be able to withstand droughts without resulting in famine.

“I can now sell onions, tomatoes, watermelons, pepper, and goat’s milk. Enough to feed my family and generate income,” said Maro Igueh, a farmer who lives in a village in Grand Bara, Djibouti.

3.9 SYRIA

Restoring Roman Wells to Bring Relief

In Syria's rural areas, long-abandoned Roman wells have become more than a relic of a bygone civilization. For communities struggling to cope with the disastrous ongoing conflict, these ancient wells, dug more than 2,000 years ago, have now become a means of survival.

Fighting in Syria has resulted in widespread physical damage to basic infrastructure. Because of damage to pipelines throughout the country, and an exodus of skilled maintenance workers and managers, access to clean and safe water has become increasingly difficult, and very costly for farmers already facing poverty.

"Before the crisis, we rarely had a problem with water," says Jameel, 45, a father of four and small-scale farmer in the region of Al-Ghab. "The crisis has forced us to buy water from trucks, which is very expensive."

To help farmers like Jameel, UNDP is providing emergency jobs to people affected by the conflict, in a programme to repair ancient wells in the region. By cleaning and pumping out stagnant water, widening and deepening the wells and monitoring the water quality for safety, hundreds of conflict-affected families in Syria now have access once again to clean drinking water. At the same time, many of those who have lost jobs because of the conflict are able to prevent their slide into further poverty through the job scheme.

"I am really happy to have been able to work on rehabilitating this well," says Qais, who was displaced by fighting in his native home, Homs, and now lives in Al-Ghab. "With two

months of work, I was able to earn almost US\$900."

Since inception of the project, UNDP supported the restoration of 36 wells, which has helped hundreds of farming households to save an average of US\$360 per year (a figure that represents approximately one month's average salary). Some 450 families and approximately 2,250 persons have benefited from clean and safe water stored in the wells, part of UNDP's overall impact which has benefitted the livelihoods of over 2.2 million people in the country during this time of urgent need.

"Rehabilitating Roman wells not only provides clean and safe water, but is also more cost-effective than building a new one," says UNDP's Ali Kayyali. "While modern wells are costly to build and require heavy equipment, Roman wells collect rainwater and water from surface aquifers. They are an ideal quick fix for the water crisis we are facing due to the conflict."

For Jameel, the well has brought much-needed revenue for him and his family. The water he now collects from the well helps him produce

2.2 Million

UNDP's urgent interventions in support of livelihoods in Syria have touched the lives of 2.2 million people.

fruits and vegetables to sell at the local market.

"The money I used to pay for buying water can now be used for seeds, and expansion of income-generating agricultural products," says Jameel. "I feel really blessed that I don't need to ask for food assistance. I can now feed my family."

"The money I used to pay for buying water can now be used for seeds, and expansion of income-generating agricultural products," says Jameel. "I feel really blessed that I don't need to ask for food assistance. I can now feed my family."

Providing for a Family in a Time of Crisis

Maheer became homeless after his house, where he used to live with his wife and six of his family members, burned down in a mortar bombardment. Maheer and his wife are both deaf and mute since childhood. Their disability never prevented them from living happily in the past since income from his construction job paid for his family's needs. Finding a new source of livelihood became a huge challenge after displacement.

"We left our home without taking anything with us. Everything is expensive; I couldn't buy milk for my six month old son or provide heating fuel to warm my family during the cold winter. It was impossible for me to find a job. I was suffocating!" he says, using sign language.

Then, Maheer got involved in a poultry project that UNDP started in partnership with a local NGO. The project aims to revive the traditional poultry sector of the As-Salamya district, in order to provide job opportunities to affected IDPs and host communities. Vulnerable groups, such as women-headed households and people with disabilities, are specifically sought for the initiative. Maheer was among the participants. Working eight hours a day, he was able to again supply for his family.

"I was praying to God and asking for a decent job. Thanks to this opportunity, I don't have to borrow money anymore," he signs, with a smile on his face.

"Thanks to this opportunity, I don't have to borrow money anymore," he signs, with a smile on his face.



UNDP RESOURCES IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

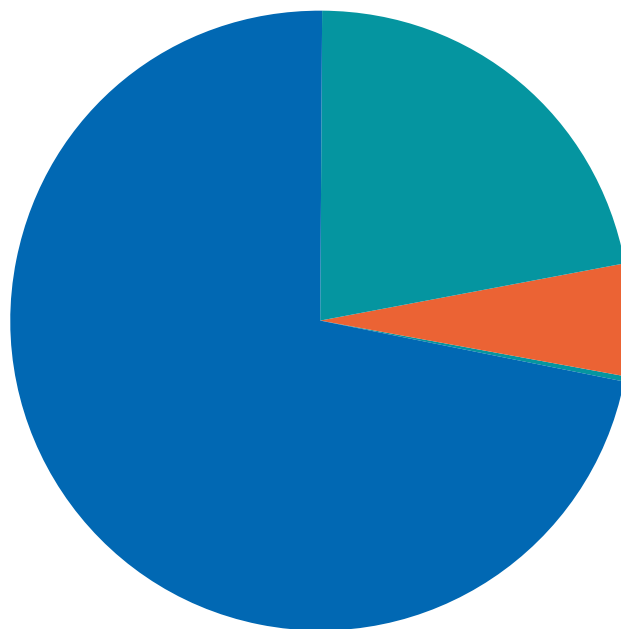
UNDP is funded entirely from contributions by a range of partners, including UN Member States, and multilateral and other organizations. These contributions are provided as either regular resources or as other resources earmarked by contributors.

The 2012- 2014 programme delivery was \$1.6 billion and comprised US\$ 93 million of regular resources, or approximately 6 per cent of the total; \$363 million of local resources contributed by programme Governments to our development work in the countries of our region, or approximately 22 percent; and US\$1.16 billion of contributions by partners, both bi- and multilateral, to specific programmes and projects, or approximately 72 percent.

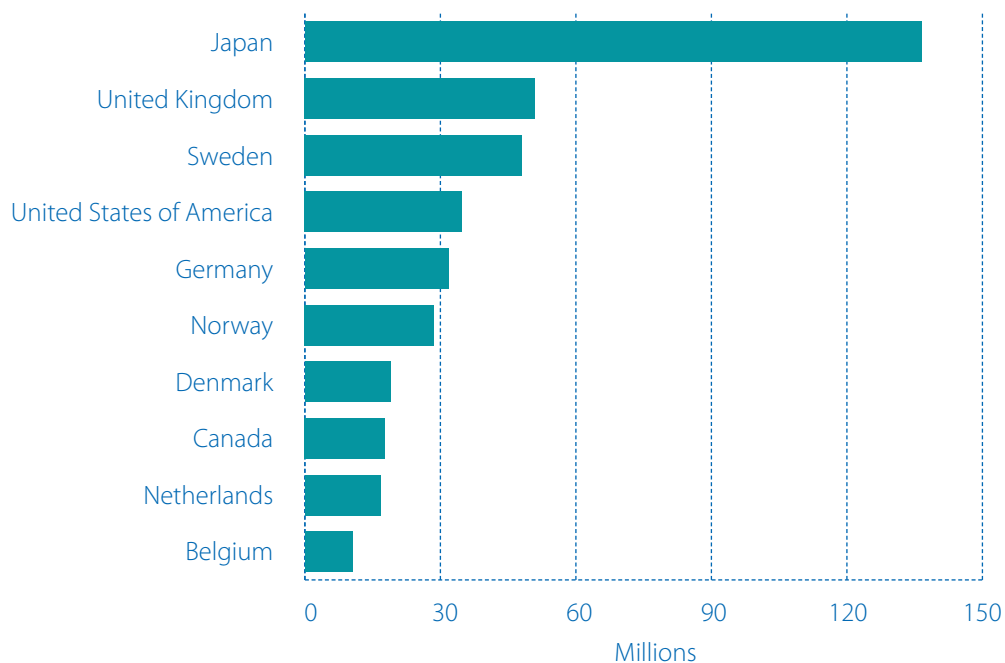
Programme Delivery By Source of Funding: 2012-2014

Preliminary as of February 2015 - in millions of US dollars and percentage of total

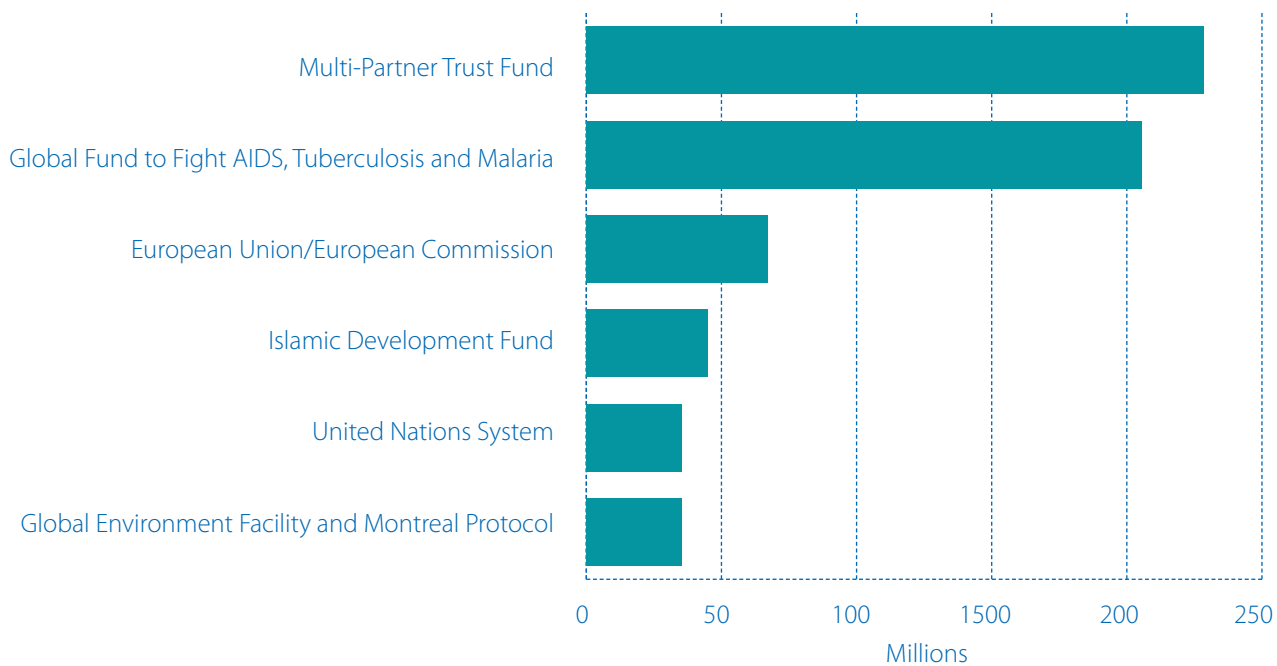
Donor Resources	\$1,157	72%
Local Resources	\$363	22%
Regular Resources	\$93	6%
Other Resources	\$1	<0%



Programme Delivery, through support by Top Bilateral Partners (2012-2014)



Programme Delivery, through support by Top Bilateral Partners (2012-2014)



A Somali boy reads from a classroom blackboard. UNDP has supported win-win initiatives in Somalia by creating jobs in school-rehabilitation programmes that have improved access for 1,340 pupils.



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB STATES REGION

2015 and beyond

This report has shown how the work of UNDP across the Arab States region is making differences that matter in people's lives.



"Freedom will never die," a powerful message signaling the positive determination of people across the Arab world for a brighter future.

As we launch this report in mid-2015 we are mindful that our vision remains vital. That vision is to support the sustainable eradication of poverty and the significant reduction of inequalities while strengthening resilience in every country of the Arab States Region.

We are also clear in our understanding that while this vision is achievable, it is ambitious; and that it requires progress and work across a vast integrated agenda including in particular a transformation towards greater empowerment for women and youth.

It is our belief that most of the areas that we propose to cover will be firmly reflected in the world's next development agenda. We stand ready to work with our national and regional partners, civil society, and

international partners to bring the best of our capacities to bear in support of a robust implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As we do so we will bring with us many lessons learned over the period covered in this report. And we will count on the continued and indeed strengthened collaboration of our partners. Most of all, the progress we all seek will depend on the men and women of all ages and all walks of life across the Arab States region who are ready for a brighter future – the *Voices of Change* that we have met in this report and the countless others who join in bringing about a more just, more sustainable Arab Region.

Our vision is to support the sustainable eradication of poverty and the significant reduction of inequalities while strengthening resilience in every country of the Arab States Region.

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For further information, please contact your local UNDP office, or contact:

Regional Bureau for Arab States
United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, New York
10017
USA

Published by the Regional Bureau for Arab States
United Nations Development Programme
New York

Writer: Laila Saada
Design: Red Dog Design Inc
Printer: GSB Digital



*Printed on environmentally friendly
paper with vegetable-based inks.
The printed matter is recyclable.*

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Regional Bureau for Arab States
One United Nations Plaza
New York, New York, 10017

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