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Inside:

- 5** The much-awaited prickly pear
- 7** Previous local councils' performance was unsatisfactory
- 10** Yield of a woman's work

Readers' Voice

Last edition's question:
 In past elections, major Yemeni parties relied heavily on women to achieve victory. Do you think these parties will fulfill their promises to give women their fair quota of local council seats?

Yes (17%) I don't know (14%)
 No (69%)

This edition's question:
 The National Democratic Institute (NDI) offices was kicked out of Bahrain. Do you think they are operating with a hidden agenda in Yemen?

- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know

Go to our website at:
yementimes.com/#poll
 and have your voice heard

Election campaigning begins, presidential programs unveiled

By: Yasser Al-Mayasi

SANA'A, Aug. 24 — Campaigns for presidential and local elections began yesterday and will continue until the Sept. 20 election.

Most observers believe Yemen's presidential election will dominate and leave nothing for local elections. The practicality of this year's presidential election lies in the fact that it's the first one wherein real competition exists.

The Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) will inaugurate their campaign by holding a festival for their candidate, Faisal Bin Shamlan, at Al-Thawra Stadium today. Launched in Sana'a, such festivals will be followed by others across the republic.

Although yesterday was the official date to begin campaigning, electoral campaigns actually began weeks ago as candidates began planning their campaigns and spreading their electoral programs.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's electoral program, entitled, "A new Yemen... a better future," focuses on

creating a new administration to serve citizens and enhance state institutions, thereby leading to a reformed and modernized government administration. Additionally, it seeks to increase wages, salaries and premiums for all state employees and reinforce transparency in all government transactions and procedures.

The program also concentrates on eradicating unemployment, alleviating poverty, expanding social security's web and creating developed infrastructure for a strong national economy. It further proposes increasing electrical power generation, extending coverage and encouraging private sector investment in it, as well as extending and developing telecommunication services.

Saleh's program highlights the importance of following new economic and balanced financial policies, including reducing taxes, improving collection mechanisms — particularly income taxes, optimally exploiting fish wealth, developing mining industries and activating the tourism sector. Additionally,

it emphasizes having a proper environmental and water policy.

Regarding corruption, Saleh's program focuses on combating administrative and financial corruption by developing mechanisms and policies to combat corruption, as well as punish corrupt officers. The program also affirms the importance of having an appealing investment environment, in addition to encouraging qualitative education focusing on vocational and technical education, eradicating illiteracy, concentrating more on health, improving children's conditions, women's participation in the society and enhancing Yemen's defense and security capabilities.

The program of Bin Shamlan, opposition candidate and Saleh's strongest rival, gives priority to political reform as to constitutionally organizing state authorities to ensure establishing a democratic and multiparty political system. It also emphasizes separating authorities and reforming judicial authority, as well as reforming and developing the local governance system.

Other important points in Bin Shamlan's program include reforming the administrative system, combating corruption and reforming economic policies by working to stop increasing prices, reconsidering economic reform programs and making the state carry the greater burden under such reform programs, not citizens.

Continued on page 2



Innovative ways are used in the Presidential Campaigning. Above a Jeep carries posters and photos of Saleh while driving around streets in Sana'a.
 YT PHOTO BY GLYN GOFFIN

NDI voices concern over potential violent elections

By: Mohammed Al-Qadhi

SANA'A, Aug. 22 — The U.S. National Democratic Institute (NDI) is concerned that the upcoming Sept. 20 presidential and local elections could turn violent.

"We obviously have concerns that in the transition process of democratic development, particularly in a highly-armed nation like Yemen, there's

always the potential for violence as tensions rise and conflicts between parties and individuals increase. We're concerned that there could be violence during the elections," NDI country representative Robin Madrid said.

Concerns mount particularly with the ongoing media barrage between the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) and the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) opposition coalition.

"I think the two sides need to tone down their rhetoric. They spend more time attacking each other and attacking personalities," Madrid commented. Media clashes are expected to increase today after the candidates' official campaigning begins.

A major step forward Despite her concerns, Madrid voiced positive feelings about the upcoming election and its significance in boost-



Robin Madrid voices concern over potentially violent elections.

ing the nation's democratic drive. "We have positive feelings about it. I think it's a major step forward that there's a serious opposition candidate and there will be national debates around issues," she noted.

"For democratic development, it's critical that there be choices. You can't have democratic development if people see no real choices," she added.

Stressing that it's impossible to evaluate the two sides before their campaigns have begun, Madrid is hopeful that there will be "a real statement of different positions on issues from the two sides and a real debate."

She mentioned that NDI has received positive response from the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum (SCER) media sector in terms of its plans to organize meaningful candidate debates on policies, which Madrid considers a major step in these elections, not only for Yemen, but for the Arab world at large.

Continued on page 2

Study warns of bribery risks in Yemen

By: Yemen Times Staff

SANA'A, Aug. 23 — Aiming to discuss the bribery issue in Yemen and enable candidates for local and presidential elections to learn the issue's details, the Yemeni Polling Center (YPC) held a symposium Tuesday at Hadda Hotel to discuss outcomes of a study regarding the bribery issue in Yemen.

Thirteen field researchers conducted the study between July 5 and Aug. 5 in five Yemeni governorates: Sana'a, Sa'ada, Hodeidah, Taiz and Aden.

"The study's main goal was to unveil all aspects related to bribery and record them in a scientific manner by gathering the opinions of government office employees and workers regarding this phenomenon," YPC head Hafez Al-Bukari explained. "It also aimed to put the phenomenon before concerned authorities and decision makers in order to come up with right solutions to it," he added.

In collaboration with Sana'a University academics, the YPC conducted and supervised the study, which was financed by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

Data was collected from various government institutions via direct questionnaire, selecting a sample from among employees and citizens, as



According to the study, bribery exists greatly in financial affairs departments and takes many forms.
 YT PHOTO BY YASSER AL-MAYASI

those two groups are more attached to the bribery issue. Governorates were carefully selected in accordance with their relative importance as to population and economic activities, with Sana'a being assigned more importance because it's the capital and contains most state institutions with direct relations with citizens.

The study involving 699 individuals indicated that there's a consensus, although relative, over the existence of

bribery in Yemen. More than 78 percent of participants indicated that bribery dominates all government institutions.

According to the study, 70 percent of respondents attributed the reason for the phenomenon's spread in Yemen to low salaries, followed by 62 percent for absence of religious restraint and, finally, 50 percent for weak legal deterrence.

Continued on page 2

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Required Entry Qualifications and Competencies

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Interested applicants who fulfill the above-mentioned requirements should send their detailed CV (with copies of awards/degrees earned, references, etc...) with a short covering letter referring to the position advertised.

All applications are to be submitted in a closed envelope clearly marked as the following:

"Application for Administrative Assistant"
Human Resources Officer, GTZ Office Sana'a
GTZ Office Sana'a
P.O. Box 692
Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Final date for submission of applications will be the 01.09.2006.

Only short listed applicants will be contacted and invited for interviews.

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Project Leader, PO Box 16870, Sana'a, Yemen.

Alternatively interested parties can submit applications by email to: dpng001@ntlworld.com marked with Project Leader in the subject field. Applications to be submitted by Sep. 14, 2006.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Program UNDP in Sana'a invites Yemeni Nationals to apply for the following position:

Post Title: Executive Associate to RR/RC (ICS-6)
Duration: Full Time-One Year (renewable)

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- Preparation of high quality briefing materials for supervisor for appointments, meetings, missions & maintenance of protocol procedures.
- Management of supervisor missions and representation schedule, preparation of informal translations.
- Maintenance of rosters of high-level partners, telephone lists.
- Preparation of correspondence, directives, comments on behalf of RR/RC for his/her signature and making follow-up when required.
- Use of automated office management systems for effective functioning of the RR/RC office.
- Ensures provision of effective communications support to the office focusing on maintenance of the filing system ensuring safekeeping of confidential materials. Use of automated filing system.
- Coordination of the information flow in the office, follow up on circulation files.
- Facilitation of information sharing between the Office of the RC and the UNCT.
- Ensures facilitation of knowledge building and management focusing on achievement of sound contributions to knowledge networks and communities of practice, Organization of specialized trainings for secretaries, trainings to UN staff on coordination, administration and protocol issues.

Qualification

- University Degree or equivalent with specialized secretarial training.
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Interested candidates are requested to visit our website at: <http://www.undp.org/ye/undp-vacancies.htm> for detailed term of reference of the position and may submit their applications indicating the title of the post applied for by mail to Human Resources Unit and response will only be made to short listed candidates.

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Providing regular indepth analysis, reporting and coverage of the Yemeni elections.

Presidential Campaigning kicks off

Open season for electoral campaigning started in earnest on Wednesday. The month-long campaigns have been long in the making, but Wednesday marked the first official day of this year's dog and pony show.

Leading up to the Sept 20 election the five presidential candidates will each attempt to win the support of the nation.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's, of the General People's Congress, has posters and billboards to drum up his support while the Joint Meeting Party's Faisal Bin Shamlan hopes to get his face and name in people's minds.

The three remaining candidates Yassin Abdu Saeed, National Opposition Council candidate and the independent's Ahmed Abdullah Al-Majeedi and Fathi Al-Azab are hoping to compete with the two front runners.

The two leading candidates started their campaigns with posters spread around Sana'a.

The Yemen Times sent **Mohammed Al-Jabri** and **Glyn Goffin** to gauge the support for the presidential candidates as the countdown begins.



President Saleh looking down from a billboard proclaiming, "New Yemen... Better Future."



Cars are adorned with the president's face. During the campaign Ahmed Saleh says it's time to show his support. "Ali Abdullah Saleh is the man who built the country. I only know Bin Shamlan as a bottle of water. I know nothing about him more than this," says.



Examining the Bin Shamlan posters gave Ali Al-Amrani a chance to consider his options. "Bin Shamlan is socialist and so is not useful. He is good man, but I shall not vote for him for that very reason, being socialist," said Al-Amrani.



Happy to see the Bin Shamlan posters on the walls Majed Al-Hakimi, a young man from Taiz says, "Bin Shamlan is an educated man, one who has experienced life. He is patriot as well. He deserves to rule the country."



With his ice cream stand plastered with Saleh photos Walid Abdullah, ice-cream says he is very proud of Saleh on his handcart. "We are happy with President Saleh. I want him to win the elections because he has vast experience. We encourage him to go ahead," he adds. Abdullah is one of many Yemeni's with the newspapers on their mind.



"Bin Shamlan is a good man, whose file is still honest. He is an honest man," says Mohammed Saeed, "I just know Bin Shamlan and Ali Abdullah Saleh. The others are nothing comparing to them."



Taxi drivers receive the word of the people, but Abdul-Ghani Al-Weshah says he doesn't know anything about the election campaign although he favors President Saleh. "It is better to elect a person you know than a person you don't know," he notes while driving near a Saleh portrait.



For Mahmoud Yahya there's only one person who can run the country and his support is firmly planted behind President Saleh. "Bin Shamlan lacks popularity," he says while holding up son and wishing his son was old enough to also vote for Saleh.

Yemen Times ELECTIONS Update

Providing regular indepth analysis, reporting and coverage of the Yemeni elections.

Citizens, local council members and candidates say: Previous local councils' performance was unsatisfactory

Yemen waded into its first local council elections in Feb. 2001, aiming to fiscally decentralize the Yemeni government by increasing local budgetary autonomy. The Yemen Times investigated the opinions of citizens, local council candidates and local council members in Sana'a, Aden, Hodeidah and Hadramout about Yemen's first local council experiment.

By: Yemen Times Staff

"What local councils?!" exclaimed Marzouk Abdulnour of Hodeidah, who was surprised at the question about the local councils and their performance, explaining that he hasn't heard about such councils except on election days when street walls are filled with photos of candidates he's never known. He affirmed that such councils have failed to offer citizens anything.

Aden resident Saleh Abduh Ali of Aden expressed his opinion, saying, "Although it's been five years since the first local election in 2001, the local council experiment didn't yield anything because they weren't based on right standards.

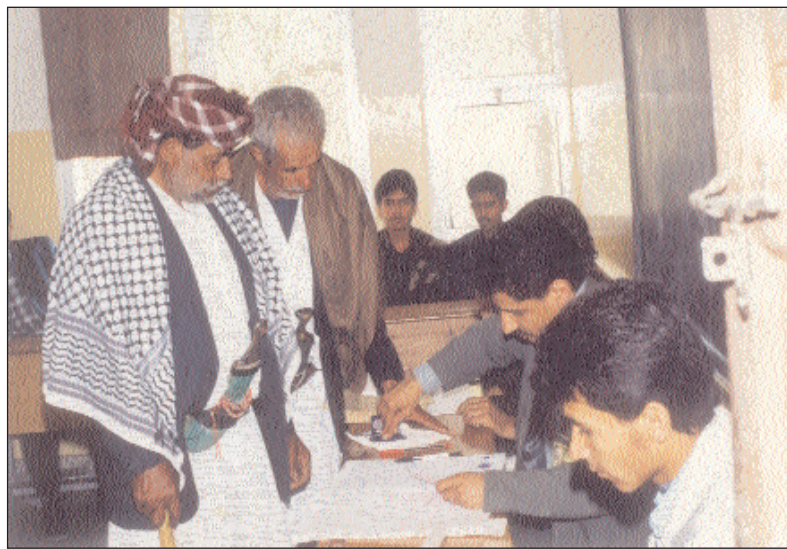
"Many candidates were supported by their parties throughout the election campaign; however, they found themselves facing difficult experiences because they couldn't keep their promises they made in the election campaign," he added, further describing some local council members as ignorant of local authority law.

While Abdulnour and Ali believe the reason for the local councils' failure is due to council members unable to keep their promises to voters, other citizens referred to powerful and influential figures, who directly affected the councils.

Hodeidah computer programmer Mohammed Al-Hamadi insisted, "Although they were provided financial capital, the councils didn't do anything mentionable." He blamed "influential individuals on some local councils, who were the main reason for their failure," without explaining further.

However, Al-Hamadi didn't deny that forming and establishing such councils is the right method for reformation, noting, "Some local councils in some regions were able to work because their members were honest and active." But Al-Hamadi didn't hide his pessimistic feeling regarding the upcoming election: "I always read and watch the conflict that's going on among powerful men in the government, who run this election like it's a trade whereby they can gain more."

Fellow Hodeidah resident Khalid Abdul Fatah Al-Qubati was more open, remarking, "We can't say the local councils achieved anything for democracy or development. In my point of view, such councils were established to practice 'legalized theft' - taking people, power and more taxes and seizing citizens' rights. Decentralization is absent in our country due to absence of law, order and discipline, as well as unbalanced



Two voters in the former local councils.

power. "Additionally, our rulers can't keep ruling the country by their ways, which aren't based on order or the law, but on personal relations and

Citizens: local councils contain unqualified members who couldn't keep their promises. Local council members: some members have no idea about the Local Administration Law.

intelligence using the army to run their business, which is against most people's interests," he added.

Al-Qubati pointed out that all authority is given either to the district director or governor, both of whom are appointed by republican resolution, "which reflects the fact that all authority and power is in the president's hand."

Havedh Al-Buqari, also from Hodeidah, agrees with Al-Qubati, noting that the local councils faced many obstacles preventing them from achieving their goals. "For example, local council law didn't define the council's competence and authority. Additionally, the political system, which is based on military thought, didn't comprehend the local council experience, which aimed to support decentralization and society's participation in the development process," he explained.

Unlike his fellow countrymen, Mohammed Khamis of Sawan in Hadramout believes Yemen's local authority experience "succeeded 50 percent and that's a good start."

However, he said voters themselves erred in the previous elections because "Many citizens voted for uneducated and unqualified candidates who neither knew nor comprehended local authority law. How do you ask someone to enforce a law that he himself doesn't understand?" he wondered.

"We can overcome such difficulties by setting voting conditions, including reading, writing and knowledge. The law mentions such conditions, but it never has been applied," he added.

Mabarak Salem Baqader of Hadramout agrees that the local authority experiment is succeeds somewhat upon financially and administratively implementing the decentralization concept, particularly on councils whose members are recognized for their honesty, activity and competency and who were given authority to deal with local area issues such as projects.

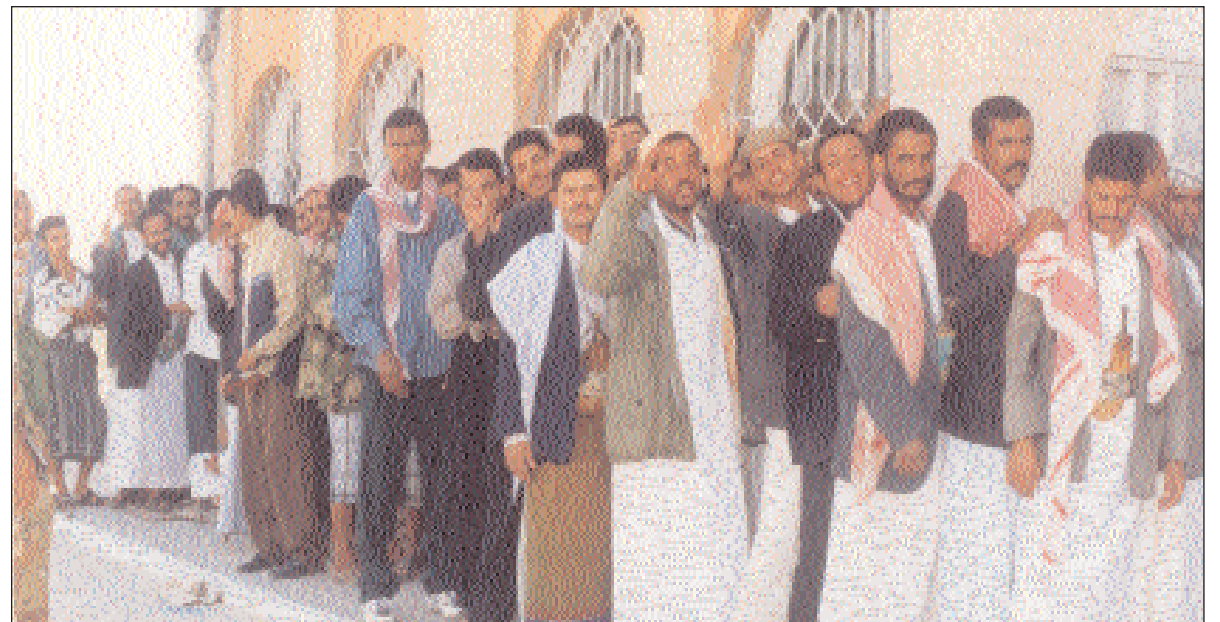
Overlapping authority and decentralization

"Citizens aren't the only ones complaining about local councils' performance, as there are complaints from local council members and even from councils' leaders," noted Adel Ali Al-Dhubhani, a local council member in Sana'a.

He explained that the councils' institutional system didn't complete the budgets, which were insufficient, to operate the councils. He also mentioned obvious inconsistency and contradiction between numerous legal articles and local authority law.

Al-Dhubhani added that many council members are unaware of Local Administration Law legislation and articles. Additionally, although they voted for them, many citizens still are unaware of such council members' roles.

A March 1999 national conference on decentralization helped provide the



Many voters participated in the first local councils election that held in 2001.

impetus for Yemen's Parliament adopting the Local Administration Law, which presents the present model for national decentralization.

The Local Administration Law seeks to fiscally decentralize Yemen's government by increasing local budgetary autonomy. Before 1999, central government tightly controlled fiscal allocations, thereby delaying local development projects. Most local revenues raised via taxes and fees

"Most local councils lack offices where their members can do their daily work. Moreover, such councils' budgets were too small to perform their tasks."

were transferred to the capital, Sana'a, with virtually all local budgets coming from fund transfers from the national government.

The new law provided that local authorities will keep revenues collected at the local level, while portions of funds collected by the central government will be distributed to municipalities based on population density.

However, some groups like the National Democratic Institute (NDI) have criticized the Local Administration Law for not extending popular elections to include governor and director-general on the provincial level, as those positions, which are assigned by presidential resolution, are executive managers of the local council boards at the governorate and district level.

In this regard, local council candidate Saleh Abdullah in Hadramout governorate's Dawan district asserted, "I believe the decentralization concept hasn't been applied due to overlapping authority between the governor, the district director-general, the council's director and local council representatives, which leads to competition between

the council and the district. Many times, this created difficulties preventing the Local Administration Law's enforcement and disfiguring the councils' performance. I believe the answer to this problem is raising awareness and defining each one's responsibility."

Local council representative Nabeel Al-Sana in Aden governorate's Al-Tawahi district believes Yemen failed when it declared the local councils' establishment and turned from centralization to decentralization before formulating and enacting all laws and legislation. "The Local Administration Law hasn't been activated yet, so the local councils didn't conduct their duties properly," he proposed.

Al-Sana alleged that the local councils couldn't perform their duties of supervising projects and controlling local personnel and financial sources independently due to conflicts between local council representatives and ministry office personnel.

"There are no prepared administrative departments; most local councils lack offices where their members can do their daily work. Moreover, such councils' budgets were too small to perform their tasks. Besides that, many yearly plans and investment budgets the districts raised

"Influential individuals on some local councils were the main reason for their failure."

never were approved," he explained.

However, Al-Sana pointed to some successful local councils, which were able to "grab their authority and prove their existence in reality by directly supervising projects and helping citizens."

Upcoming local election nominee Abduh Kutaif of Hodeidah agrees with Al-Sana, insisting that local council representatives must be given complete authority to perform and achieve their duties without stress.

Women and local elections

"Some councilwomen observe a major traditional constraint, that is, the inability to attend qat sessions. Hence, they can't learn more about discussions and talks occurring during councilmen's qat sessions, thus limiting their active role in deciding local council issues," said engineer Fatima Huraibi, Secretary-General of Tahrir district's local council.

"Women can't learn more about discussions and talks occurring during councilmen's qat sessions."

She confirmed that only 36 of 125 women candidates won local council elections in 2001, including two at the governorate level in Aden and Abyan. At the district level, three women won the post of secretary-general: in the Capital secretariat, Ibb and Lahj.

"The Local Administration Ministry and the Capital secretariat mayor assigned me the post of director-general of Tahrir district, which is the only Yemeni woman in such a post. The remaining 30 councilwomen are ordinary members of local district councils," Huraibi explained.

"The presence of women as district director-generals, secretary-generals of local district councils and council committee heads allows them to participate in the decision making process and observe implementation of council resolutions. Additionally, women can deal with both men and women in society, thus enabling them to discover society's comprehensive needs and concerns from all walks of life," she pointed out.

Huraibi insisted on donors' role in making local councilwomen more successful by supporting capacity-building programs, funding study tours to countries with similar experiences, like India and Tunisia, and providing financial aid to women's election campaigns.

Yield of a woman's work

By: YemenTimes staff

Women play an integral role in the Development of the country.

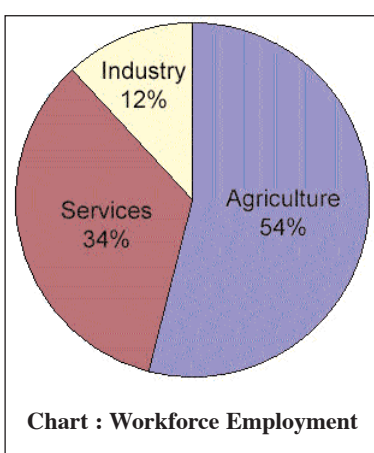
The legal framework and the socio-political environment of the country allows women to actively participate in productive activities with minimum complications. This legal framework includes civil service regulation, civil records, employment, social security, legal authorities and other government services that represent the legal basis to allow Yemeni women their political, economic and social rights as well as increase the participation of women in all aspects of civil life in the country.

However, studies indicate the participation of women in Yemen is far from its potential, mainly due to social constraints that limit the number of productive jobs women can take part in, as well as the high level of illiteracy among women reaching nearly 80 percent. Education and knowledge are the basis of value-added productivity, including primary and secondary education as well as higher education and vocational training, and women are being held back from reaching their productive potential.

Nevertheless, a national strategy administered by the Women's National Committee was laid out in order to develop women's roles in national economic development between 2003 and 2005. It was the first national strategy to integrate with various government agencies and sectors following the national population policies endorsed by the government. However, the outcome of this strategy was jeopardized by the demographic conditions of the country, as well as the economic deterioration which resulted in reduced investment in women.

Estimates indicate that female employment in agriculture reaches up to two thirds of all female employment, compared to the workforce average of just over 50 percent. In many locations of the country female labor in agriculture is considered free labor. Even in other sectors such as education and teaching, a profession deemed acceptable and popular among females in the Yemeni society, studies find that only a fifth of teachers in Yemen are female.

There are no official statistics on women's employment or economic output in Yemen, but employment in Yemen is divided into three main sectors. It starts with agriculture, 54 percent, followed by services, 34 percent



and lastly Industry, inclusive of manufacturing and oil-related sectors, at only 12 percent. However those statistics might be undermined by the fact that it does not take into consideration the employment of males and of females which might, in turn, portray a different picture on the economic activities of men and women and compare that to the yield of both genders.

Therefore, Yemen will not achieve the maximum potential if women are not encouraged to play a more active role in the economy, starting from increased investment in women's education and training to facilitate their work and active participation in the economy.



Yemeni women working in agriculture may not get paid.

Yemen's housing industry

By: Raidan Al-Saqqaf

With huge migrations from rural to urban in Yemen, the demand for real estate is expanding rapidly and urban centers of the country witness tremendous growth as cities expand to host many new residents and expanding population. This reports aims at studying the trends in the Yemeni housing industry and the effects of its growth on real estate costs, land prices, constructions, infrastructure services, as well as investments and government policies in this regards.

The global trend of migration from rural to urban follows a number of complicated changes in economic activity, until four centuries ago the source of wealth was in land and through agricultural activity, thereafter the industrial revolution sparked considerable changes in wealth generation economics as activates in Iron and steel as well as manufacturing provided new means of wealth creation, creating with that hubs of industry jobs and income sources for many workers. This trend continued to develop in most of Western Europe and North America, followed by parts of Asia in the twentieth century, and now Yemen is catching up with the trend.

Forty Years ago, the main means of income generation was dominated by agriculture, with small numbers of people working in trade and services. However, with the emergence of new sources of income but those were limited to urban hubs which are the major cities in Yemen, such as Taiz, Aden and Sana'a, which attracted job seekers to work in various factories and in various services including the government. However, this issue wasn't planned for enough ahead of time, with that attraction came a fundamental problem, i.e. growth in the urban housing industry should at least accompany the growth of migration and population in urban centers.

The poor planning in Yemen's housing Industry results from lack of understanding of the size of the issue, as well as the poor coordination between the private role and the public role in housing and



The Urbanization trend is not slowing down to cope up with the challenges of the housing industry in urban centers.

land market, and also in regulating the relationship between market players and owners of estate and those who wish to enter the market. This has resulted in making the housing problem a problem of affordability as a result of inadequate availability, making the cost of housing increase on timely bases due to the increased demand unmet by existing supply. Resulting in demand-motivated supply to exist through the purchase of new land and constructing new housing facilities.

Construction in itself will have a boom in turn, with the demand for civil engineers, construction workers and raw materials for construction increasing, prices of such materials – in the view of the limited supply – will accordingly increase, therefore increasing the size of the problem.

Another relevant issue is that construction works are rarely located at the areas that are most needed, as the center and more populous areas of Yemeni urban centers are in most cases misused by small and inefficient buildings of a few stories that can host a small number of residents with limited expansion space and capital to fund more efficient utilization of space.

Infrastructure is yet another obstacle to proper housing, as

electricity networks and phone line services continue to expand, more fundamental infrastructure services such as sewage and proper roads are in short supply, seemingly the budgets allocated for infrastructure development are not enough to cope up with the increased demand.

The Urbanization trend is not slowing down to cope up with the challenges of the housing industry in urban centers; in fact it is accelerating and making those challenges even more complicated. What is needed are government policies in order to regulate the growth of the industry and also creating new housing projects to meet some of the demand. Regulation to ease financing of housing projects on the part of investors as well as to facilitate the purchase of houses for citizens.

Italy, first European country represented in SIE 2006

Trade commissioners and representatives of companies from different countries, including Kuwait, Jordanian, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab countries were here in Sana'a to attend the second Sana'a International Exhibition last week. The exhibition, which was entitled "SIE 2006" was inaugurated by Minister of Industry and Trade and was also attended by international organizations interested in trade and industry. It took place at the Apollo International Exhibition Co. between the 13 - 18 August, 2006 and was organized by the Indian Embassy in Yemen.

The major goal will be to promote a better knowledge of Italy in Yemen as well as to encourage Italian companies to invest here, as agreed by the two governments on the occasion of the official visit to Yemen of the Italian Minister for Foreign Trade, Emma Bonino, at the end of June. During this visit it was also announced that the Italian Trade

Commission in Dubai will take charge promoting trade exchanges between Italy and the Yemen.

Italy was the only European country represented in the fair. Abdullah H. Al Sonidar & Sons, representing the Italian Caprari pumps; Adhban group, representing FIAT cars and the New Holland vehicles; Ashibami Corporation.

CVS Ferrari, CTE and the Green Power generators also participated in the fair and Al Bakri Corporation, representing the Lovato electrical products; Al-Radami Establishment, representing Angelica products. High-level executives of International Steel Constructions were present at the fair.

The grand presence of Italian companies is an indication of the rising attention paid by Italian entrepreneurs to the Yemeni market and the continuously growing trade exchange between Italy and Yemen, whose significance is all the more exalted by the recurrence of the 80 anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two Countries.



Business in brief

Decree to force government officials to state their wealth

President Saleh issued a decree to force government officials to state their wealth and total worth prior to holding any government posts. The decree is intended to result in reducing the widespread corruption within government circles.

714 cases of corruption in six months

The number of reported cases of corruption within the first six months of 2006 has reached 714 cases worth over YR1 billion. The Public Funds Court has also indicated that apart from the finances already known, the court has also frozen the assets of many other officials until enough evidence is gathered in accordance to law.

Delegation to increase trade with South Africa

His Excellency Minister of Trade and Industry Khalid Sheikh has sent a Yemeni delegation to South Africa in order to study the possible export opportunities for Yemeni products. South Africa operates a Free Trade Zone to other countries in Africa especially those experiencing considerable economic growth.

Sugar Production Factory in Aden

The Hayel Saeed Anam investment and trade group has announced a plan to establish a sugar refining and production factory in Aden with established capital of \$US 100 million. The projected sugar production will be annually one million tonnes. The project should create employment opportunities for local manpower as well as decrease Yemen's purchase of sugar from the international market, in turn saving foreign reserves.



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Despite age, Al-Ashmour district forts remain inhabited

By: Saddam Al-Ashmori

"I've lived here since I was born in 1901. I wish I could live another 105 years in order to stay in this fort," said Hajj Hussein Al-Naghib, who still lives in Al-Kuber Fort. "My children built new and modern houses outside the fort, but I refuse to live with them because I like living in my house inside the fort," he added.

Al-Kuber Fort is located in Al-Ashmour district, west of Amran governorate. Al-Ashmour district is 125 km.



In Al-Ashmour the old forts may look ruined, but the unconquerable homes still have some families inside.

from Sana'a and is famous for its unique and unconquerable forts as well as their exceptional architecture. Although most were built six centuries ago, they have been and remain standing and inhabited.

Besides Al-Kuber Fort, other forts like Halamlam, Al-Shara'ei and Al-Darb were built sometime between the 14th and 15th centuries. These forts were built in a similar design

also noticeable is a tunnel through which water passed into the fort, thus enabling its inhabitants to have water for prayer and other uses if the fort came under siege.

The fort was divided into zones and every zone belonging to a certain family was fortified and equipped with a strong door. The zone incorporating the fort's center belonged to the family to which the fort's sheikh belonged. This zone had the largest diwan (a place able to hold all inhabitants during meetings, weddings, consultations and receiving guests) and the sheikh had the keys to it.

The fort's ground floors were allocated for sheep, cows and other domestic animals and some were used for such animals' food or as horse stables, particularly at the fort's gate.



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