

Mr. Hafedh Chekir  
Director  
[chekir@unfpa.org](mailto:chekir@unfpa.org)

Ms. Delia Barcelona  
Deputy Director  
[barcelona@unfpa.org](mailto:barcelona@unfpa.org)

Dr. Abdallah Zoubi  
Programme Advisor, P&D  
[zoubi@unfpa.org](mailto:zoubi@unfpa.org)

Dr. Aleksandar Bodiroza  
Technical Advisor, HIV/AIDS  
[bodiroza@unfpa.org](mailto:bodiroza@unfpa.org)

Ms. Maha El-Adawy  
Technical Advisor, RH  
[eladawy@unfpa.org](mailto:eladawy@unfpa.org)

Ms. Kaori Ishikawa  
Programme Specialist, Gender  
[ishikawa@unfpa.org](mailto:ishikawa@unfpa.org)

Mr. Mohammed Shoaib  
Regional Security Specialist  
[shoaib@unfpa.org](mailto:shoaib@unfpa.org)

Ms. Josiane Khoury  
Programme Specialist, Youth  
[jkhoury@unfpa.org](mailto:jkhoury@unfpa.org)

Ms. Henrietta Aswad  
Communications Advisor  
[aswad@unfpa.org](mailto:aswad@unfpa.org)

Ms. Ann Pettigrew-Nunes  
Programme Analyst  
[pettigrew@unfpa.org](mailto:pettigrew@unfpa.org)

Ms. Marija Vasileva-Blazev  
Project Analyst  
[vasileva-blazev@unfpa.org](mailto:vasileva-blazev@unfpa.org)

Mr. Ryan Dolan  
Project Associate  
[dolan@unfpa.org](mailto:dolan@unfpa.org)

Ms. Iana Dikidjieva  
Programme Associate  
[dikidjieva@unfpa.org](mailto:dikidjieva@unfpa.org)

Ms. Linda Haddad  
Consultant  
[haddad@unfpa.org](mailto:haddad@unfpa.org)

Ms. Branka Djurkovic  
Finance Associate  
[djurkovic@unfpa.org](mailto:djurkovic@unfpa.org)

Ms. Suzan Boulos  
Assistant to the Director  
[boulos@unfpa.org](mailto:boulos@unfpa.org)

Ms. Olive Baccaray  
Administrative Assistant  
ASRO New York  
[baccaray@unfpa.org](mailto:baccaray@unfpa.org)

Ms. Mona Benzeriane  
Administrative Assistant  
ASRO Cairo  
[benzeriane@unfpa.org](mailto:benzeriane@unfpa.org)



# ARAB STATES



## Regional Office Newsletter

June, 2009

### Arab Conference on Population and Development—ICPD@15

#### DOHA, QATAR

UNFPA participated in this regional event as part of the ICPD@15 follow up activities for 2009. The regional conference was jointly sponsored by the League of Arab States, ESCWA, UNFPA, and hosted by the State of Qatar.

Delegations consisted of heads of National Population Committees, representatives of Ministries, international and regional development partners, civil society organizations, national experts and mass media.

The conference highlighted interesting papers

and research reports on various population issues in the Arab region, notably those related to fertility and mortality trends, health, education, employment, environment, and migration, with significant emphasis on youth issues.

As one of the principal supporters of this event, UNFPA played a significant role in facilitating the working group sessions, supporting delegations and drafting the Doha Declaration, which presents a comprehensive set of recommendations for follow up actions to ensure implementation of

the ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs in the Arab region.

Capitalizing on the event, UNFPA held side meetings for continued collaboration with partners such as, among others, the Permanent Committee on Population for Government of Qatar, American University of Beirut, and IPPF

The event's opening and closing sessions were attended by high ranking officials of the Qatar Government, and was adequately covered by the media.

### 'Population Caravan' stops in Nine Moroccan cities

#### MOROCCO

In preparation for the 26th Conference on Population which will take place from 27 September to 2 October, 2009, the Moroccan government and the High Commission for Planning (HCP) have organized a traveling exhibition called "Population Caravan" which began its journey on 14 April and will visit in total nine cities. The first of its kind to be held in African and Arab countries, the exhibition will feature 2,000 experts and specialists

in the field of population representing over a hundred countries from different continents. On the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ICPD, this aims to make 2009 an exceptional year for population issues in Morocco with an effort to educate the general public, especially youth and women, on major population challenges both within Morocco and worldwide.

This has also been a great opportunity for the visibility of UNFPA and its mandate at the national level. The

scientific programme of the conference includes several events including ten scientific sessions for the Arab world with the theme of "Intercontinental crossroads between demographic transitions and population movements".

Taking a snapshot from its stop in Casablanca, the exhibition booths featured the Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy, HCP, UN agencies, governmental departments and various NGOs.

## Forum on the State of Population Report (SSPR)

### SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2009, the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA) with the support of UNFPA conducted a Forum on the State of Syria Population Report (SSPR).

The SSPR is the first of its kind, and aimed to form a close correlation between Population & Development and identifying strategies, policies and programmes needed to address the related issues. Among others, the main population challenges include high population growth rate, imbalanced population distribution, and gaps in human capital. All of these issues are complicated by cultural factors and the roles of women, including access to education.

The proceedings were attended by line ministers, heads & members of the Parliament committees at the central and governorate levels, local authori-

ties, including governors, representatives of UN organizations, religious entities, civil society constituents, embassies and accredited development partners.

With extensive coverage in the local and regional media, the Forum began with opening statements from UNFPA Deputy Director of the Arab States Regional Office, Ms. Delia Barcelona, Chairperson of the SCFA, Ms. Sira Astour, and His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR), Naji Al-Otri.

During the meeting, attendees worked with their counterparts to identify key challenges and specific needs in their respective governorates, as well as cooperation mechanisms between the population sub-committees and partners. The main proposed actions & recommendations emphasized the need for leg-

islative actions and legal frameworks in support of population issues; Scaling up IEC and media involvement with a focusing on RH/FP education; Increasing the role of community-based and popular organizations; Focusing on behavior change communication with respect to the traditional demographic patterns & prevailing preference for large families; Focusing on the primary health care level, including RH/FP services.

The Government of the SAR has shown previous commitment to these issues as evidenced by the integration of population, RH, gender and youth issues in the 10th 5-year NDP, other policy frameworks and budgetary allocation for reproductive health, and has formed a strategic partnership between the United Nations agencies working in the country.



## Fashion Retailer H&M Supports UNFPA's Efforts to Raise Awareness about HIV Among Young People

### UNITED NATIONS

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has been selected by the international fashion retailer H & M (Hennes & Mauritz AB) as one of the contribution recipients of its 2009 Fashion Against AIDS campaign (FAA2). As part of a recently-established partnership, H&M will present 25 per cent of the FAA2 campaign donations to UNFPA to support HIV prevention projects in four countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Oman and Turkey. The projects will be

undertaken by Y-PEER—a groundbreaking youth-to-youth initiative pioneered by UNFPA.

Young people are at the centre of the global HIV epidemic, with an estimated 5.4 million youth living with the virus. UNFPA plays a leading role in programmes that provide young people with access to the information and services that would protect them against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

H&M has launched the FAA2 cam-

paign with the charitable organization Designers Against AIDS. The campaign, according to H&M, aims to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS among youth through H&M's celebrity-designed clothing and by sending positive safe sex messages.

—Omar Gharzeddine



## Launch of the Midwifery Programme



### SOUTH SUDAN

Africa's longest running civil war left 2 million dead and displaced 4 million people in Sudan.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between the conflicting parties established the first strong framework for providing humanitarian, recovery and development efforts in a peaceful context. However, infrastructures remain devastated, and pockets of insecurity remain in both the North and South.

In Southern Sudan the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has been estimated at 2054 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, placing it among the three highest in the world. Only 10% of births in Southern Sudan are attended by skilled birth attendants. An RH health situational analysis conducted in 2007 revealed that there were only 8 professional midwives in the whole of Southern Sudan, serving an estimated population of 9.7 million. A year later, 37 community midwives, the first ever to undergo a formal midwifery education in Southern Sudan, graduated. Currently there are 23 other student

community midwives in training.

In the face of these incredible challenges, the government of South Sudan has established a directorate for Nursing and Midwifery, led by Director General Janet Michael. Beginning May 13<sup>th</sup>, UNFPA Southern Sudan, together with the International Confederation of Midwives, and in collaboration with the Government of Southern Sudan, launched a programme entitled, "Investing in Midwives" under the theme, **"Southern Sudan needs midwives now more than ever"**. A series of media and advocacy events were aired on radio and shown on television over the course of three days. Meet-



ings were arranged at the highest level: the President himself was briefed and pledged his support for the campaign. Additional support was secured from the Vice President, First lady, Ministers for Health, Education, Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs, and the Presidential Advisor on Gender and Human Rights.

Importantly, ICM was represented by Jemima Dennis-Antwi, the Regional Midwifery Adviser for Anglophone Africa based in Accra, Ghana.

Ms. Dennis-Antwi attended the launch of the programme in Juba, briefing officials, appearing on TV talk shows, and offering the keynote address at the main launch event.

Through the UNFPA-ICM Programme, it is planned that two International Midwifery Advisors will be recruited to the Ministry of Health to strengthen training as well as regulatory and supervisory mechanisms for midwifery across Southern Sudan. Additional resources from the Midwifery Programme and the newly-launched Maternal Health Thematic Fund are being committed for 2009 and beyond. To date UNFPA has contributed to the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidities throughout Southern Sudan with core resources through the provision of reproductive health kits, Emergency Obstetric Care training, and an annual Fistula Treatment Campaign at Juba Teaching Hospital (*inter alia*).

Congratulations to Magda Armah, Dragudi Buwa, and the rest of the UNFPA/Southern Sudan team for their tremendous work in implementing the launch.



## Resource Mobilization Workshop

### DAMASCUS

Arab States Regional Office is hosting the Resource Management Workshop on 21-23 June, 2009. Facilitated by Valerie Hayman and Philippe Grandet from Information and External Relations Division, the upcoming meeting will bring together Representatives and Programme Specialists from COs in the Arab Region and aims to improve knowledge of key Re-

source Management tools and issues related to planning, implementation and follow up in the context of on-going UN reform and the changing aid environment. The meeting will clarify the role of these respective offices, as well as that of the IERD Liaison Office in Brussels, ASRO and Country Offices in terms of resource mobilization and accountability. Karin Heisecke from Brussels Liaison Office will

discuss the European Union as a donor and how to best access these funds. Knowledge sharing from countries in emergency situations on resource mobilization will also be an element of the workshop. The desired outcome will be to produce key action points to strengthen resource mobilization capacity of Country Offices and Arab States Regional Office as a whole.

## UNFPA Tunisia CO hosts Study Tour for Jordanian Delegation

### TUNIS

Within the South-South cooperation programme aiming to share experience at the regional level, the UNFPA Jordan CO has requested UNFPA Tunisia CO to facilitate a study tour for a delegation of officials from the Ministry of Public Health, the Jordanian National Institute of Statistics and departments of civil status and Passport. The delegation discussed with Tunisian col-

leagues about registration system of deaths and births (Statistics Department, Municipality, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, National Family and Population Board); they have met also representatives of multiple national institutes in order to compare the existing mechanism registering death and birth certificates, and ensuring timely and accurate registration as well as gaps reduction especially in rural areas.

The National Public Health Institute in Tunisia has initiated new ways to work on the causes of death, particularly in the context of maternal health. This data collected at the public hospitals and is very valuable for national policies, and is mandatory.

Tunisia strengthened national epidemiological surveillance of new and emerging diseases with the creation of a new public institution, the National Observatory for the new and emerging diseases (ONMNE) which is under

the authority of the Ministry of Public Health. It helps to identify measures to limit the risks of emerging diseases. The information available in its database helps decision makers particularly in the area of prevention. The Center also plans the establishment of a network-saver microbiological laboratory. The UNFPA CO in Tunisia could support this request especially in terms of sharing programmes with other similar experiences at the regional level.

The linkages and networking between the two country offices brought new opportunities for cooperation to improve the analysis of data for decision makers on total fertility and mortality trends. The Jordanian delegation said that cooperation with the UNFPA Jordan has been enlarged since 2007 to cover new structures such as the Ministry of Interior. The participants emphasized the benefits of their visit in Tunis and called for more collaboration at the regional level.



## Arab States Regional Office Welcomes New Staff

### Mona Benzeriane

#### Administrative Assistant, ASRO Cairo



Mona joins ASRO as temporary administrative assistant for the ASRO office in Cairo. Mona retired from UNFPA Morocco in November 2008 where she worked as Personal Assistant to the Rep. for 12 years. Prior to that, she also served UN in Morocco (UNICEF and UNFPA) for 15 years.

She functioned as Executive Secretary at Hilton and Hyatt Hotels in Morocco and UAE for 11 years, as Senior Secretary in Morocco for Danish dairy ice cream company, and for Air France and the tourism business for 4 years. Her educational background, professional experience, and foreign language skills make her an asset to office. She can be reached at benzeriane@unfpa.org, Tel.: +20 2 2528 1730, mobile Tel.: +20 16 66 24 544.

### Mohamed Afifi

#### Special Assistant to the Director, ASRO Cairo



ASRO is pleased to welcome Dr. Mohamed Afifi as the Special Assistant to the Regional Director. Prior to joining UNFPA, Mohamed worked for Pathfinder International implementing different USAID-funded RH projects in management and M&E capacities.

Before working with Pathfinder International, he worked as health systems researcher in Scotland. Mohamed is also a qualified medical doctor and holds two master degrees in international health, and health systems research and development from the UK.

He is based in ASRO Cairo and may be contacted at afifi@unfpa.org, tel no. +20 2 2528 1730 Ext. 3311.

## Calendar of Upcoming Regional Events

June	
6-7	2009 Joint Annual Meeting of the AU Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Economic Commission for Africa, Cairo
8	Internal UNFPA Training on ATLAS, Cairo
9-10	Y-PEER coordination meeting, Cairo
15-18	RDT/DRDT meeting, Amman
21-23	Resource Mobilization Workshop, Damascus
July	
11-18	Sub-regional advanced TOT in Peer education & Y-PEER focal points training, Manama
August	
TBC	Advanced TOT in Peer Education, Beirut
September	
2-4	Global Partners in Action: NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Development, Invest in Health, Rights and the Future, Berlin
27-30	UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Consultation Meeting on HIV/AIDS and Young People, Hammamet, Tunisia
27-2/10	IUSSP conference, Marrakesh
October	
18-21	In-Reach Training for Populations at Risk, Marrakech, Morocco (TBC)
26-27	IPCI conference, Cairo
November	
16-19	YFS Orientation Package Adaptation Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya (Somalia office)
December	
1-4	UBW Review Meeting: Consultation on Regional Programming in the Area of HIV/AIDS, Beirut, Lebanon

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