

UN WOMEN COUNTRY OFFICE FOR JORDAN



Friday Notes

EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to a new issue of the UN Women Jordan *Friday Notes!* In this edition, we are happy to present you our main highlights from the field from April to July 2015.

As Jordan is preparing for the upcoming session of the UN General Assembly, we are proud to announce that the Government is reviewing the draft 'Step it Up!' commitment. The announcement will come at the hedge of a one-year journey for the preparation of the Beijing+20 national review led by our Country Office in collaboration with other six UN Agencies (namely UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, UNDP and UNRWA).

The past few months have also witnessed the consolidation of the position of UN Women Jordan as the main coordination actor on gender equality issues, with a recognized added value in mobilizing the civil society and engage CBOs in the most marginalized areas of the Kingdom.

In the following pages, you will have the chance to feel the impact of our interventions on the lives of Syrian refugees in the Za'atari camp, as our 'Women and Girls Oasis' grows in terms of accountability and outreach.

The recent Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Ministry of Social Development constitutes a milestone in our efforts to reach out to women in marginalized areas as well as the youth in order to sustain their meaningful participation in the economic sector.

I wish you a happy reading.

Warmly,

Giuseppe Belsito
Representative
UN Women Country Office for Jordan

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Jordan gets ready to ‘Step it Up!’

The Jordanian National Commission for Women presents draft commitment

On 15 June, the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) conveyed civil society partners to illustrate the findings of the Beijing+20 National Report. On this occasion, JNCW also presented the draft ‘Step it Up!’ Commitment from Jordan, in order to seek inputs on the draft document prior to the submission to the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Ensour, for the final endorsement of the government as part of Jordan’s national obligations towards “Planet 50-50 by 2030”.

The roundtable discussion was held under the esteemed patronage and at the presence of HRH Princess Basma bint Talal (UN Women Goodwill Ambassador) and served as closing event for the joint program ‘Realizing Beijing+20 in Jordan: Women in Action!’, promoted by UN Women, in partnership with UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, UNDP and UNRWA.

Stressing the significant role the government plays in applying the provisions of the Beijing Declaration, HRH Princess Basma emphasized the importance of the discussion as an assessment tool to identify challenges and build on achievements. She also noted that many Jordanian women are suffering due to the regional unrest.

Building on the COMMIT initiative signed by Jordan in February 2014, the draft ‘Step it Up!’ Commitment focuses on various pillars, including the empowerment of marginalized women and those living in rural areas, prevention of violence against women, and the reinforcement of national women’s machinery.

The draft document is currently under the review of the Prime Minister and the official Jordan’s ‘Step it Up!’ Commitment is expected to be announced at the beginning of August 2015.



A catalyst for coordination



Promoting women's empowerment in marginalized areas

On June 14 2015, UN Women in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, organized a coordination and information sharing meeting to discuss women's economic empowerment and engagement in the labor force in the Mafrq Governorate. The meeting sought to solicit feedback from local NGOs and CBOs on the main challenges for engaging women in the labor force while exploring collaboration opportunities with key stakeholders in order to provide greater coherence on women's meaningful employment.

The protracted presence of a considerable number of Syrian refugees is further affecting the already economically challenged governorates in the north of Jordan - especially in the Mafrq area. *'Women's economic empowerment plays an integral role in economic stability for Jordan and overall empowerment of women'* affirmed Ms Eman Akor, the Head of the

Fostering legislative reforms: progress on art. 308

Following the release of the proposed amendment for Article 308 - a provision of the Penal Code which allows the perpetrator to escape persecution if he agrees to marry the victim - UN Women has facilitated an information sharing meeting on 16 June 2015 to take stock of the various initiatives that has been undertaken for the amendment/ abrogation of this article, to share views and to discuss the next course of action to be taken. The meeting had a good representation from several civil society

Women's Economic Empowerment Section within the Ministry of Labour.

Forty-six participants contributed to discussion, seeking creative solutions to meaningfully engage women. The main topics presented included key entry points for the engagement of women in the labor force, the obstacles facing women's engagement in the labor market, the legal framework and policies needed to engage women in the labor market.

At the end of the meeting, participants called for a stronger collaboration with international donors to support the creation of more job opportunities in Mafrq – and to ensure that vocational trainings are certified and linked to market demands and concrete job opportunities. Coordinated advocacy efforts shall also support women's engagement in the labor force, to ensure the de-stigmatization of women in the workforce and to activate women-friendly labor provisions. While closing the gender pay-gap represents a priority, participants stressed the need to enforce policies on sexual harassment in the workplace.

organizations including the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the Jordanian Women's Union, Sisterhood is Global Institute, ARDD Legal Aid, JOHUD, Arab Women Organization and the National Center for Family Affairs in addition to representation from UNICEF and the EU delegation.

Participants have agreed to draft a statement petition and to organize a wide consensus building meeting to sign this petition to be presented to the prime ministry office, which reflect a unified message and joint efforts and consensus among the civil society organizations.

Response, Recovery and Resilience

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ZAATARI REFUGEE CAMP

UN Women Established Medical Fund Saves Lives

In March 2015, UN Women expanded its portfolio of services provided in Za'atari refugee camp to include a small self-sustaining medical fund – managed and operated by the Swedish non-governmental organization Operation Mercy. Made possible through support from the Governments of Finland, Italy and Japan, the fund provides limited support for medical care for those working with, and utilizing UN Women's services in Za'atari. It is used for cases that cannot be addressed within the camp and is self-sustaining through the Syrian refugee women engaged through UN Women's centres.

One of the first beneficiaries is a young man named Nathir. Nathir is originally from Dara'a in Syria and now lives in Za'atari. He is one of 11 in his family and was forced to leave school just after the 7th grade. He found work as a car mechanic and a painter in order to help support his family. Despite leaving school, Nathir remained an avid athlete, running marathons and dreaming of one day becoming a professional football player.

Upon arriving in Za'atari, Nathir began experiencing terrible pains and numbness in his feet, and over time lost movement of his legs – leaving him partially paralyzed. He was diagnosed with multilevel lumbar canal stenosis and reversed lumbar lordosis

– and without emergency surgery the prognosis was full and permanent paralysis. This surgery was unavailable in the camp and in the absence of remittances or an income his family was unable to afford this urgent medical care.

Nathir's aunt is one of the many women who participate in the Women and Girl's Oasis programming provided by UN Women in Za'atari. She is an active member of the Za'atari women's committee – a dialogue mechanism between camp residents and camp decision makers. From this involvement Nathir's aunt was empowered to approach UN Women and ask for assistance. Nathir's case was put forward as a recipient of the newly established UN Women-Operation Mercy medical fund. The case was quickly approved, having met the criteria for support, and within a week Nathir had seen a specialist in Mafraq and received an appointment for surgery at a hospital in Amman.

Shortly after the surgery Nathir was back in the camp, moving around on crutches. Two weeks after surgery he was able to stand unassisted and even walk slowly. When visited by the UN Women team, he spoke with hope and excitement about being able to one day play football again – and his renewed dreams of becoming a professional football player.



UN Women joins interagency activities to commemorate World Refugee Day



Within the framework of joint inter-agency efforts to mark the commemoration of World Refugee Day 2015, UN Women organized two awareness raising activities in the UN Women-led ‘Women and Girls Oasis’ of the Za’atari refugee camp as well as in the Governorate of Madaba, in collaboration with Youth for Youth Association.

This year’s theme for Jordan is “Standing together”, which encompasses all groups involved in supporting refugees, starting with refugees themselves, host communities, humanitarian partners, donors and national authorities.

More than 180 participants from all age range attended the awareness raising activities, enthusiastically taking part in the joint art project using recycled camp tents.

Knowledge gateway: UN Women issues a brief on Women, Peace and Security

The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) has drafted a National Action Plan (NAP) on United Nations Security Council resolution (UN SCr) 1325 (2000) to advance women, peace and security. The NAP is currently under discussion within the Government of Jordan.

Within this framework, UN Women launched a brief note titled ‘Advancing Gender Equality within Peace and Security in Jordan’. This note serves as a summary of recent discussions hosted by UN Women and JNCW on issues of women, peace and security.



Two consultations were held under the framework of the Beijing+20 national review and appraisal process and the current high level review on the implementation of UN SC Res.1325 (2000)

The consultations targeted national actors and decision makers on issues of women, peace and security, as well as Syrian refugees living in the Za’atari refugee camp in Al Mafraq governorate.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HOST COMMUNITIES AND POVERTY POCKETS

Investing in CBOs to straighten Resilience at the community level

Within the framework of the EU-funded project “Spring Forward for Women”, UN Women and Jordan River Foundation – in collaboration with the Governor of Mafraq – scaled up their support to marginalized women living in Al Salheiyah and Deir Al Kahf. This second phase of the programme will see the active engagement of new community based organizations, which will provide training opportunities and technical assistance to targeted women in accessing and managing revolving loans.

"The Governorate of Al Mafraq is really satisfied from the results of this project. It is one of the most successful projects in the Governorate. It reached the most marginalized women, and they started to get income to their families, that led to the improvement in their economic status" affirmed the Deputy Governor.

The Al Mafraq Governorate is situated in North-East Jordan and it hosts a large number of poverty pockets; women are particularly effected by the high rates of poverty and unemployment, which have been increasingly affected by the prolonged presence of Syrian refugees in the community.



"Women of Mafraq have become pillars of change and will be a model for all women all over the Kingdom. We are very proud of you" affirmed Mr. Giuseppe Belsito, Representative UN Women CO for Jordan.

On this occasion, the Jordan River Foundation team presented the result achieved so far in the two targeted communities, which include more than 160 women beneficiaries who were empowered to successfully run their small income generating projects – such as food processing, trading, livestock production, planting, beauty salons. The signing ceremony was attended by around 50 participants, including a representative from the EU Delegation in Amman, local authorities, beneficiaries and representative of CBOs active in Mafraq.

In focus: Youth making a stand on cultural heritage and economic resources



In May 2015, the Kerak local Youth Municipal Council launched the initiative “Karak, a touristic city” which aims at preserving touristic spots clean in order to boost tourism in the Karak Governorate. The launch took place in the spectacular setting of the Karak Castle - the largest and the most-preserved Crusader Castle in the Middle East.

On this occasion, passionate youth members presented the results of the recent cleaning campaigns implemented in the five main touristic spots of the Karak Governorate. More than 80 representatives from the Karak civil society attended this event, which has been enriched by a bazar organized inside the castle in collaboration with twelve associations to promote local products. The initiative

helped Jordanian young women and men to take ownership of their national and individual economic prosperity. This event falls under UN Women’s ongoing efforts to empower the youth to become drivers for change in their local community by establishing local district councils, within the framework of the EU-funded program ‘Spring Forward for Women’.

News from Jordan

New framework of cooperation with the Government of Jordan

UN Women Jordan and the Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 27 May 2015 to straighten the cooperation on social protection issues and support to the most vulnerable and marginalized women in Jordan. The MOU follows close cooperation and coordination between UN Women and the MOSD on issues related to violence against women and economic empowerment. Moreover, UN Women supports the MOSD in its role as Chair of the Jordan Response Plan task force on social protection, serving in a Secretariat function to coordinate national partners to enhance coherence, coordination and prioritization of national efforts and funds.



UN Women also signed a Letter of Agreement with MOSD, through generous funding from the Governments of Finland and Italy, to provide support to the Ministry to build its work on women's economic empowerment. Through this support UN Women and the MOSD will partner to undertake the following: to support and highlight female entrepreneurs in Jordan's host communities and to undertake a review and national conversation on the national labour policies and laws from a gender perspective. With support from the Government of Norway, UN Women is supporting the MOSD to roll out of national strategies and activities to eliminate violence against women.

Fostering capacity on Gender Responsive Budgeting

Following the endorsement of 2015 budget by the Lower House of Parliament, UNWomen Jordan and JNCW were requested by MPs to get more in-depth knowledge on gender responsive budgeting methodology and tools. Within this framework, a two-day training for 20 parliament and parliamentary staff from the legal, financial and women committees was organized on 17-18 April 2015. The main objective of this training was to advance parliament's own capacity to make a positive impact on the budget, and to empower MPs and parliamentary staff with the necessary tools and skills to examine the budget from a gender perspective. At the end of the workshop, participants agreed on a set recommendations on how to implement GRB in Jordan. Inputs provided focused on the need to develop a



comprehensive strategy for enabling parliamentarians to scrutinize budgets from a gender perspective as well as to include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data in the budget analysis.

UN Women agrees on action plan with OCHA

On January 8 2014 UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and OCHA Under-Secretary General Valarie Amos sent a joint communication to Humanitarian Coordinators calling for the development of country specific joint action plans for advancing gender equality efforts in humanitarian action.

As a result, UN Women Jordan and its OCHA counterparts have agreed on Action Plan (May-December 2015) in order to foster gender coherence in the humanitarian action as well as to provide gender-focused training opportunities for Humanitarian Country Team members and partners.

The joint action plan also includes the organization of a workshop to identify gender gaps and opportunities within the humanitarian response in Jordan.

Voices from the Field

Introducing our enthusiastic Interns!

Michelle Jackson is a dual intern at the UN Women Jordan Country Office and the Office of the UN Women Advisor to the Resident Coordinator for Yemen. Michelle's studies and research at Harvard University lie at the intersection of gender, development and international affairs with a regional focus on transitioning countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Michelle has a background in business with extensive experience in enterprise development and performance management. She is a gender and employment commitment maker at the Clinton Foundation and founder of a female economic empowerment initiative.



At UN Women Jordan, Michelle is interning for the Response, Recovery and Resilience Unit where she engages in research, advocacy and strategic writing for various projects focusing on Syrian women in Za'atari refugee camp and vulnerable women living in Jordan's host communities. At UN Women's Yemen team, Michelle is involved in supporting women's political participation and inclusion in the peace process as well as in drafting protection and livelihood projects for women affected by the Yemeni conflict.

"I have always been drawn to the diversity, scope and impact of UN Women's work in building gender inclusive societies. Many women around the world are still disproportionately affected by violence, conflict, poverty and injustice. UN Women, together with its outstanding team, has provided me with the ideal setting to build upon my understanding of these issues and make a positive impact." affirmed Michelle.

Kelly Joseph joins the UN Women Jordan Country Office as our Research, Advocacy and Communications Intern. Ms. Joseph comes to the UN as a master's student at Columbia University's School of International Public Affairs (SIPA) in New York. Her studies are focused on Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy with specializations in Gender, UN Studies and Conflict Resolution. She began her studies at SIPA with almost 10 years of professional experience, spanning US domestic healthcare policy, public relations and fundraising as well as community development and social enterprise work on livelihood projects in Namibia and West Africa.

Under the direction of the Recovery Specialist, she is a member of the Response, Recovery and Resilience Team and has an array of projects she is contributing to, including support drafting concept notes on the implementation of UNSC 1325, drafting funding proposals, research projects ranging from the status of female Syrian refugees and their perception of safety inside and out of Za'atari refugee camp, developing partnerships between private entities and UN Women to further develop livelihood programming, and streamlining messaging and documentation of events and progress evaluations.

"It has been a dream to work with the UN and UN Women in particular. I have always had a strong inclination towards issues of gender equality and now I am able to couple my passion with my past professional experiences to make an impact on a global scale. I am humbled for this experience and thankful to all my colleagues here for welcoming me with open arms." - affirmed Kelly.