

United Nations Development Programme



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# **Japan and the Arab States: Partners for Development**



# A Partnership for Growth, Peace and Stability

UNDP's presence in the region covers the following countries and territories:

Algeria  
Bahrain  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
Iraq  
Jordan  
Kuwait  
Lebanon  
Libya  
Morocco  
Saudi Arabia  
Somalia  
Sudan  
Syria  
Tunisia  
United Arab Emirates  
Yemen  
Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

MOROCCO: A woman weaves with a traditional loom in a workshop in Fes el Bali. Photo: Dieter Telemans/Panos Pictures

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Text: Laila Saada

Over the past decades, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Japan have developed an important partnership, anchored in the belief that without peace, security and stability in the Arab region, the advancement of human well-being cannot be achieved. Together, we have worked to ensure a balanced approach to better the livelihoods of men, women and children in the Arab states.

Today's Arab region is full of opportunities. The political turmoil that has plagued the region over the past two years has galvanized millions of young people and unified their determination to change their destiny and secure their future. People in the Arab states are more aware today of their rights and are eager to seize opportunities to move forward and improve their lives. This is where UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States finds its mission: to accompany change and help the region meet its challenges.

Youth employment has taken priority throughout our programmes in the Arab states. The region has been weighed down by alarmingly high rates of unemployment, especially among women and people with disabilities. As we work across the main areas of development—poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery and environment and sustainable development—youth remain at the heart of our work.

Whether we empower women to participate in nation-building like Libya and Yemen, or we facilitate the inclusion of former combatants and warlords into productive communities such as the village of Mazmoun in Sudan, or whether we educate the young on climate change and energy efficient lifestyles like our work in the oasis of Tafilalet in Morocco, together we strive to harness the wealth of human energy and high hopes that this region has to offer. You will see these stories illustrated in this publication.

In 2013, UNDP and the Government of Japan marked two decades of cooperation to promote development in Africa through the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD). Nine UNDP offices in the Arab region are located in Africa and have benefited from this partnership. We believe that there is a real possibility for a Tokyo International Conference for Arab Development.

As recent events across the region have reminded us, development is not only about economic growth or the up-and-down of financial data. Development has a human face. It is about dignity, voice and justice, with people at its core, both as its drivers and its beneficiaries.

**Sima Bahous**

*Assistant UN Secretary-General and  
Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Arab States*

# Japan Funds to UNDP Projects in the Arab States in 2012 and 2013

2012

Country	Project	Amount in US\$ Million
Algeria	Youth Employment Generation	0.50
Djibouti	Development of Agro-Pastoral Farming System in Rural Communities	1.00
	Emergency Preparedness and Response Disaster Risk Management	0.50
Egypt	Youth Employment Generation	0.50
	Consolidating Electoral Practices and Institutions	1.00
	Employment Creation Programme in Public Work	5.50
	Strengthening the Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Peacekeeping in Africa	0.50
Jordan	Youth Employment Generation	0.50
Libya	Strengthening UN Coordination in Humanitarian Efforts	0.35
	Early Recovery for Sustaining Humanitarian Gains	0.46
	Support to Transitional Governance Structures	5.05
Morocco	Youth Employment Generation	1.00
Somalia	Enhance Food Safety and Introduce Biogas Technology in Sheikh	0.35
	Support to Somalia Police Force	5.20
	Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Youth Affected by Conflict	6.03
Tunisia	Youth Employment Generation	1.50
	Support to National Dialogue and Constitutional Process	7.60
	Supporting Emergency Employment and Private Sector Development	2.30
Yemen	Youth Employment Generation	2.00
	Support to Presidential Election	1.14
occupied Palestinian territory	Construction of the Administration Building in Jericho Agro-Industrial Park	1.09
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$44.52</b>

2013

Country	Project	Amount in US\$ Million
Egypt	Employment Creation in Public Works	5.60
	Strengthening Good Governance: Social Contract Centre	2.00
	Strengthening Democratic Process	2.00
Jordan	Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities	4.00
	Youth Employment Generation Programme	2.00
Morocco	Strengthening Public Services	0.20
Somalia	Capacity Building of Police Force and Peacebuilding Programme	7.30
	Solar Applications to Improve Energy Security	1.00
	Capacity Building for Border Security	1.50
Sudan	Support for Disabled People, Returnees and Their Communities	1.00
Syria	Capacity Development of Infrastructure Damage Assessments	0.50
Tunisia	Improving Governance of Drinking Water Supplies in Rural Areas	1.00
	Support to the Electoral Process	1.00
	Strengthening Public Services	1.00
	Support for Effective National Integrity System	0.25
	Support for Development of Crisis Management System	2.58
Yemen	Support to Elections	2.00
occupied Palestinian territory	Construction of Electrical Substation for the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park	0.58
	Construction of the Administration Building in Jericho Agro-Industrial Park	0.40
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$35.91</b>

Source: UNDP



UNDP Somalia

## Boosting Economic Growth

Securing livelihoods and ensuring access to education and healthcare services have been at the centre of UNDP's mission to reduce poverty around the world.

In the Arab region, the unmet needs of a young population that still suffers from the highest rates of unemployment can no longer be ignored. In some countries, over 30 percent of youth in the labour market cannot find a job. In **Yemen**, for example, 50 percent of the unemployed are young people.

UNDP is strongly committed to youth employment projects across the region. Tens of thousands of young people, especially women in rural areas, have been trained for the job market. Many are currently successfully employed.

The Government of Japan has been working with UNDP on poverty reduction programmes and access to basic services such as healthcare and education in the region for several years. For instance, the range of successful employment and food generation programmes through the Green Jobs projects in North Africa attests to our common goal of seeking higher living standards. UNDP initiatives have further empowered thousands of young people to jump-start their businesses and secure lucrative jobs.

▲ **SOMALIA:** In 2013, UNDP, through its poverty alleviation and livelihoods programme, provided funds to some internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Kooshar IDP Camp in Burao, Somaliland. The programme helped them to start their own rickshaw business or "motorized camels," as they like to call them.

In the region,  
by 2011,  
**92 percent**  
of children were going to  
primary school, up from  
85 percent in 1999.

**5 million**  
jobs were created  
in **Iraq**.

**1,200**  
young men and women  
found employment and  
started small businesses  
as a result of UNDP's Youth  
Economic Empowerment  
project in **Yemen**.

## JORDAN: Employment Programme for New Graduates

Like many young students in Jordan, Yousef El-Mughrabi, 23, was full of plans for his future. Living in Ma'an, a southern Jordanian governorate where one in four people live in poverty and one in five is unemployed, El-Mughrabi's dream was a simple one: securing a respectable job that could open the door for a better tomorrow for himself and his family.

Although he graduated with good grades in 2010, he was not equipped with the required skills for the job market. "My certificate was not enough," he says. "People were telling me jokingly that graduates have three options after university: to exit Jordan by land, air or sea. But I do not want to leave."

He participated in the UNDP-supported training programme for recent graduates seeking employment. The programme additionally places trainees in internship programmes in the private sector, making them significantly more employable. This programme is part of a larger UNDP initiative launched in April 2012, in partnership with the Government of Japan, dedicated to finding jobs for young people living in Arab countries.

El-Mughrabi distinguished himself as an outstanding public relations intern for tourism in Ma'an, where he now serves as the Deputy Director.

"You could never imagine how much difference the training and internship made in my life," Yousef says enthusiastically. "They finally unlocked the door to employment."



UNDP Tunisia



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## Up Close: Egypt

Some 300 kilometres north of Cairo, in one of the many narrow alleyways that connect citizens to Alexandria, Egypt's second largest city, Mohammad Khamis El-Said puts the finishing touches to his latest wood art design on his computer.

El-Said is deaf. He learnt woodcarving from his uncle at a very young age. However, due to his handicap, coupled with his lack of marketing and basic accounting knowledge, his work was almost always exploited. El-Said did not know how to promote his craft and make a decent living.

Unemployment rates in Egypt have reached 13 percent, affecting more than 77 percent of Egyptian youth. To address this, in March 2012, UNDP launched the Youth Employment Generation project, which aims at providing the necessary training for young entrepreneurs like El-Said to start up their own businesses.

"The training changed my life and opened up new horizons for a promising future," said El-Said, now 25. "I started creating designs using my computer and marketing them online."

**ALGERIA: Towards the end of 2012, UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Japan, launched an employment project called *Força*, which means "opportunity" in Arabic, to introduce young job seekers to civil society employment opportunities. The scheme currently employs 100 young men and women. The project was launched with a design contest for its logo among art students. Nadia Fekhar, the logo contest winner walked away with a new iMac computer.**

**TUNISIA: In the Southern provinces of Mednine and Tataouine, Tunisia, where resident communities have been severely affected by the turmoil in neighbouring Libya, UNDP, in partnership with non-governmental organizations, coached recent graduates to successfully launch their enterprises. Trained to sew, Zahra Tlig, has just signed her first business deal.**



UNDP Algeria





UNDP Libya

## Building Inclusive Societies

In the wake of the series of popular uprisings that have swept the Arab region over the past two years, UNDP responded to the urgent call for political reform, and for transitional governments to effectively meet the aspirations of men and women, including youth, who envision their future in a more inclusive and just political system in their respective countries.

UNDP's work has a special focus on electoral assistance, access to justice and support to national dialogue, to include the voices of people who had been traditionally overlooked.

In partnership with the Government of Japan, UNDP embarked on a range of projects that aim to educate and empower citizens, especially those from poor communities to raise their concerns and become active participants in this historic and dynamic process.

Impressive results have been achieved in several countries. **Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen**, for example, have witnessed a number of milestones in this short but challenging period of transition.

▲ **LIBYA:** Candidate Radhya Bourawi is elated to have voted after a three-hour wait.

In **Egypt**,  
**76,000**  
national identity  
cards were issued to  
women in rural  
areas.

**1,700**  
women in **Tunisia**  
were trained  
on democratic  
processes and  
citizenship.

In the region  
women's share  
of seats in parliaments  
rose from  
2.6 percent in 2000 to  
**12.7 percent**  
in 2013.

**YEMEN: Training for production of biometric identification cards.**



## Up Close: Yemen

Elham Sarhan wears a badge of courage underneath her headscarf: 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. Her visits were organized by UNDP to prepare women in rural areas for the first crucial elections after almost 33 years of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule.

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

"Nobody stops me," she said. Sarhan is head of the Women's Unit at the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum in Yemen. "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. "Education is key," she said on her unrelenting campaigning efforts. "Women need to be empowered."

Through programmes supported by UNDP and run by Sarhan and the Women's Unit, more than 250,000 of the four million registered women voters in Yemen, cast their ballots in the early presidential elections in February 2012.

UN Women/Carin Maike Kohl



**"Every woman needs to give her opinion," says Shaine Mohammed from Giza Governorate. Mohammed is one of five million women in Egypt who does not have an identity card (ID). Since the launch of the Woman Citizenship Initiative in 2012, in collaboration with UN Women, two million women are expected to have their IDs that will empower them to vote, and obtain birth certificates for their children and register them for school.**

## LIBYA: Breaking Barriers for Voter Awareness

UNDP helped invest in the future of Libya's fledgling democracy in the run-up to the 2012 congressional elections, the first in 60 years. Training of a core group of civic educators enabled them to educate youth on voting and public participation: half a million university students and 18,000 members of the Libya Scouts Organization.

The **My Voice for Her** campaign launched with civil society organizations, helped ensure that 1.3 million women in Libya registered to vote. Breaking the barriers in a male-dominated society, 629 women candidates stood for elections in July 2012. UNDP supported 170 candidates; eight of them are currently elected members to the National Congress

"Youth were at the heart of the revolution in Libya," said Baba, who received her training from UNDP to conduct awareness sessions on constitutional issues. "We young people have to play a role in the transition of this country to a sustainable democracy."

**UNDP organized a public debate in July 2013 to address the needs of youth as well as their role in the constitutional process in Tunisia. UNDP also helped produce a song, called *Enti Essout* (You are the Voice), which became the unofficial anthem of the elections. The song was written, composed and performed by a group of young artists on the contemporary music scene who retain strong Tunisian roots and encourage other young people to participate actively in rebuilding a new Tunisia.**





UNDP Iraq

## Ensuring Human Security

More than any other phenomenon, conflicts in the Arab region have stripped people, communities and countries of the choices they need to build better lives for themselves and plan for a better future. They have rolled back hard-won development gains and rendered progress on long-standing challenges all the more difficult to attain.

Poverty, political turmoil and repression have all pushed youth across the region to seek alternate routes to survival: piracy in **Somalia**, gangs in **Sudan**, and confrontations with Syrian refugees in **Jordan**, to name a few.

UNDP has channeled funds from Japan to directly help people affected by conflict. Whether they suffered from the destruction of their schools, homes, workplaces or roads, or whether they are rehabilitated former combatants looking for a safer future, UNDP provides support to the peace process by helping develop the skills of government officials, building schools, hospitals, sewage systems, bolstering local government organizations, and promoting human development and security in the region.

▲ **IRAQ:** With \$18 million funding from the Government of Japan, UNDP turned the Fallujah Maternity and Children's Hospital from war debris in 2004 to a modern structure that now boasts state of the art diagnostic, treatment and operating equipment.

In the region nearly  
**300,000**  
jobs were created  
through various youth  
employment schemes  
in 2012.

In 2012, **Jordan**  
was declared the  
**first** country in the  
Middle East to attain  
mine-free status.

In **Sudan**,  
**17,520** former  
combatants have been  
successfully  
re-integrated into  
society.





## Up Close: Gaza

UNDP

Um Mohammed broke the conservative tribal traditions of her community when she became one of the Gaza strip's first *Mukhtarah*—a person who peacefully settles disputes without having to resort to formal judicial systems.

After learning the legal skills necessary to perform this informal, yet important, role of gatekeeper of justice during a 52-hour training on legal mediation and its basic rules, Um Mohammed, 50, now sees herself as a broker of peace.

"I had been a preacher for many years," says Um Mohammed. "But the turning point that gave me the confidence to practice this profession was the training I received at the Legal Clinic, in addition to my husband's support."

From July 2012 to April 2013, female *Mukhtar*as mediated close to 1,500 cases. Their training comes as part of UNDP's Access to Justice programme in the occupied Palestinian territory, where legal experts provide training on conflict resolution, negotiation techniques and an overview of laws and regulations in matters of engagement, marriage and divorce. The programme is partly funded by the Government of Japan.

"Being a woman gives me an advantage because I can talk to both men and women. Male *Mukhtar*as can only talk to men," says Um Mohammed. "They end up communicating through a male family representative, who may not be completely neutral or accurate."



UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Misako Konno visited a general hospital built by the Government of Japan in the occupied Palestinian territory and called the "Japanese Hospital" by local citizens.

## Sudan: Hope for Sudanese Youth

Mohammed Al Agba, 32, was one of the thousands of former Sudanese combatants recruited to defend their communities until the separation of South Sudan in 2011.

Born and raised to a pastoral family, Al Agba was abruptly forced to leave his cattle herd in the South and settle in Mazmoun, an agricultural farming village in the state of Sennar, along the shores of the conflict-torn Blue Nile region. The region suffers from water scarcity, and jobs in farming are a rare find.

UNDP recognized Sennar as a high-risk community and initiated a range of projects to promote peace, security and empower resettling combatants to integrate. Water sources were identified, a multi-purpose building serving both as a school and community centre for peace mediations was established, and vocational training for returning combatants began.

Al Agba was trained as an electrician and immediately found employment. "My training as an electrician is quite timely," said Al Agba. "It is important because electricity was recently introduced in Mazmoun."

**SOMALIA: A few years ago Ali, 21, the eldest of three children was orphaned when his parents died in an explosion. He started working at a security checkpoint. Disillusioned with his life, he turned to drugs and violence and gave up his childhood dream to become a football star. With sky rocketing youth unemployment rates, young Somali men often turned to gangs, piracy and other acts of violence for sustenance. In 2011, UNDP and other UN agencies, with funding from Japan, launched a programme to give young Somalis an opportunity for rehabilitation and personal development. Through this initiative, Ali, now a trained mechanic, is among the 1,650 youth who have benefited to date.**



UNHCR/B. Heger



UNDP Djibouti

## Managing Resources for Sustainability

The Arab region is home to nine of the world's ten most water-scarce countries. With the impact of climate change and rising sea levels on coastal countries like **Tunisia**, water scarcity becomes an immediate concern.

On the other hand, the region is rich in natural resources. Its desert climate ensures an abundance of sunshine year round. Yet many Arab countries have the highest levels of consumption of electricity.

UNDP and the Government of Japan have partnered to champion green projects, educate school children about climate change, and engage in energy-efficient projects across the region, including North African countries like **Morocco** and **Tunisia**.

UNDP's priority is ensuring that the poor have fair access to the resources they need for survival and development. The region is poised to leverage its potential from its natural resources and to channel its efforts towards a more sustainable future, especially for the young generation.

▲ **DJIBOUTI:** To mitigate drought-induced famine, UNDP, with Japanese funding, launched in 2012 a project to develop agro-pastoral land, train farmers in cultivation techniques, composting and water and soil conservation. New crops were introduced and both forage and watermelon proved very successful ventures and a lucrative business. Forage ensures goats increase their milk production even during heavy drought. Watermelon serves as a great nutrition crop and yields profits for the farmers.

In the region  
**89 percent**  
of people in urban areas  
and **73 percent**  
in rural areas have access  
to improved drinking  
water.

In the region,  
between 1995 and  
2010, the consumption  
of ozone-depleting  
substances dropped by  
**98 percent.**

**5,200**  
households  
in Puntland and south  
central **Somalia** now  
use energy efficient  
solar cookers.



## Somalia: Livestock Industry Finds an Alternate to Charcoal

The Hawd Plateau in Somalia is arid, and the sun scorches the earth. Riverbeds are almost always dry, and livestock, the lifeblood of this country, seek cover from the heat under the thin shadows cast by acacia trees.

But this relentless and blinding sun is also a potential source of energy that, if harnessed, could significantly reduce the practice of charcoal cooking and its devastating environmental impact in Somalia.

In the Karkaar region of Putland of Somalia, 3,500 households were provided with energy-efficient stoves and local enterprises have started sprouting around alternative energy industries providing job opportunities to many.

"We used four bags of charcoal per day, and we needed to find a substitute because without charcoal, there would be no food," said Ali Shaqal, administrator of the Igad Sheikh Technical Veterinary School in Somaliland, where UNDP supports the conversion of biodegradable livestock waste into biogas, as a source of energy for cooking and electricity.

"With the biogas, we will protect the environment by saving trees and produce a fertilizer, which we can showcase at the farm of the school and to interested farmers".



**A 3,000 cubic metres water tank is now serving more than 50,000 residents of Rafah in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). Until recently, the city could only provide water via pipes for three to four hours, twice a week, and the flow of water was weak.**

**LEBANON: Before and after: 12,000 to 15,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil spill had been cleaned up along Lebanon's coastline.**



UNDP Morocco

In the southeast corner of Morocco, Tafilalet, the largest Saharan oasis in the country, spreads its sandy dunes to eco-tourists who come to enjoy its historical treasures and famous dates. Over Moroccan mint tea, the nomads of Tafilalet generously offer their foreign guests a glimpse of nomadic life and its warmth, despite the harsh living conditions outside their tents.

Despite the area's natural beauty and rich historical heritage, the people of Tafilalet face daily water scarcity, and the consistent degradation of arable land, forcing a great number of youth to emigrate in search of a better future.

Recognizing the need to safeguard the future of Tafilalet, UNDP, with support from the Government of Japan through the Africa Adaptation Programme and other partners, launched in 2007, a sustainable development project to counter the ecological, economic and social impact of land degradation and water scarcity.

"The partnership between the town of Fezna and the people shows how we can complement each other," said Moussa Slimani, Mayor of Fezna, one of 113 settlements in Tafilalet. "From infrastructure enhancement, like solar public lighting or waste water purification, to environmental education and cultural preservation, it has been a boost to local development."

In Fezna, 250 people benefited from the installation of windmill and solar energy for irrigation. Some 1,300 palm trees were planted. In the towns of Izif and Tafroute, more than 5,000 people benefited from the establishment of two eco-friendly collective laundries. Focus on eco-tourism has also transformed dilapidated towns such as Ksar into ecological attractions.

"We have renewed interest for agriculture," said Rabha A., president of a cooperative in Ksar. "Other villages envy us now."



UNDP Lebanon



UNDP Lebanon

“Put simply—**peace and security** are preconditions for **progress and development** work. Now is the time to scale up our initiatives towards achieving those goals.”

**Helen Clark**  
UNDP Administrator



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Resilient nations.*

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