

UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE FOR JORDAN AND SYRIA



Friday Notes

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EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to a new issue of the UN Women Jordan and Syria Country Office **Friday Notes**, which covers the work from the first quarter of 2014. In this edition, we will present you with a brief on some of the Jordan team's initiatives and projects.

We are proud to announce that Jordan's commitment in the area of women's protection and empowerment has witnessed a major push forward. The government of Jordan joined the COMMIT Initiative which was a significant achievement at this stage.

The Executive Director's visit to Jordan was a major drive for media to shed light on the women issues, along with her visit to Zataari that has attracted the attention of the humanitarian community in the country.

In addition to the above, this edition of the Friday Notes highlights UN Women Jordan Country Office's achievements in women economic empowerment, which focused on joint projects with other UN agencies, in addition to the initiative of Achieving Equality in the ICT sector.

A special part of this edition addresses the UN Women humanitarian efforts, with a focus on means to make the lives of the Syrian women in refugees camps better and reasonable.

While we would like to leave you enjoy reading details of this edition of the Friday Notes, please feel free to inform us of any comments or feedback.

Warmly,

Giuseppe Belsito

Representative

UN Women Country Office for Jordan and Syria

News from Jordan

Jordan joins the COMMIT initiative

On 20 February 2014, Jordan joined UN Women's COMMIT initiative by announcing its commitment to address and prevent violence against women and girls.

Under this initiative, the Jordanian government pledged to take certain concrete steps towards ending violence against women and girls. These specific measures include rolling out a national strategy to end violence against women, undertaking legislative reforms to improve the legal and judicial responses to violence against women, improving the data availability on the prevalence of violence against women, to name a few.

The signing of this document came at the occasion of the visit by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director, Ms.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka to Amman. By this step, Jordan joined more than 61 other governments who have pledged to make ending violence against women a top priority, through UN Women's advocacy initiative COMMIT.

"I commend the government of Jordan for its commitment to end violence against women and for taking steps forward to advance women's rights, leadership and political participation in its recent legislative reforms. UN Women is committed to strengthening our partnership and deepening our cooperation to advance women's rights and gender equality in the kingdom." Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said.

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Secretary-General, Asma Khader said "While we announce number of strong commitments today to address

and prevent violence against women, we realize that protecting women from gender-based violence is a prerequisite to empowering them and to ensuring their full participation in all fields".

In addition to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka and Ms. Khader the signing ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture Lana Mamkegh (acting as the representative of the Prime Minister), Minister of Social Development Reem Abu Hassan and members of the Shama'a Network Against Violence against women.

In her remarks to the press following the ceremony, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka called on the government of Jordan to abolish the much-discussed Article 308 of the Penal Code which states that if a rapist agrees to marry his victim, the charges would be dropped.





JNCW SIGNS MOU WITH UN WOMEN

UN Women Country Office and The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) signed on 20 February 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding with the aim to enhance their mutual cooperation to empower women and achieve gender equality.

The MoU was signed by JNCW Secretary-General, Asma Khader and Representative of UN Women in Jordan and Syria, Giuseppe Belsito.

“The new agreement will pave the way forward for both Jordan and UN Women to further enhance their mutual cooperation to address issues with high priority for the status of women in the country,” Mr. Belsito said.

“We will work together on women’s rights, empowerment and gender equality” he added.

Jordan Celebrates International Women Day and UN Women Organizes 2nd Women's Film Week

UN Women Country Office for Jordan and Syria organized, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Talal (UN Women Goodwill Ambassador) and in partnership with the Royal Film Commission, the 2nd Women's Film Week from 8 to 15 March 2014.

To celebrate International Women's day and in the presence of HRH Princess Basma, the Women's Film Week kicked off on 8 of March 2014 at the Rainbow Theatre with the screening of "Scheherazade's diary" a documentary about female inmates in Lebanon – most of them victims of domestic violence- who find hope and rehabilitation through theatre. Ms. Marianne Kallassy, program officer at Catharsis, Lebanese Center for Drama Therapy, the organization that conducted the activities with these women, engaged with the audience in a discussion over the movie immediately after the conclusion of the screening.

Throughout the week, UN Women aimed to use film and theatre as an instrument to raise awareness and engage the public on different gender equality issues around the world. Sixteen movies from 15 countries (both fiction and documentary) addressing issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in the region and worldwide were screened and viewed by a wide number of audience.

The success of the Festival was largely due to the wide number of supporting partners and collaborations. Indeed UN Women collaborated with a diverse group of partners, including the embassies of Brazil, Canada, France, Finland, Greece, Italy, South Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United States of America and with the support of Aat Network of Women Artists, the Anna Hunna Initiative, the ITVS Women and Girls Lead Global Project and the Karama Human Rights Film Festival, in addition to UN Women's sister agencies, UNFPA and UNICEF as well as the Jordan Women's Union, and the International Rescue Committee.

Showing of a play on early marriage

"Because I was still a little girl" a play on early marriage was presented on the closing day of the Women's film week. The play is part of the Norwegian funded Joint project between UNWOMEN, UNFPA and UNICEF "*Hemayati: promoting women and girls' health and well-being*". UNWomen in partnership with the Jordanian Women's Union has worked on this play which aims towards involving women and girls in cultural activities as a means of reflection, dialogue and awareness on early marriage and its effects on women, girls and society told through presenting personal experiences on stage.

Through theatre and film, the play aims at empowering women and girls, while creating a dialogue and awareness on issues specifically related to early marriage. The approach promotes women and girls' self-expression and self-awareness, while providing them with skills to articulate changes they would like to see in their reality. The performance was followed by a discussion on issues related to early marriage in Jordan.



UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISITS ZAATARI REFUGEE CAMP

As part of her trip to Jordan in February 20-23, the UN Women's Executive Director, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka visited the Zataari Refugee Camp in northern Jordan.

She met with officials of the Camp who briefed her on the situation there and the challenges in regards to making the Syrian refugees' lives easier.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka toured in the camp, and visited the Women and Girls Oasis, where female refugees seek hope and safety.

She met with dozens of the Syrian women who come to the Oasis to participate in various programmes such as sewing and jewelry-making.

The Zataari Refugee Camp currently hosts about 120,000 Syrians, according to the UN Refugee Agency, with women making up approximately 55 per cent of the population.

"The most important thing is to have peace in Syria; the biggest thing we can give these women is the possibility to go back to a peaceful Syria." Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka — Executive Director

Opened as a pilot project in the fall of 2012, UN Women's Oasis is a safe space for women to seek support, regain their strength and access the tools they need to participate actively in camp life, as well as to plan for their future.

The programming at the Centre was developed in consultation with Syrian women. They help run the programme, and their hope and determination have played a critical part in making it a success.



Development Programmes

WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

UN Women Jordan Country Office has engaged in implementing several projects under the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Programme. The first quarter of this year witnessed major achievements under this programme.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

UN Women Jordan Country Office is pursuing its efforts to empower women in rural areas in Mafraq Governorate through the management and preservation of the Umm el-Jimal's archaeological site in Jordan as income-generating activities

To do so, UN Women and UNESCO joined forces to empower women economically and preserve archeological sites in Um el- Jimal village in northern Jordan.



The two UN agencies launched their joint project of “Empowering rural women in Mafraq Governorate through the management and preservation of the Umm el-Jimal's archeological site in Jordan as income-generating activities” on January 18, in Umm el-Jimal, Mafraq Governorate.

They celebrated launching of the project under the patronage of Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

The project benefited from the expertise of UNESCO and UN Women in the fields of culture and gender equality to provide development opportunities for women in Umm el-Jimal in Mafraq, a governorate that hosts largest number of poverty pockets in the country.

“We will work together on women's rights, empowerment and gender equality,” Giuseppe Belsito, Representative for UN Women Country Office for Jordan and Syria, said.

UN WOMEN CONDUCTS TRAINING FOR UNPRIVILEGED WOMEN

The Jordanian Friends of Environment conducted a joint training programme with Ministry of Education directorate targetting underprivileged women in Al-Ghayyath village in Mafraq Governorate.

The two partners agreed to utilize a division of a local community school there, designating it as a community-based training center for women empowerment and training center.

This programme enhanced women knowledge on how to setup cooperative societies and trained them on solar panels assembly, installation and maintenance.

INCREASING WOMEN ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN POVERTY POCKETS

Under this project, UN Women partnered with the Family Development Association and local CBOs to provide small revolving loans and financial services to marginalized women in Mafraq Governorate.

The concept of this project was to provide poor women with opportunities to start and sustain economic activities. If women play greater roles in their families in terms of income-generation, then they would enjoy better and safer lives. This is exactly what this project seeks to achieve, in addition to paving the way for such women to transform their socio-economic situation and impact their families in a positive manner.

ICT STUDY

UN Women Jordan country office concluded a study entitled “*The Status of Jordanian Women in the ICT Sector*”. This study will be published soon and comes as part of the UN Women mission to ensure gender equality and women empowerment in the economic sector in general.

The study came to evaluate and highlight women's contribution in the ICT sector in Jordan. It also serves the ultimate goals of the “*Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector*”, which is one of the UN Women masterpieces that seeks to build capacities of women, enhance their skills and eventually integrate them into the ICT workplace.



ACHIEVING E-QUALITY IN THE ICT SECTOR

UN Women Jordan country office maintained its support for the female ICT students in Cisco academies across the country. The Agency's goal was to enhance women's economic security by empowering female graduates after they gain necessary competitive technical skills in the ICT sectors.

The project is another UN Women success story as it focused on means to engage both public and private sectors to support innovative projects that women showed capabilities to implement from scratch.

Among the objectives of this ambitious project are: enhance the capacity of women to compete in the ICT sector, increase their participation and engagement in various activities carried out by Cisco academies in the local universities, disseminate knowledge and experience to our partners in public and private institutes, achieve sustainability for Cisco academies through leaving enough space for the local universities and private sector firms own the project, bridge the gap between industry needs and students' knowledge gained through academic curricula and raise female awareness in connection to the marketplace in the ICT sector.

UN WOMEN SUPPORTS 7th NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PARADE

UN Women supported also the Seventh National Technology Parade, which has been an annual event since 2003. Yarmouk University hosted this year's version of the event in Irbid under the title “Youth and Technology: Towards Future Innovation”.



Parade, a well-known concept among ICT engineering and ICT students across the country's universities, has become a platform for students to present their creativity in the projects they perform and compete among their peers. UN Women objectives behind such project included motivating creative and innovative thinking, building practical skills, connecting students' project with the ICT market and local community needs, encouraging teamwork and leadership, promoting prototyping and linking higher education system's outcomes with labor market needs.

REALIZING BEIJING+20 IN JORDAN: WOMEN IN ACTION

The UN Country Team in Jordan has put the Beijing +20 review process at the heart of their work plan for 2014. Building on the foundations of 1995, UN Women has partnered with six UN Agencies on a joint programme titled “Realizing Beijing +20 in Jordan: Women in Action!” in order to push forward the goals set by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Together with WHO, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNRWA, UN Women will work with various groups within Jordan to address key issues affecting women, including poverty, violence against women, education, health, and socio-economic issues that prevent women from fully advancing.

Beijing +20 will create a new momentum for women’s movements by influencing the dialogue on the Post 2015 development agenda.

“With the will of my Arab sisters and the participation of women throughout the world, together with all those committed to furthering the rights of women, let us once again capture the momentum witnessed by the world in 1995 in Beijing” — HRH Princess Basma bint Talal.

UN Women Jordan Country office will broadcast a video message by HRH Princess Basma bint Talal (UN Women Goodwill Ambassador) who speak to women across the Arab countries on this occasion to encourage them for further achievements and to address youth, encouraging them to join forces and support women rights within their societies.



INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY ON FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

UN Women Jordan country office partnered with The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) to support members of the GRB network in finalizing the National Network Action Plan to Support GRB in Jordan (2014 – 2016).

The action plan as well as the vision, mission, core values and mandate of the network will be published as an informative brochure during the launching of the GRB network in May 2014.

Also, UN Women Jordan country office has conducted capacity assessments on GRB for three selected ministries including: Health, Social Development and Labor.

In addition, UN Women Jordan office carried out a gender gap analytical research on the nature of the allocated budget in different programmes in the selected line-ministries. A first draft report was shared with the concerned Ministries for their review and feedback. UN Women is working closely with the Ministries to finalize this report.

Response to the Humanitarian situation

Under its ongoing efforts to provide support for Syrian refugees in Jordan, and in particular to the most vulnerable segments among them, including women and children, UN Women Jordan Country Office has worked on means to enhance its services, through new partnerships and organization of special events. Under this section we will uncover major achievements in this area.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The first quarter of this year witnessed few special events in the Women and Girls Oasis, in addition to the regular activities. Such new events included:

A two-day women's craft event hosted at the Oasis compound in District 4 of Zataari Refugee Camp on March 19-20. The event was a result of collaboration with UNHCR, IRC, IRD and NRC along with other participating agencies, and five local associations from the northern Badia region of Jordan.



It featured handicrafts made by Syrian women residing inside the camp and by local women from the community outside the Camp. There was a colorful display of scarves, carpets, bags, candles, homemade soaps, amongst other things. The uniqueness of the event lay in the fact that this was the first time the two communities came together to share a common space, reflecting the strength and possibilities for innovative, community-driven collaboration models.

The women worked together in a non-threatening sense of healthy competition about attracting the best buyers to their stall. Both the Syrian and the Jordanian women participated with common feelings

of mutual support and warmth. UN Women finds it worthy to build upon this success for future engagements.

Additionally, under the special events of the UN Women's Oasis in Zataari Refugee Camp and in collaboration with the Japanese Emergency NGOs (JEN), UN Women held on March 8, an event to mark International Women's Day for over 100 Syrian refugee women at the Women and Girls Oasis in Zataari.

The daylong event began with an open mike session, in which, Syrian women shared their experiences from their time at the Oasis. Then, a children's skit and musical performance about camp sanitation and health took place. The programming continued with a camp trash cleanup across District 3, a group lunch, and then a thank-you ceremony, in which, UN Women expressed its appreciation for the many contributions made by the Oasis volunteers.

"With many thanks to UN Women, the Oasis helped make this a meaningful time in our lives" — Oasis program participant.



VISITS TO UN WOMEN'S OASIS

The Women and Girls Oasis in Zataari Refugee Camp hosted several visitors over the past few months, including:

1. Sexual and Gender Based Violence Specialist with the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, dialogue with Syrian Refugee women about SGBV in the context of Syria
2. Delegations from the Governments of Italy and the Netherlands, and representatives of the US Department of State
3. A team from Scotland Yard which is leading the community policing program in Zataari Camp.
4. A delegation from UN Women's Country office for Iraq.



NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past four months, Humanitarian Team in UN Women Jordan country office established three new partnerships to help enhance their services provided to women who suffered the impact of the Syrian Crisis in Jordan.

Under the first partnership, UN Women is working side by side with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to develop training programme for graduating women from the Women and Girls Oasis in Zataari Camp.



The ILO carried out series of focus group discussions with Syrian women in the camp in order to identify potential self-reliance opportunities that these women want to pursue.

The outputs of such process will then be used for the development of training tools that will promote basic self-reliance skills. This is the first phase of a longer UN Women-ILO collaboration.

The second partnership emerged from UN Women work with WFP and Tazweed, a Kuwait-based grocery store that has an outlet, in Zaatari Camp, to create an women's economic empowerment project focusing on food production and livelihoods.

Also, under third partnership, UN Women has signed an agreement with a Jordanian NGO, ARDD Legal Aid, to deliver a ten-session civic participation training program to men and women in Zaatari Camp.