

# Yemeniate

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YEMENIATE MEANS YEMENIZING OUR WORKS AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE YEMENI PEOPLE



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# Equator Prize 2010 goes to Rosh Community from Socotra



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**W**ith hope and a bit of mistrust, the Rosh community from Socotra Island accepted a suggestion of the UNDP-GEF Socotra Governance and Biodiversity Project to run for the Equator Prize 2010. That was in February 2010. In July 2010, the community under the leadership of Sheikh Omar Ali Ahmed Mosallam was pronounced as one of 25

best initiatives from the Equatorial belt countries and awarded the equator prize 2010 for outstanding efforts to reduce poverty through conservation of biodiversity.

## Arab community initiative getting visible

The Rosh Marine Protected Area community has been granted 5.000 US dollars for its development activities. This is the first time ever the Equator Prize has a winner from the Middle East. As the organizers announced, the level of competition was extremely high this year and the nominations received were truly impressive.

There were almost 300 initiatives from 66 countries from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America running for the prize. The winning Rosh community has joined an elite group of 128 Equator Prize winners. It has been confirmed as an influential grassroots movement of local and indigenous best practices in biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction.



## Exploring ways of income generation

Rosh impressed the committee with its marine conservation and the eco-tourism enterprise based on the principle of community sharing benefits. Rosh is a Marine Protected Area located within 1 km off the northern coast of Socotra. It boasts with a rich and well protected marine life and one of the biodiversity hotspots on the island, which is listed as a World Natural Heritage Site by UNESCO since July 2008.

The villages of Sacra and Diherhom that traditionally own the Rosh Marine Protected Area started their conservation activities back in the 1990s, long time



before the first international environmental project came to the island. In the Socotra Zoning Plan, designed in 2000, Rosh was given the status of Marine Sanctuary with the highest level of protection thanks to the richness of its well conserved biological diversity.

In 2008, UNDP-GEF Socotra Conservation and Development Programme and GEF Small Grant Programme supported the community to build an eco-campsite where tourists are provided with basic

accommodation and food services. The operation of the eco-camp is organized on the principle of community sharing benefits as the best way to show how to motivate the whole community to conserve their natural resources. The eco-campsite uses solar panels and sustainable water management system. In the last tourist season, more than 200 tourists visited the Rosh eco-campsite.

#### **Award Ceremony without a winner**

The Rosh community was nominated for the prize by UNDP-GEF Socotra Governance and Biodiversity Project, which has been working in the island since June 2009. The project supported the community in preparing the presentation materials for the Equator Prize Award Ceremony which followed the Community Summit during the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September. Rosh delegates were supposed to personally attend.

However, Sheikh Omar and his son Wagdi could not finalize the VISA procedures. Therefore, the Rosh initiative

was presented in New York by a MDGs poster, detailed in-case study and a short narrated photo story.

The Equator Initiative started in 2002 as a response to the fact that the world's greatest concentrations of biodiversity are located in countries suffering the world's most acute poverty. It is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses, and grassroots organizations. It aims to build the capacity and raise the profile of local efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.



**Sheikh Omar and his son**





## YMN officially inaugurated



T

he Yemeni Microfinance Network (YMN) Official inauguration was held on Sunday August 1st 2010 at the Mövenpick hotel in Sana'a.

The official launch was held under the patronage of H.E. Abdulkareem Ismael Al-Arhabi (Deputy Prime-Minister, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Managing Director of the Yemen Social Fund for Development).

"By inaugurating YMN, we now have the infrastructure system needed to raise the microfinance business in Yemen," said Al-Arhabi. According to Al-Arhabi, poverty in Yemen concerns many sectors of society such as youth, women as well as rural areas. Small business owners do not have adequate financial services. The YMN will be a basic provider of knowledge in the field of microfinance. The YMN aims to provide over 300 microfinance institutions (MFIs)



**UNDP Resident Representative received an honoring trophy during the Inauguration Ceremony**

employees from the credit officer to the board members which customized training.

Afterwards, Ms. Pratibha Mehta, UNDP Resident Representative, said that UNDP's support to strengthen the microfinance sector in Yemen falls within one of the four main priority areas identified in the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), i.e. the **promotion of Pro Poor Growth**.

"The rising unemployment rate, especially among the youth, poses a major challenge to the stability and development of Yemen and

all efforts are needed to consciously create gainful employment opportunities in rural and urban areas. While only an estimated 800,000 participate in formal sector, roughly 80 per cent of the population depends on the ever-growing informal sector for their earnings," Ms. Mehta added.

The Yemen Microfinance Network (YMN) is a member based association registered on 31st August 2009 under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as a non-governmental organization (NGO). Its board of directors consists of the microfinance member institutions.

In order to support an inclusive finance sector in Yemen, to increase the outreach of microfinance services in the country and to address the issue of capacity building and transparency, the government of Yemen represented by the Social Fund for Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiated a joint three-year project to establish the first MNY in the country. The project aims to build supportive infrastructure necessary to enhance the capacity of local institutions and provide a range of financial services and

products to the entrepreneurial poor, in a cost efficient manner, thereby increasing sustainable access to finance and enhancing the scope for participation of youth and women in economic activities.

Being a member-driven association, YMN three year strategy was developed in a very detailed, comprehensive and systematic process. The YMN vision and goals are built on the findings of a thorough situation analysis.

Key stakeholders including Microfinance Institutions, Microfinance Banks, Commercial Banks, SFD and the UNDP were part of the strategy development.

Training & capacity building, technical assistance, lobbying and awareness and linkages with internal & external players were outlined as four major strategic issues behind lack of substantial outreach of microfinance services to the poor of the country.

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*[www.undp.org.ye](http://www.undp.org.ye)*

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## **Conference of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) held in Yemen:** **Yemen Chairs the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network**

**T**he Conference of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) was held at the end of July and lasted for two full days.

It featured the second general meeting of ACINET where members reviewed the first cycle's work progress and adopted the program of work for the second cycle (2010-2011) in addition to a number of resolutions, including the transfer of the chairmanship of ACINET to the Republic of Yemen represented by the head of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, H.E. Mr. Ahmad Al Anisi.

Participants discussed the means to support national integrity and anti-corruption efforts through developing, implementing and monitoring specialized national anti-corruption strategies. Participants reviewed the main elements that bolster such strategies and were introduced to Arab and international major successes in the field.

They also discussed how to address challenges related to public sector reform including improving the quality of basic public services, improving parliamentary oversight, reinforcing the role of the judicial system in protecting integrity, facilitating regional and international cooperation in combating crimes of corruption, and supporting the participation of the private sector, civil society and media in developing, implementing and monitoring National Anti-Corruption Strategies.

The Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network decided to transfer the chairmanship of the Network from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, represented by H.E. the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Dr. Abed SHAKHANBEH, to the Republic of Yemen, represented by H.E. the President of the Supreme National Authority for

Combating Corruption, Mr. Ahmed AL Anisi.

The Conference was attended by Arab Anti-Corruption Authorities Chairs and Heads, Ministers of Justice, high officials of several Arab auditing and judiciary authorities, parliament members, CSOs representatives, UN organizations, donors' community, and others.



**UNDP Deputy Country Directors Opening Remarks**



## **The New UNDP Country Director, Ms. Randa Aboul-Hosn, to Yemeniate:** **Yemen feels like home!**



*The newly appointed UNDP Yemen Country Director, Ms. Randa Aboul-Hosn, is of Lebanese origin with over fifteen years of experience with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).*

*Ms. Aboul-Hosn served at UNDP Lebanon and the UNDP Head Quarters in New York. In addition, she served at the UNDP Country Office in Yemen as an Assistant Resident Representative/ Programme Manager in 2004.*

*Ms. Aboul-Hosn holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Public Policy and Management from the University of London - School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). She also holds a Masters Degree of Arts in Social and Behavioral Science from the American University of Beirut (AUB).*

*Ms. Aboul-Hosn brings an extensive experience in strategic programming alignments, resource mobilization, and team building.*

### **How does it feel to come back to Yemen?**

"It feels like coming back home! It really feels like coming back home. This is the first thing I said to my friends in New York when I arrived back in Yemen. It feels like I had left only yesterday. People are so welcoming. Everything, and everyone, is so friendly. The stresses are different from other places, yet life is relatively easier. I had such a great time during my last post here, I am

very very happy to be back. I feel alive again!"

### **What changed in Yemen?**

"The people are still very nice. The country is still very hospitable. The weather is still wonderful. Yemen's weather is its best kept secret.

What has changed? First, I see that the city has spread out. It is more crowded. In that sense, Sana'a has become more urban than it was five years ago.

Second, the situation in the country has changed. You can feel that people are more worried about the situation. People feel insecure about the future. They are worried about their livelihood. One thing that we do see more in Yemen this time is the high inequality in the spread of wealth."

### **How different do you find hearing about Yemen on the news, and seeing Yemen in reality?**

"From my experience, even when I was in New York, where I continued to

follow Yemen's situation on the news, I knew that it was exaggerated. Of course, the situation was serious. However, the security aspect of the news gave the impression that it was dangerous to walk in the streets of Sana'a. Even more, one was under the impression that Sana'a was subjected to curfews at night to the point that would lead visitors to believe that the City was a war zone (joking)."

"I knew back then that this was not the case, and I still see that this is not the case. Ever since I moved back to Yemen, I have been enjoying going out and hanging out with my friends.

Nevertheless, back to your question, having been observing the situation in Yemen, on the news, all this time, was not something new to me. I am from Lebanon, a country of constant political and security turbulence, the news of which I had also been following and concerned over for the longest time. Therefore, given my past experiences in both Lebanon and Yemen, I am very familiar with both situations."

### **As the Country Director of the UNDP Yemen, what are your priorities?**

"My priorities are to do the best I can to make the most difference possible where UNDP's missions are concerned on all levels of UNDP-Yemen's development programs. I know it is difficult. I know that the country is very complex. I also know that the current needs are crucial and we will address these needs with the highest delicacy and consideration suitable for the Yemeni context in order to be met efficiently and sustainably.

My objective is to set up a programme that aims to address the basic needs of the people in Yemen, while proceeding to address the most crucial policy issues. I really think that we need to be where the people are. We have done extensive work on the central level. Now, we have to be proactive and address the people's needs in order to be effective and achieve positive and sustainable

results, the core of our mission in Yemen. There seems to be a misconception about the relationship between the UNDP and the people in Yemen. This is not true. Our role as UNDP is to re-ensure our closeness to the people, which we plan to implement effectively through our programmes."

"As UNDP's Country Director, I am working on reinforcing the best team atmosphere in the office, which is distinguished by a lot of capable people with remarkable skills and capacities. It is imperative for me to make sure that the work is done with as much productivity and fun!"



## *Yemeniate is One year Old*

*Yemeniate's vision (Yemenizing our works and programmes for the benefit of the Yemeni people) is to showcase what UNDP is doing and how it is benefitting the people of Yemen. We are now preparing our new country programme for 2012-2015 and are aiming to reach Yemenis living in remote rural areas, young men and women and assist in reducing all forms of inequalities.*

*We hope that, through Yemeniate, you would continue to give us feedback to not only improve the content of this newsletter but also how UNDP can provide relevant assistance.*

*Happy Birthday Yemeniate, and many happy returns! One year passed, and many years to come Inshallah!*

*Ms. Pratibha Mehta  
UNDP Resident Representative, Yemen.*



Ms. Pratibha Mehta



### About UNDP:

*The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. In 2000, at the Millennium Summit, world leaders pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the overarching goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empower women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. UNDP's network links and coordinates global and national efforts to reach these goals.*