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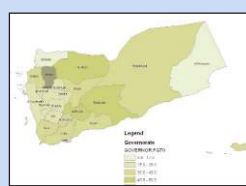
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## Analyzing the content of women's programs in official Yemeni mass media

An analysis of Yemeni women programs in Yemeni mass media reveals different pictures for women portrayed in radio and television programs than those of women portrayed in newspapers. Newspapers are found to be a more neutral medium than other forms of mass media. Several reasons and policies are behind such differences, as reported in the following:

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

“A mother requests a lot of things from her husband. When she is about to marry, she writes a list of conditions before accepting the marriage.” Above was a scene in a Yemeni television serial in which women were portrayed as greedy and a source of problems in the family. This is what some types of media try to reflect without realizing the negative results that will affect society and the lives of women in particular.

Ahmed Al-Ojeal, the chief of the information administration in the general company for Radio and Television described women's roles in most Yemeni television dramas as traditional ones, in which mostly the negative behaviors of women are pictured. Such roles never portray the reality of Yemeni women; instead, they distort it.

Social and political reasons are behind limiting women's roles to traditional ones. There are some women's rights issues such as calling for women's freedom, reforming laws concerning women, and others which have

received limited exposure. Ali Al-Ajrei, the director of the political programs section in Sana'a radio, explained why it is difficult to portray different pictures for Yemeni women, saying, "radio audiences are mostly from rural areas, and represent 70 percent of our audience. So we have to think about the messages that they need to receive, especially since they are uneducated." Ajrei adding that the main picture for Yemeni women in radio is a typical one, as a kind of education for radio audiences and women in particular.

Media and communication expert Nashwan Al-Sumairi ensured that broadcasters and journalists are responsible for portraying women either positively or negatively so they have to pay more attention to what they write or present. They have to know how to serve women's issues positively, as they send deliberate messages to society and women as well.

Al-Sumairi added that the role of mass media is basically to portray a realistic picture of Yemeni women without trying to decorate it or make it ideal.

In a workshop arranged on December 4th, 2007, under the banner "Techniques for analyzing the image of women in Yemeni mass media," broadcasters and journalist trainees analyzed some contents of Yemeni women's pro-

grams productions for 2007 in the official mass media. The result was as follows:

In the radio program Hams Alsawagi, women played traditional roles reflecting an ideal picture of women who are wives and mothers. However, such roles were somehow not realistic. The aim of the program was to reinforce and encourage the traditional role of a woman in her society.

Similar analyses were done on a Yemeni television drama called Haletina (meaning "our life"), a family and women serial, produced in 2007. The female characters who appeared in some episodes portrayed insulting pictures for women such as victims, aggressors, or nagging housewives. The purpose of such pictures is to criticize and advise women.

However, in newspapers the picture of women was somehow different and more positive when compared to other media sources.

The newspapers in Yemen participate in presenting a modern picture of Yemeni women, portraying them as citizens such as lawyers, politicians, etc., who develop society.

In 1997, the Arabic Women Center for Research and Training prepared a study for the content analyses of three Yemeni official daily newspapers by Nashwan Al-Sumairi, media and communication expert and trainer. The study aimed to analyze how official newspapers deal with women's issues during International Women's Day celebrations and to evaluate these newspapers' policies. The study samples were Al-Thawra, Al-Jomhori, and 14 October newspapers.

The study claimed that the newspapers published about 55 percent of women's articles with photos, but the pictures were not professional, as they should have been. Moreover, the con-

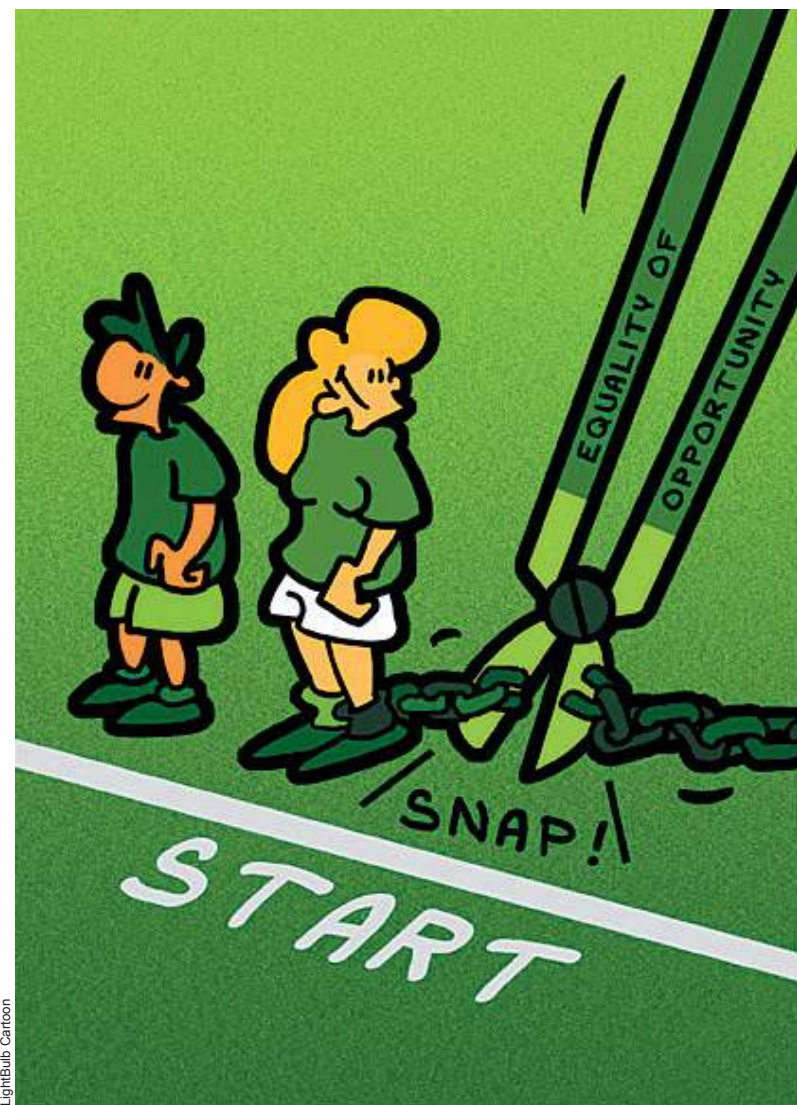
tent of the articles was based on opinions, press releases, readers' letters; rarely did they contain investigative reports or surveys made to discuss women's issues seriously.

The articles mostly portrayed women as citizens who play an important role in political and development issues, and call for their rights as politically active members and decision makers in Parliament and the country in general. Besides this, some articles presented women in traditional roles.

The study revealed that the three newspapers specialized only 3.1 percent to women's issues on the occasion of International Women's Day. This reflected the low concentration of newspapers for women's issues. However, about 40 percent of women's issues were published on the front and back pages, showing the priority these newspapers have in presenting women's issues.

The attitude of the official newspapers reflected an appreciation for women's roles, according to the study, which showed that 60 percent of the women's articles emphasized the importance of women in the social development, while others aimed to provide advice about how women can improve their position in society.

Amat Al-Razaq Jahaf, Yemeni heritage specialist and founder of the Sana'a House Center, said that each mass media tool presents women in a different light. She described how the media portrays her, saying that it was a positive image but it is still rare. "Speaking frankly, such a positive portrayal of me was not because the media realizes the important roles of women in society, but because there isn't a male specialist in the same field. I and a few other women are the only [Yemeni] heritage specialists, and as a result the focus will be on us," Jahaf said.



Jahaf expressed that newspapers are the best medium for portraying women in a positive way compared to other mass media outlets. Working women and models are presented well in newspapers, but in a simplified way.

However, there are people who see that the mass media distinguishes between men and women subconsciously. Antelak Al-Mutawakel, chairperson and gender and development consultant in the Youth Leadership Development Foundation, ensured that the mass media plays a role in developing society. "In general, there is some improvement in the Yemeni mass media in pre-

sending women's issues, especially in launching campaigns, workshops, studies, etc. But the picture is still mostly traditional," Al-Mutawakel ensured.

In the Women National Committee's (WNC) third national conference for women, held in Sana'a in 2007, it was recommended to increase women's participation in all media outlets and to enhance the content and message about women and women's issues in the media. Discussed also were strategies to develop educational and awareness programs that discuss women's issues, especially regarding development, and to target rural women.

## Gender equality in Arab world critical for progress and prosperity, UN report warns

By: UN News Service

Women in the Arab world are still denied equality of opportunity, although their empowerment is a critical factor crippling the Arab nations' quest to return to the first rank of global leaders in commerce, learning and culture, according to a new United Nations-sponsored report released this month.

SANAA, Dec. 17 - It not only calls for all Arab women to be given equal access to essential health, education and all types of activities outside the family, but also urges temporary adoption of affirmative action to expand such participation, thus allowing centuries-old structures of discrimination to be dismantled.

"Full participation and empowerment of women, as citizens, as producers, as mothers and sisters, will be a source of strength for Arab Nations and will allow the Arab World to reach greater prosperity, greater influence and higher levels of human development," said UN

Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Kemal Dervis, whose agency sponsored the Arab Human Development Report 2005: Toward the rise of women in the Arab world.

It commends some states for "significant, progressive changes" in tackling fundamental gender biases prevalent in the region, but cites a range of obstacles to equitable development, from cosmetic reforms with little real effect to violent conflict, foreign occupations and terrorism casting a shadow over the tantalizing hints of progress.

The fundamental obstacle to the rise of women remains how to deal with conflicts between the needs of a productive economy and internationally agreed standards on the one hand and traditions and customs on the other, according to the report.

The strongest inhibitors of development for many Arab citizens, women and men, have been foreign occupations and the 'war on terror,' with basic rights from the right to life through civil and political rights to economic and social rights continuing to be violated.

This negative environment, together

with the spectre of extremist terrorism, which the report condemns in the strongest possible terms, damages the prospects for a broad revival by impeding reform and obstructing opportunities for peaceful and just solutions to the occupation of Arab lands and the restriction of Arab freedoms and rights.

A continued impasse over these matters may push the region further towards extremism and violent protest in the absence of a fair system of governance at the global level that ensures security and prosperity for all, according to the report, the fourth and final part of an annual study of Arab development.

"To embrace the courage and activism of women in the Arab world is to champion the catalysts of human development," UNDP regional director Amat Al Alim Alsoswa said. "Hard-won gains in women's rights are the culmination of decades of committed engagement by generations of women's rights campaigners and their allies in Governments across the region."

Islamic movements, often characterized in the West as uniformly malevolent have in reality been in many cases

at the vanguard of women's empowerment, with most mainstream movements witnessing notable growth of an enlightened leadership among their relatively younger generations, the report says.

"In the last five decades, the internal dynamics of these movements, their relationship to mainstream society and their positions on vital societal issues, on human rights and on good governance and democracy have undergone significant, progressive changes," it adds.

But these positive developments have not cancelled out other currents outside mainstream Arab society that could seek to curtail freedom and democracy if they came to power, especially with regard to women.

Among achievements that have been secured, the report cites the presence of at least one woman in most Arab countries' parliament, cabinet or local council but it warns that political reform, at every level, must go beyond the cosmetic and the symbolic: "In all cases...real decisions in the Arab world are, at all levels, in the hands of men," it says.

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# Poverty in Yemen is deeper and more severe than in other MENA countries, report

**A** recent report on poverty assessment in Yemen said poverty rate dropped from 40 percent in 1998 to 35 percent in 2006. Titled 'Yemen Poverty Assessment', the report was prepared by the government of Yemen, World Bank, and UN Development Program (UNDP). This report was based on a household budget survey conducted from April 2005 to March 2006. Below is an executive summary for the report.

By: Yemen Times Staff

From what was historically known as "Arabia Felix" – a land of prosperity and happiness – Yemen has become the most impoverished among the Arab countries.

The government of the united Yemen, formed in 1990, has launched so far three five-year economic reform plans with the goal of restoring Yemen's prosperity. Have these efforts succeeded? What policies are needed to further reduce poverty? The Poverty Assessment report aims to answer these questions. This report measures poverty in Yemen in 2005/06, and evaluates the change in poverty compared to 1998, the two years for which comparable household budget surveys are available. The period between the two survey years (1998 and 2005/06), more or less overlaps the first two five-year economic plans and captures the effect of the economic reform programs launched since 1995.

In addition to measuring poverty, this report has three objectives: evaluating the role of growth and past reforms on poverty, identifying better ways to target the vulnerable poor through public action, and an assessment of the poverty monitoring system. By examining the effect of the key policies on poverty, such as the petroleum price reform and the government's social protection mechanisms between 1998 and 2005/06, the study aims to equip policy makers and development partners with the knowledge needed to improve the effectiveness of their efforts to reduce poverty in Yemen.

**The main conclusion of the study is that poverty in Yemen declined.**

Real GDP per capita grew, on average, by 2.1 percent per year between the two survey periods, while poverty (measured as the headcount ratio) declined by almost 2 percent on an annual basis. The percentage of poor declined from 40.1 percent in 1998 to 34.8 percent in 2005/06. The percentage of the poor declined in both urban and rural areas. However, due to continued high population growth, the absolute number of poor remained at around seven million, the same number as seven years ago. The pace of poverty reduction is modest compared to the MDG goal adopted by the government. The goal of reaching the first MDG (halving the percentage of poor) will require the quadrupling of the current one percent per year rate of growth in per capita consumption achieved over the last seven years.

**The urban areas of Yemen witnessed a remarkable decline in poverty.**

The urban areas benefited remarkably from the predominantly oil-led growth, which resulted in the rapid decline in the percentage of urban poor from 32.2 percent to 20.7 percent, despite an increase in urbanization. Although poverty declined in four of the seven urban regions, poverty did not change in the remaining three.

The decline in national poverty for the rural areas is not robust to changes in poverty lines. In rural Yemen, the percentage of poor declined from 42.4 percent in 1998 to 40.1 percent in 2005/06. However, unlike in the urban areas, this decline is not robust to alternative definitions of poverty line. If slightly higher poverty lines were used than the already chosen ones (higher by about 12 percent), the percentage of poor in the rural areas would have increased between 1998 and 2005/06. The decline in poverty as measured by the poverty gap and severity measures is also reversed at slightly higher poverty lines. However, examined at regional levels, the change in rural poverty becomes robust. In three of the seven rural regions where nearly 40 percent of the country's poor live (Central North, Central South and Eastern), poverty unambiguously worsened by 10 to 15 percentage points.

**The distributionally sensitive measures of poverty show a greater decline in poverty.** During 1998 to 2005/06, the poverty gap index declined at a greater rate than the headcount index, and the severity of poverty index fell at an even greater rate. This indicates that the ultra poor benefited even more than the average poor.

Despite the recent reduction, poverty in Yemen is deeper and more severe than in other MENA countries. The poverty gap index is 8.9 percent, implying a monthly poverty deficit per capita of about YR 497. On average, a poor person should receive YR 1,431 per month to be lifted out of poverty<sup>2</sup> - about one-third of the mean consumption of the poor. Perfect targeting of the poor would require only about YR 124.4 billion per year (about 4 percent of GDP) to fill the gap between the actual spending of poor households and the poverty line, thus lifting everyone out of poverty. The severity of poverty index (which attaches greater weight to the poverty gaps of poorer families) at 3.3 percent is relatively high by MNA country standards (Figure E.2). The food poverty gap averages about YR 2,100 for the food-poor, some 75 percent of the average consumption of the food-poor. Meanwhile the government's cash transfer program which targets the food-poor (the Social Welfare Fund) is inadequate as it currently has a benefit ceiling of YR 2,000 per family.

Poverty differs considerably across regional dimensions. For the first time for Yemen, utilizing the 2004 census data and the 2005/06 HBS, poverty at the district levels was projected with statistical precision. There are large intra-governorate differences in the incidence of poverty (Figure E.3). Poverty varied between 5.4 percent and 71 percent in 2005/06 among governorates. Poverty is highest in the rural part of the Amran governorate, where 71 percent of the population is poor. Amran is followed by Shabwah and Al-Baida (60 percent). The incidence of poverty is the lowest in the Al-Maharah and Sana'a City governorates. The ranking of governorates remains unchanged for other measures of poverty. Because of the faster reduction in urban poverty, regional differences in the rates of poverty have accentuated between 1998 and 2005/06.

Educational attainment of the poor has improved, and the poverty incidence has marginally declined among illiterate families. The share of poor households headed by a person without any formal education declined from 86.8 percent in 1998 to 68.3 percent in 2005/06. The illiterate dominate among those without formal education. The incidence of poverty among families headed by an illiterate person declined from 47.3 percent in 1998 to 44 percent in 2005/06. The lowest poverty rate was found among households headed by persons with university degrees and above, although puzzlingly the difference between the poverty rates of university graduates in urban and rural areas is very large: 5 percent versus 29 percent. This difference could arise from inefficiencies of the labor market such as costs of job-search. Poor workers receive 10 percent less return on education than the non-poor as they probably cannot secure better paying jobs which require better social connections.

However, at a time of rapid surges in enrollment, poor children are falling behind. The enrollment rates for children in the age group 6-14 in the poorest decile declined for both urban and rural areas by 5 percentage points, while the richest deciles increased enrollment by 1 percentage point in urban areas and by 21 percentage points in rural areas. Unavailability of schools and difficulty in commuting are the obstacles that keep children out of school. Other reasons given for non-enrollment include a lack of interest by the family, and/or having to work.

Poor families spend less on health expenditure as a share of their total

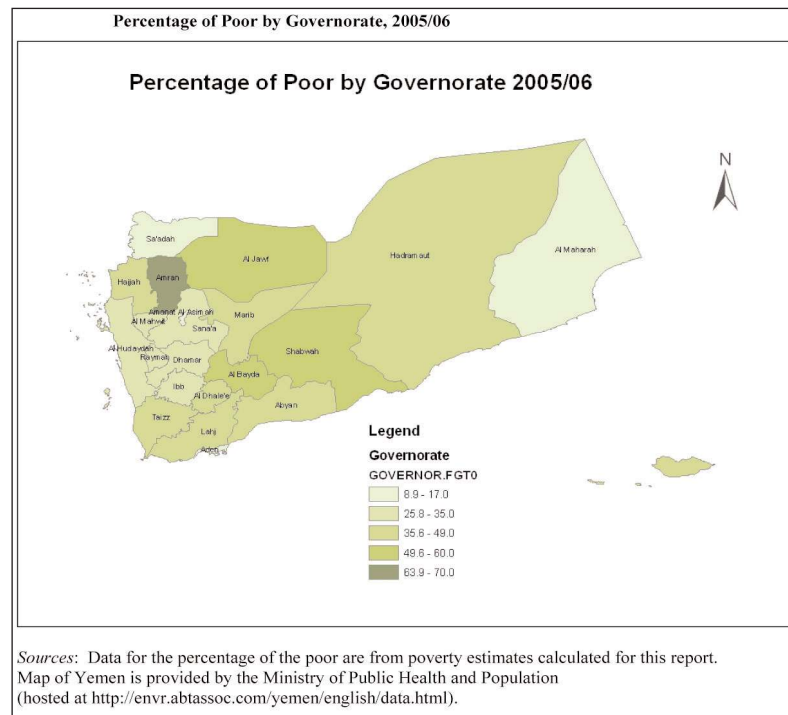
expenditure compared to the non-poor. Inability to pay and difficulty of access may be discouraging them from utilizing medical care. Out-of-pocket payments for health services as a share of total expenditure has increased between 1998 and 2005/06. Households in the poorest quintile spend about one-half what the richest quintile spends as a share of their total consumption expenditure. This distinct pattern suggests that the poor in Yemen may be discouraged from utilizing medical care since they cannot afford it. The inability to pay may contain demand for medical care among the poor.

Children from poor families suffer more from malnutrition. Child malnutrition remains a concern in Yemen, as nearly one-third of children between two and five years old are severely stunted<sup>4</sup>. Data on severe stunting shows a greater disparity between urban and rural children than other types of malnutrition (Table E.1). Poverty is clearly associated with the prevalence of severe stunting and underweight among Yemeni children<sup>5</sup>. Since the WHO guidelines for the international reference population changed, it was not possible to compare the prevalence of child malnutrition with the results of earlier health surveys. On the other

hand, available data suggests that the prevalence of child malnutrition did not decline over the last few years.

More people are seeking medical treatment when sick, but the gap persists between the rich and poor. In the 2005/06 HBS, the percentage of individuals who were ill during the preceding month of the survey and sought treatment ranged from 56.6 percent in the poorest quintile<sup>6</sup> to 79.7 percent in the richest quintile. Compared to the 1998 HBS, the 2005/06 HBS figures show that proportionately more of the poor population seeks medical care when ill; however, there still exists a persistent gap between the poor and the rich.

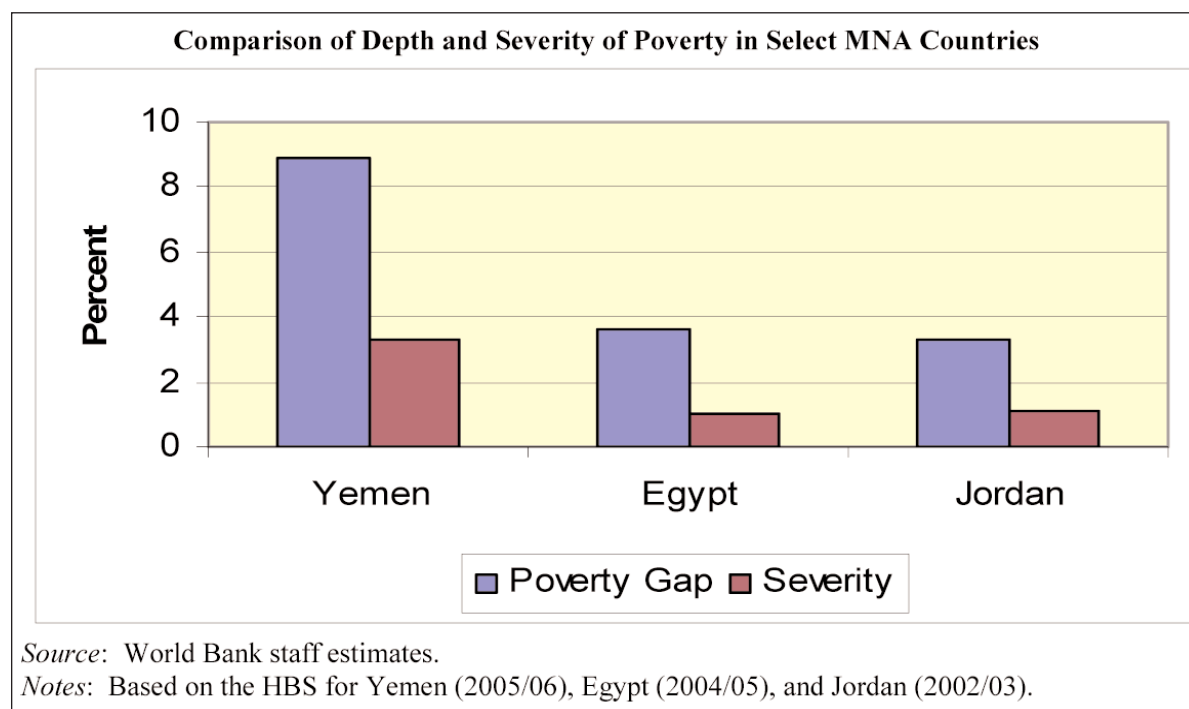
High health cost is the single most important reason why the poor do not seek care when they are sick. For the poor, inability to pay for medical care is the most significant reason for not seeking treatment. Unavailability of needed medical service and difficulty in physical access were the second and third reasons for not seeking the medical care by the poor<sup>7</sup>. Inability to pay for medical care



and unavailability of care become less significant barriers as the expenditure level goes up. In the richest quintile, the major reason for not seeking care is that the illness was considered too minor to receive the medical attention.

Using self-reported status, the poverty rate of female-headed households in Yemen is not significantly different from male-headed households. Only 5 percent of the population in Yemen lives in households headed by a female. These households represent 8 percent of all households. While the mean poverty incidence for self-declared female-headed households is 32 percent versus 35 percent for male-headed, this difference is not statistically significant, as the sample of female-headed families produces a high standard error.

Among female-headed households, there is heterogeneity in risk of poverty. Poverty incidence is highest among those female-headed households which have a spouse residing in the same household. In most cases these husbands are physically or mentally disabled. Next in incidence are the households where the husbands are away. Widows and divorced women



headed households rank next in poverty risk. The lowest risk (7%) is for households headed by single women who have never married.

Female-headed households allocate resources better than male-headed households. Controlling for other factors in a typical demand system, the HBS data established that female headed households (self-reported and de-facto) allocate resources better for current welfare and for the future. Households that are headed by women have lower shares of consumption on adult-consumption goods such as tobacco and qat, and spend more on education<sup>8</sup>. This applies both to households headed by single women, and households where the male head of the family is mostly absent. Having a female as head of household increases the share of expenditure on food by 1.2 percent, while the demand for non-essential goods such as tobacco and beverages declines by 10 percent.

## THE IMPACT OF GROWTH AND REFORMS ON POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The decline in poverty rates observed in Yemen between 1998 – 2005/06 was largely a result of oil-driven economic

growth. However the oil sector employs few Yemenis, and fewer if any from the poor population<sup>9</sup>. The spending impulse from government expenditure expands mostly the service sector based in urban areas.

The devaluation has probably contributed the most to transitional adverse effects on the poor. Between 1998 and 2005/06, the Yemeni Rial depreciated by 41 percent. International evidence points to an average pass-through coefficient of 0.712, implying that up to one-third of the observed price increase of 89 percent over the period could be explained by depreciation. But devaluation improves the incentives in the export-oriented sectors, and the expansion of these sectors could benefit the poor. Partly in response to the depreciation, non-oil exports in Yemen expanded more than two-fold in nominal US\$ terms between 1998 and 2005.

The partial removal of petroleum price subsidies between 1998 and 2005 may have resulted in a cost of living increase of around 21 percent. Petroleum prices have been highly subsidized in Yemen, the highest in the MNA region, representing up to 9 percent of GDP. Faced with the prospect of dwindling oil reserves, and thus declining fiscal revenues, the authorities decided to reduce petroleum sector subsidies. Increased disbursements from the Social Welfare Fund were meant to mitigate any adverse effects.

## The increase in the labor force outpaced the growth in jobs during 1999 - 2004.

The labor force increased at a rate of 4.3 percent per year, while the number of jobs increased by 3.7% per year. The labor force participation rate increased slightly from 38.5% to 39.2% between the two reference years. Therefore the rate of unemployment increased slightly by 2.6 percentage points. Youth unemployment (ages 15 – 24) is considerably higher than the average general population, at 28.3%.

## Unemployment increased between 1999 and 2004. Unemployment in Yemen

(ages 15+) increased from 13.7 percent in 1999 to 16.3 percent in 2004, even though there was a significant decline in poverty (from 40 percent to 35 percent approximately) .. According to international evidence, there is no clear relation between poverty and unemployment. While micro-economic analysis may show a positive correlation between unemployment and poverty, from a macro-economic standpoint, poverty is a household phenomenon and unemployment is related to the individual. An unemployed individual may not be poor if there are other income earners in the household. Moreover, poor households cannot afford to be unemployed, but likely earn very low wages that perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Similarly, changes in policy can cause divergent outcomes for poverty and unemployment. For instance, a significant reduction in real wages may create more jobs, but lower incomes would create higher poverty.

## Unemployment rate among women has increased during 1999 - 2004.

This is in part because female labor force participation increased from 7.0 to 9.6 during 1999 - 2004. The female unemployment rate also increased from 25.4 to 39.5 percent in 2004. The high level of

female unemployment is slightly more evident in the urban areas, where nearly half the female labor force is unemployed. In comparison, in rural areas, female unemployment is 33 percent. There is also a large difference between male and female unemployment rates. The ratio of male to female rate of unemployment is approximately 3:1, similar to that in Egypt

## Social spending in Yemen has decreased in the recent past to 7 percent of GDP.

Social spending, defined to exclude petroleum subsidies, has declined from 8.6 percent of GDP in 2003 to 7 percent in 2006. Health spending is only about 2 percent of GDP. In fact, petroleum subsidies alone equal or exceed total social spending.

## POVERTY MONITORING

**A coherent and functional poverty monitoring system does not currently exist in Yemen, despite multiple donor efforts.**

Most monitoring and evaluation is done in response to varying donor agendas. Moreover, the information is not available publicly. Competing demands for information exist under the PRSP, TFYP, and MDG frameworks, leading to poor formulation of objectives and indicators. Past inefficiencies exist in the system, such as the lack of coordination and duplication of work at various levels of MOPIC, which have hampered growth and poverty alleviation programs. Even after three years of initiating M&E, monitoring systems are still not completely functional. Discussions regarding the list of most important indicators are still ongoing, and progress is very slow. In addition, there are also concerns regarding implementation capacity.

## But, improvements to the monitoring system are planned.

A successful strategy for M&E must focus on the essential aspects of poverty monitoring and capture primarily the level of outcomes, as well as scrutinize the input side (the budget, its execution, and medium-term financial planning). It should include surveys that can assess the effectiveness of policy measures on the ground. It should be built upon the existing administrative information systems in the sectors, but it should also critically examine and validate their results. The new Third Five Year Plan (TFYP) recognizes these deficiencies and prioritizes poverty monitoring as a major objective under the TFYP. Proposed restructuring of MOPIC and reassessing the role of all stakeholders, including line ministries and donors, should lead to improvements in the monitoring and evaluation processes.

## Greater civil society involvement is the key to success in monitoring.

The involvement of the parliaments and civil society in the discussion about the achievements and successes in implementation of the PRSPs is so poor, that in effect, neither accountability nor dialogue is possible amongst the governments, the parliaments and the citizens. Since the objectives of the poverty monitoring process include a qualitative change in the political culture and a more intense dialogue between governments and civil society, considerable efforts are necessary in order to maintain the dynamics of participation that emerged during the formulation of the PRSP.



# High growth rate takes Yemen to catastrophe

By: Ismail Al-Ghabri

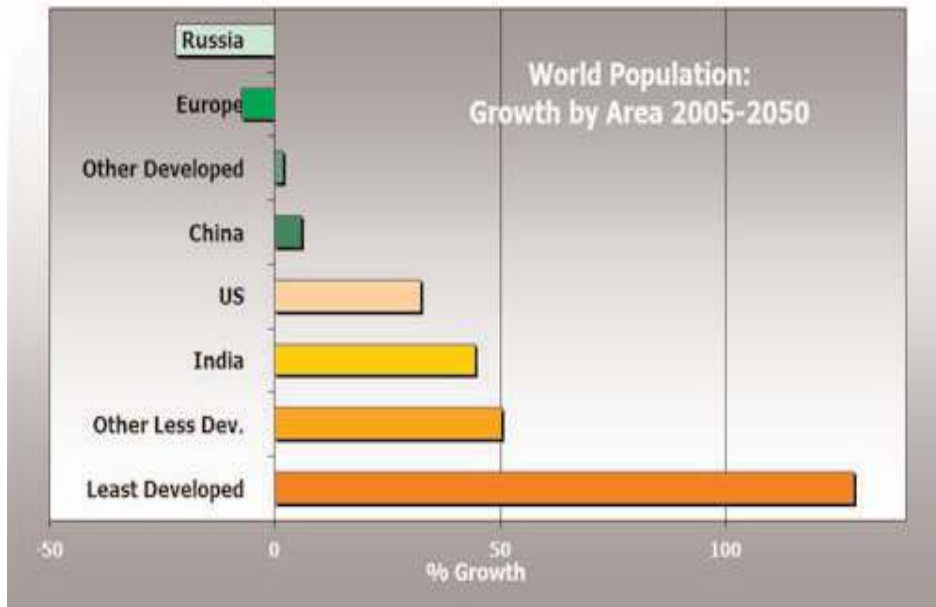
SANA'A, Dec. 15 — In the Fourth National Conference for Population Policy, held under the theme, "Toward further implementation of a population policy," participants stressed the necessity of providing family planning and reproductive health services in all health care centers.

Some of the papers reviewed warned against the risk of increased population growth, indicating that UN estimates show that if population growth in Yemen continues to increase at the present rate, the population will increase from its current 22.4 million to 29.9 million in 2015, then to 43 million in 2025, 62 million in 2035 and 90 million in 2045, finally reaching 108.6 million in 2050. However, the reports mentioned that if Yemen achieves the national population policy goals, estimated population growth will decline by 7 million in 2025, 16 million in 2035, and 49 million in 2050, accomplishing a balance between population growth and available resources and allowing Yemen to achieve its millennium objectives.

Studies also indicated that the annual 3 percent population growth rate is one of the key challenges facing development efforts. They also showed that Yemen is categorized as one of the least developed countries in human resource, ranked 174 out of 184 countries. According to the studies, poverty levels have progressively increased, from 19 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 1999, and lastly 34.4 percent in 2005.

They also advised utilizing resolutions of free of charge health care units in addition to family planning consultations, encouraging women to breast-feed babies naturally, and increasing efforts to increase society awareness about prenatal care.

The recommendations also emphasized the importance of enacting secure motherhood-related laws, defining the minimum marriage age at 18, incriminating female circumcision, setting up government policies to encourage physicians to work in rural



and remote areas, as well as encouraging the private sector to offer reproductive health services in remote areas.

The participants further recommended expanding obstetrics, particularly in the remote areas, interconnecting it with health care units, so the units will be able to offer family planning services. They also stressed the importance of increasing emergency services for delivery, offering reproductive health services among youths and teenagers via youth-friendly clinics, consultation services and pre-marriage tests.

They went further and discussed the importance of increasing public awareness via different media outlets in order to educate the public about the importance of delivering reproductive health and family planning services, and of engaging males in health education and awareness programs. This is in addition to providing media resources in the health units, assisting services to offer consultation for ladies.

The source also advised decision makers to be aware of the population status quo, calling for utilizing the successful countries' experience in slowing population growth and increasing economic growth rates to keep up with population growth. Authorities were asked to work on reducing illiteracy, especially among females, and enforcing attendance in government schools.

The source urged the Ministry of Finance to earmark an annual budget

to implement awareness activities, aiming at increasing reproductive health and family planning demands to ensure the continuation of programs in the long term.

Over 250 persons, including specialists, scholars, representatives of appropriate parties, civil society organizations, and regional and international organizations attended the conference.

The conference also aimed at analyzing and assessing the population status quo and its impact on development efforts over the last years. It also discussed the available mechanisms to combat population challenges, filling the gap between the policies, strategies and population plans and applications.

It also discussed the obstacles that stand as a stumbling block to practical changes of the National Strategy for Population, ensuring coverage of reproductive health-related services. They further reviewed the balance between economy growth, population growth, and civil society, and discussed partnership with donors and the international community to combat the population growth crisis, which is rapidly increasing in Yemen.

Representatives of donor organizations delivered speeches at the conclusion of the conference, when WHO representative Ghalam Bal Ribani, UN representative Velavia Pansieri, and UNFPA representative Hans Obdeijn affirmed to support Yemen in population issues.

# Early marriage increases poverty, study finds

By: Fatima Al-Ajel

After three years of continuous work distinguished by responsibility and a spirit of teamwork involving 15 government and non-governmental organizations, Sana'a University's Gender Development Research and Study Center reveals a link between early marriage and increasing poverty.

SANA'A, Dec. 17 — The study highlights the negative effects of early marriage on human development, particularly increasing dire economic conditions and bad health for women.

Tailoring its message for Yemeni society, the study aims to increase support for ceasing early marriage and mobilize the public to raise the marriage age to a minimum of 18.

Hasinah Al-Gader, head of the research center, stated that the study educated approximately 95 percent of religious men and a sampling of parents promoting early marriage, especially in conservative areas, about the importance of delaying marriage, as this is in the best interest of youth and society at large and not against Islamic principles.

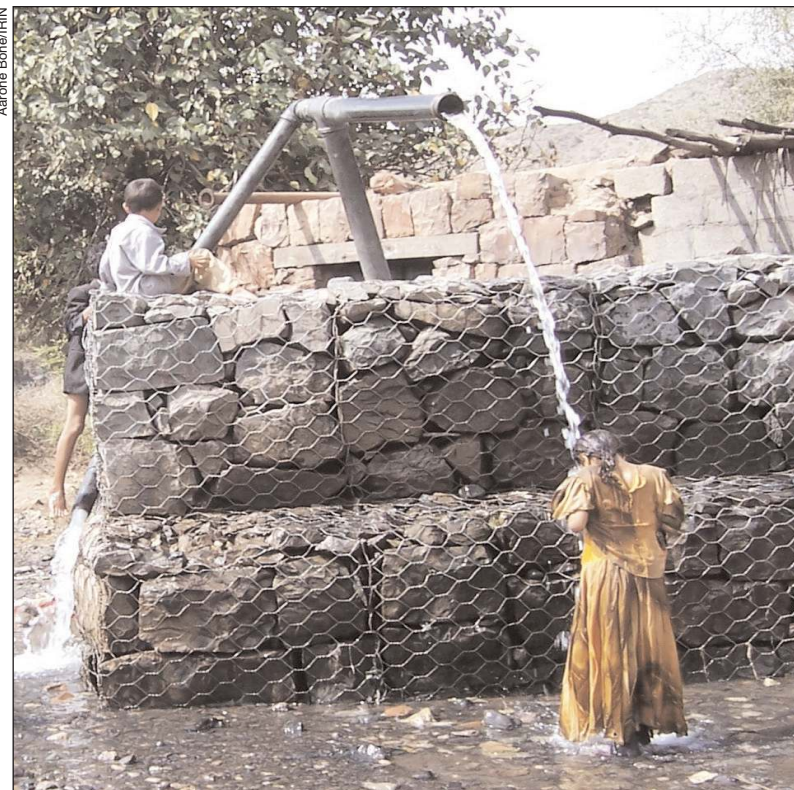
On Wednesday, the center celebrated the launch of a book about the study, entitled, "Early Marriage in Yemen," in cooperation with SHIMA, which is the Yemeni Network to Combat Violence against Women, and Britain's Oxfam organization.

The study done in Hadramout and Hodeidah governorates involved a sampling of areas in Yemen, all representing Yemeni governorates with the same conditions. Sociologist Adel Al-Sharjabi, who headed the research group, explained that only two governorates purposely were chosen.

Hodeidah governorate represents most Yemeni governorates suffering from poverty, whereas Hadramout reflects those governorates favoring early marriage due to their cultural orientations, wherein many citizens believe Islam urges the practice.

Some poor families sell their daughters into marriage as soon as they reach their teens, a fact confirmed by 388 of those surveyed, who pointed out that families often offer their girls for marriage at an early age due to poverty.

Al-Sharjabi noted that poverty is the primary reason for child marriage, while social traditions and values constituted another reason for the phenomenon, as parents prefer their daughters marry to avoid any immoral deviation.



**Childhood in Yemen is often short, as the pressures of poverty and tradition cause many families to marry their children early. Nearly half of all girls in Yemen are married before their 18th birthday.**

"Another reason for early marriage is the financial situation of families, who consider a source of income and sufficient finances a condition for marrying their daughters, even at an early age," Al-Sharjabi pointed out.

The study indicated that 1,495 couples revealed that early marriage for women is 52.1 percent, whereas men marrying at an early age comprised only 6.7 percent. Over the past three generations, the marriage age in Yemen has increased from between ages 10 and 24 to between ages 14 and 70, according to geographic district.

For example, in Hodeidah, Hadramout and Sayoun, girls marry at age 8, whereas they marry at age 10 in Mukalla. Moreover, the marriage age varies among urban and rural areas. It was found that the appropriate marriage age is between 15 and 16.

Souha Ba-Sharan, a specialist on the study's campaign and policies, reviewed some of the difficulties the study encountered, such as some respondents opposing delaying early marriage, including some religious men. Ba-Sharan wondered, "Some religious men endorse the argument for early marriage according to

the example of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), who married Aisha when she was nine years old. When reminded that he also married Khadijah when she was 40 years old, they brushed off the topic."

Antelak Al-Mutawakel, a researcher involved in the study, explained the poor health conditions wherein young wives face numerous problems if they become pregnant at an early age. She pointed out that most of their first children die or born with problems, whereas the young mothers themselves may die due to bleeding or bearing children at home because of lack of medical centers in their area.

The National Women's Committee and SHIMA recently devised a strategy and an advocacy plan targeting Yemeni Members of Parliament in order to amend Article 15 of the Personal Status Law, which concerns marriage but doesn't define a minimum age for marriage.

The network hopes to pressure Parliament to adopt 18 as the minimum age for marriage — for both males and females — along with implementing a serious monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with the marital age requirement.

# World Bank funds to go directly to the people

By: Yemen Times Staff

ADEN, Dec. 16 — World Bank consultant Ismail M. Sharif recently announced that the Bank would conduct a five-nation study, which includes Yemen, about possibly directly funding local communities for development projects without going through central governmental offices, or the districts' local councils.

Additionally, he pointed out, "The World Bank previously funded projects via central governmental offices in their respective countries, but it found that a large proportion of those funds don't adequately go to those deserving them, instead being used for administrative expenses."

Sharif's comments came during his Dec. 14 visit to Al-Shatari Cooperative and Agricultural Society based in Al-Hutah in Lahj governorate, where he met with the society's leaders and several of its contributors with a view to preparing the required study to transfer funds from the center directly to the districts.

He further noted that the World Bank has begun changing its methodology via direct contact with targeted beneficiaries forming what's called beneficiary committees to supervise the planning, implementation and evaluation of the development projects.

Consequently, a study is being conducted in five countries: Yemen, Ethiopia, India, Afghanistan and Vietnam, wherein the effectiveness of this new approach is being studied.

One of the organizations at the local levels will be selected through thorough evaluation of its goals, structure,



**Mud houses in Jawl Madram village in Abyan. Because of high overhead costs many rural area projects remain hugely inefficient. This is why the World Bank is considering dealing directly with the local communities in Yemen.**

work scheme, contact methods, services delivered to targeted beneficiaries, challenges and problems, as well as its future vision, in order to be selected as the WB's local partner.

"At the end of the study, we expect to answer the following essential ques-

tion: Will the World Bank be able fund districts directly without referring to the main center? Implementation will be through the partnership of civil society organizations, cooperative associations and local authorities, among others," Sharif noted.

"Preliminary indicators reveal that there's a possibility for direct cooperation at the district level, despite some gaps related to capacity-building. There's also a mechanism for such coordination and partnership between the appropriate bodies," he concluded.

# Training on AIDS treatment

By: Yemen Times Staff

TAIZ, Dec. 16 — Taiz governorate leaders, along with the area's Health and Population Office, have worked together to inaugurate the AIDS treatment center at Al-Thawrah Hospital. Two physicians also have been sent to Uganda for training on how to fight AIDS, declared Dr. Sa'eed Sifyan, coordinator of Yemen's national AIDS program.

He also noted that two units for testing volunteers and psychological factors were opened, one of which is the Yemeni Association to Fight AIDS, while the other is the headquarters of the Family Association.

Free testing will be conducted for volunteers to ensure that they are AIDS-free, highlighting that the program's most important activity is following up this year's reported cases.

Sifyan noted that 27 AIDS patients, including one foreigner, were admitted to treatment centers in Aden and Sana'a governorates. He further reviewed the cases and cumulative numbers reported regarding epidemic situations in Taiz, especially those related to AIDS and involving 455 cases or 22 percent of cases registered in Yemen up until 2007.

Registered cases in 1992 were 46 percent and 54 percent for Yemenis and foreigners respectively, with 155 individuals being infected with AIDS. Moreover, 300 cases or 47 percent involved infected females, while 51.5 percent were males and 2.5 percent children.

"The main reason for discovering these cases is the improvement of health workers and the extent of training them to fight the AIDS contagion. Most foreign cases are from the Horn of Africa and Saudi Arabia and most were youths, 94 percent of whom became infected as a result of illegal sexual relations. Thus, they became patients with sexually transmitted diseases. This day is dedicated to fighting AIDS, not its patients. If this slogan isn't applied, those infected may flee to other areas, while others may commit suicide," Sifyan warned.

His remarks came during the UNDP-funded Dec. 1 World AIDS Day celebration under the slogan, "Leaders, fulfill your pledges and stop AIDS!" The activity was organized by the Taiz Health and Population Office in conjunction with Yemen's National Program to Fight AIDS.

Girls from Al-Hakimi School performed dramas and chants at the celebration, expressing the tragedies of AIDS, as well as how to fight and prevent it.

Additionally, Sifyan reviewed the activities of Yemen's National Program to Fight AIDS, which include an awareness campaign for more than 12,000 male and female youths in universities, schools and civil society organizations.

The program also conducted the first activity of its kind to educate citizens from Yemen's poorest segments about AIDS, with 700 male and female participants from four areas in Taiz governorate. UNICEF funded that activity.





البنك الأهلي اليمني  
**National Bank Of Yemen**



## For Second Consecutive Year National Bank of Yemen Wins The Banker's Award (Bank of the Year 2007-Yemen)

**“Globally renowned and internationally rated with high standard reinforced with the bank's strong financial position confirms the bank's pioneer role in Yemeni banking sector and its important strategic position in the national economy.”**



The Banker Magazine, one of the Financial Times Group magazines issued in United Kingdom judged National Bank of Yemen for the Banker's Award as (Bank of the Year 2007, Yemen) for the second consecutive year. This is an internationally distinguish award; which has over the years become one of the most important events that occupies a prominent position at international banking industry level, and it is awarded to the best banks in 130 countries, including Global Bank of the Year. In addition includes awards in emerging markets, cash management, securities services and two environmental social governance (as well as a chief information officer award. Together these winners represent the best commercial banking performance and the most important banking across the globe.

Ms Sakina Abdulhussein Mohamed Manager Foreign Relations Department And Mr. Esam Ahmed Alawi Al Skaf Manager Treasury Department delegates of National Bank of Yemen received The Award. at the annual function held for distribution of the Banker's

Award at the Dorchester Hotel – London on 28 November, 2007 in the presence of a large number of directors of the boards, senior managers of banks and financial institutions from all parts of the world.

On this occasion it was announced in the press release by The Banker in its issue of December, 2007, that the National Bank of Yemen had achieved another successful year through its series of distinguished achievements in all items of the bank's balance sheet. The bank's assets grew by 25.8% and net profits recorded an increase of 30.2%, hence the shareholders' equity was raised from 27.6% (2005) to 28.3% (2006). In addition the bank's capital adequacy was raised to 35.2%. The magazine stated that these financial achievements contributed to strengthening and consolidating the bank's financial position and improvement of its profitability indicators. It also strengthened its place in the Yemeni banking market as one of the effective financial institutions which enjoys great potential for growth and achievements and value added to the shareholders (Yemeni Government)

The magazine further stated that these achievements were in confirmation to the report issued in October, 2007 by the Capital Intelligence which is based in Cyprus. The Capital Intelligence which is specialized in rating banks in the Emerging Markets rated National Bank of Yemen (BB) for its financial strength which the highest rating among Yemeni banks.

On the occasion of winning the Bank of the year Yemen award ,2007, for the second year, Mr. Abdulrahman Mohammed Al Kuhali the Chairman of the Board of Directors and General Manager of The Bank stated to the magazine : 'the bank's winning the Award for the second consecutive year reflects the right path that the bank has outlined in its strategies and its modernization and development which is now in its final stages of implementation'

He added: that the National Bank of Yemen is committed to attaining quality in its services and products according international standards , and to realizing the goals and expectations of all parties concerned in the welfare of the bank within the domain of comprehensive benefit of the society and Yemeni economy..



The Banker Awards 2007



# Rising sea levels could lead to political tensions - report

**R**ising sea levels predicted as a result of global warming could have severe environmental, economic and political implications for the already water-stressed Middle East, a new study published on 10 December warns.

The report entitled *Climate Change: A New Threat to Middle East Security*, by the non-governmental organisation Friends of the Earth Middle East (FOEME), was presented at the annual UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia.

It believes climate change could act as a “threat multiplier”, exacerbating water scarcity and tensions over water between nations linked by hydrological resources, geography and shared

borders, particularly in Jordan, Gaza and Egypt.

“Poor and vulnerable populations, which exist in significant numbers throughout the region, will likely face the greatest risk”, says the study.

The report refers to a series of scenarios set out by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and other organisations which indicate that a 0.5 metre rise in sea levels could displace 2 to 4 million Egyptians by 2050. Rising sea levels would also contaminate the drinking water of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza due to sea water intrusion contaminating their only water source, the coastal aquifer, the FOEME report says.

“Economic unrest across the region, due to a decline in agricultural produc-

tion from climate impacts on water resources, could also lead to greater political unrest, posing a threat to current regimes and, thereby, affecting internal and cross-border relations,” it says.

Climate change for Jordan will mean no fresh water resources available for agriculture in the future, say activists. To counter this, the director of FOEME’s Amman office, Munqeth Mehyar, has called on the Jordanian government “to assist rural communities in Jordan that are currently dependent on agriculture to diversify their income sources to rural tourism and small cottage industries”.

## “Unsustainable”

“Government policies that continue to heavily subsidise water for agriculture are unsustainable and are preventing us from preparing for the inevitable,” Mehyar said.

However gloomy the picture for the region appears, environmentalists also say that dealing with climate change, and recognising the looming crisis, may provide opportunities for local, cross-border and international cooperation: current problems projected to intensify could be overcome.

“Improving local demand and supply side water and energy management policies is essential and will only become more critical as the needs increase due to climate change”, the report said.

## Donor assistance

The document also says third-party donor assistance will play an impor-



Rapidly depleting water resources have forced residents of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, to buy water from private sources.

tant role in facilitating adaptation in countries such as Egypt, Palestine and Jordan.

“US leadership is required to both prevent the worst impacts and to provide developing countries such as Jordan and Palestine with technical and financial assistance in adapting to

climate change”, Mehyar said.

“Being left unprepared will affect not only economic, physical, and environmental security, but national, regional, and global security, if actions are not taken now to mitigate, and adapt to the projected impacts of climate change,” Palestinian Director of

FOEME Nader Khatib concluded.

The annual UN Climate Change Conference, which started on 3 December with the participation of over 180 nations, ended on 14 December.

Source: IRIN



Saline sea-water engulfs rice fields in southern Khulna district, Bangladeshi.

# Risking all for a new life in Yemen

**G**enet Mengesha left her home in Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa, to undertake the uncertain, often treacherous, journey to Yemen shortly after the 2005 elections.

“I was tired of the violence; my brother was one of those students who were killed,” the 24-year-old Genet told IRIN on 2 December in Bosasso, capital of Somalia’s self-declared autonomous region of Puntland.

Genet and her husband had planned to make their way to the port city where they would pay a smuggler to get them into Yemen.

“We met a broker in Addis who charged us US\$100 to get to Nazareth and then another broker to Harar [both in Ethiopia],” she said. “In Burao [Somaliland], the broker kept us in a compound for 15 days, robbed us and threatened to kill anyone who tried to escape.”

Three members of her group were killed when they tried to escape. “He killed a woman and two men, because they were so hungry they tried to see if they could find food,” she explained. “He is well known and feared.”

The group was put on a bus to Bosasso, but they were dumped before their destination. “We had no idea where we were, so we kept walking,” Genet said. “It took us four days to get to Bosasso.”

Despite the hardships, the group was happy to reach Bosasso - a trip Genet said cost her \$300 - because it was the last stop to Yemen. “We had to spend time here to make some money to go to Yemen,” she said.

Because of her pregnancy and the difficulties in raising money, Genet and her husband agreed he should go ahead. But like many migrants, he drowned when the boat capsized near the Yemeni coastline - which she only found out weeks later when one of the survivors called.

Now the mother of a nine-month-old baby, the former university student lives in a shack with other would-be

migrants in Bosasso.

Abdulkadir Nur, 30, arrived in Bosasso 15 days previously from Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital. Sitting on the dusty floor of a tea kiosk, the former bus driver and father of six weighed his options.

“I have heard of the dangers, but it is a risk I am willing to take,” he said. “Staying in Mogadishu was a guaranteed death sentence. If we were not killed by the shells and bullets, we would have died of hunger.”

He added: “There was no work because of the security; it got to the point where we could not get out of our house; [here] I have a 50-50 chance of survival and making it to Saudi Arabia.”

## Constant influx

According to local authorities in Bosasso, the influx began in 2000 with Somalis who were escaping insecurity in the south. It expanded in 2004-2005 when Ethiopians joined in, becoming a fully-fledged business.

Over the years, scores of migrants have died. On 29 November, for example, more than 80 people, including women and children, died off the Yemeni coast, according to Somalia’s consul-general in Aden, Hussein Haji Ahmed.

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), at least 20,000 African migrants have crossed the Gulf of Aden this year in boats operated by traffickers from Somali ports; 439 people have died and another 489 are missing and feared dead.

Would-be migrants told IRIN there was a well-established route run by brokers, who are connected to boat owners, from Addis through Harar and Jigiga in Ethiopia; Togwajale, Hargeisa and Burao in Somaliland, and on to Bosasso.

Bosasso officials said there were thousands of would-be migrants in the port city, many living in difficult conditions with inadequate food, shelter and sanitation.

“The sanitation problems in Bosasso

caused by the migrants are obvious,” an aid worker told IRIN. “They sleep and use every available space as a toilet. We have been lucky so far as we have had no major outbreaks of any disease.”

Yusuf Nur Bide, the acting mayor of Bosasso, told IRIN: “Our estimate at present is that there are about 10,000 migrants in Bosasso; they are everywhere and are sleeping in the open with all the health risk this entails.” There are “those who want to leave no matter what, economic migrants who want to find work and stay, and those who straddle the first two categories”, he added.

On average, he said, five trucks brought about 200 migrants each into Bosasso daily. Some of the migrants, particularly the Somalis, join the already established displaced community in the town while others set up makeshift shelters, he added.

## Taskforce

Catherine Weibel, an information officer with UNHCR in Somalia, said an inter-agency taskforce had been set up to undertake an advocacy campaign targeting migrants seeking to reach Yemen.

It comprises representatives of several agencies including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Bide said the local administration had cracked down on the problem “by arresting some smugglers, repatriating migrants and confiscating properties used to [house] smuggle people. We even passed a law to discourage people from helping them, hoping that they will go back if no-one helps them; but it did not stop them.”

Appealing for assistance, he said it was beyond Puntland’s capacity to stop the problem. “We need major help if we are going to stop this. The international community needs to accept that this is an international problem.”



A group of would-be Ethiopian migrants sleep outside a building in Bosasso, capital of Somalia’s self-declared autonomous region of Puntland.

Locals in the port city, however said, people-smuggling was a highly organised business with “wakiilo” (representatives) in all major towns of Somalia and Ethiopia.

The wakiil, one source said, work with “Mukhalas” (brokers) and boat owners. “Everybody knows who they are and where they operate,” he added. “If the government was serious about ending this, they could do it in an hour.”

Blaming the Puntland authorities for reluctance to address the problem “for financial and political reasons”, one boat owner said many of his colleagues were “politically connected” and “it would be politically difficult for the government to shut them down”.

Some local aid workers agreed that the authorities were not doing enough.

“They could do a lot more if there was the political will,” one aid worker said.

However, Ali Abdi Aware, the minister for local government, told IRIN: “We have done more than anyone else to address this problem.” The administration, he added, had confiscated boats and trucks used to ferry migrants, arrested and prosecuted smugglers.

The US with all its power could not stop Mexicans; the EU could not stop African migrants. How on Earth do you expect Puntland with its very limited resources to tackle the problem by itself? We have asked for help many times but none came forward. It is not a question of political will, but of resources.”

Apart from the inter-agency “mixed-migration” taskforce, there is no aid agency specifically tasked to

help the would-be migrants in Bosasso. “They have no legal status, so there is not much one can do for them,” one aid worker said.

Another source said the aid agencies faced a dilemma. “You want them to have access to help but you don’t want to make it so attractive that more will come,” he said.

Aware said his administration would carry out campaigns to warn would-be migrants of the dangers involved. “Right now, that and pressure on boat owners is all we can do.

“We don’t have the means to patrol our coast as effectively as we would like; when we close one port they go to another,” he added. “Instead of criticising us for doing little, the international community should start doing a little bit.”

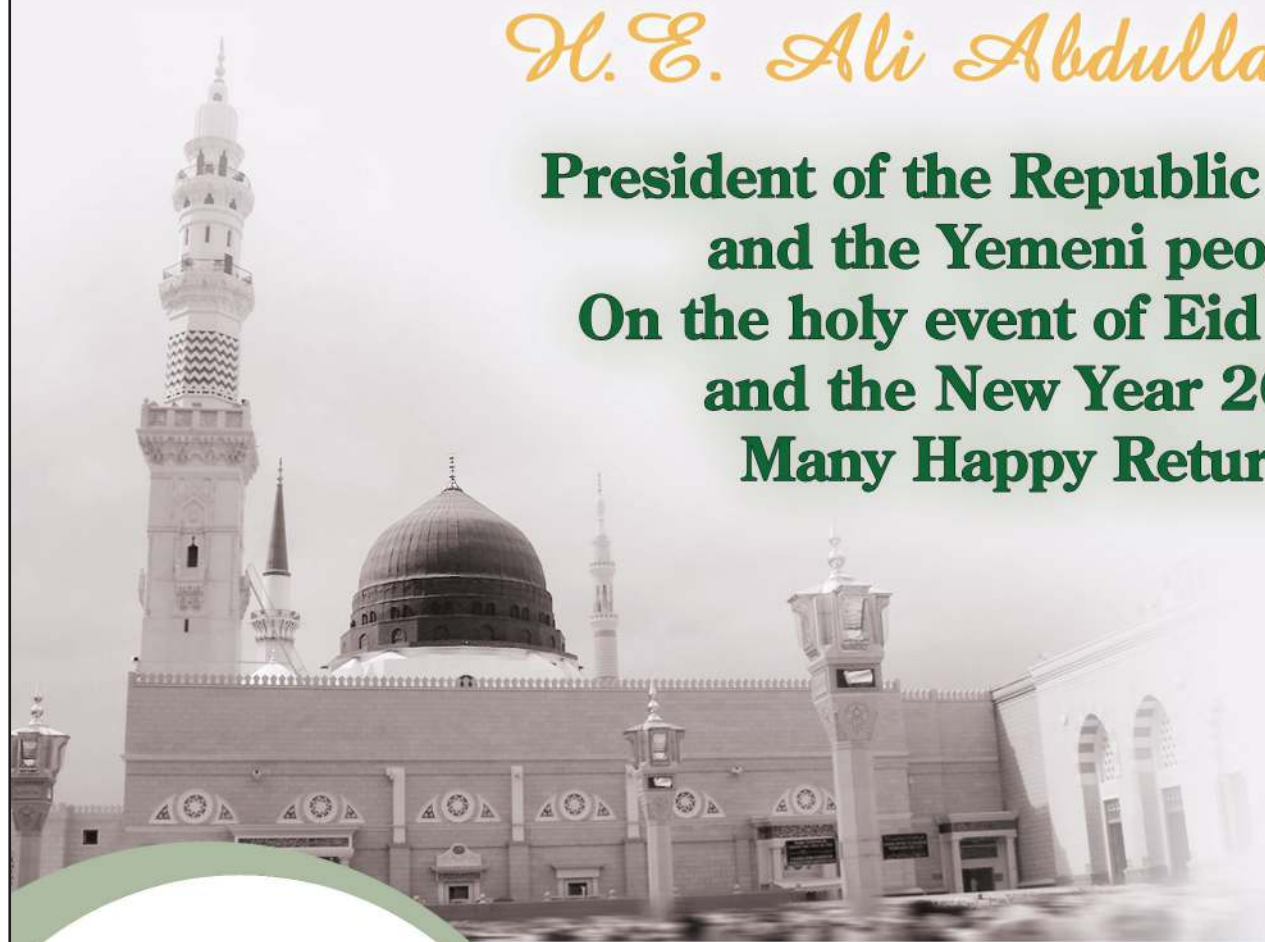
Source: IRIN



Present their heartiest congratulations to

*H. E. Ali Abdullah Saleh*

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On the holy event of Eid Al-Adha  
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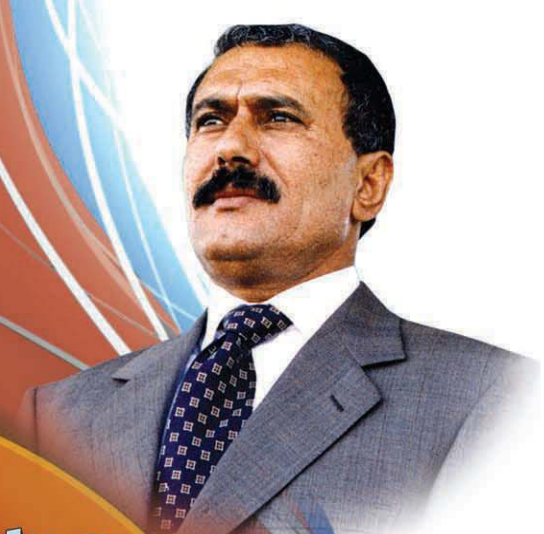
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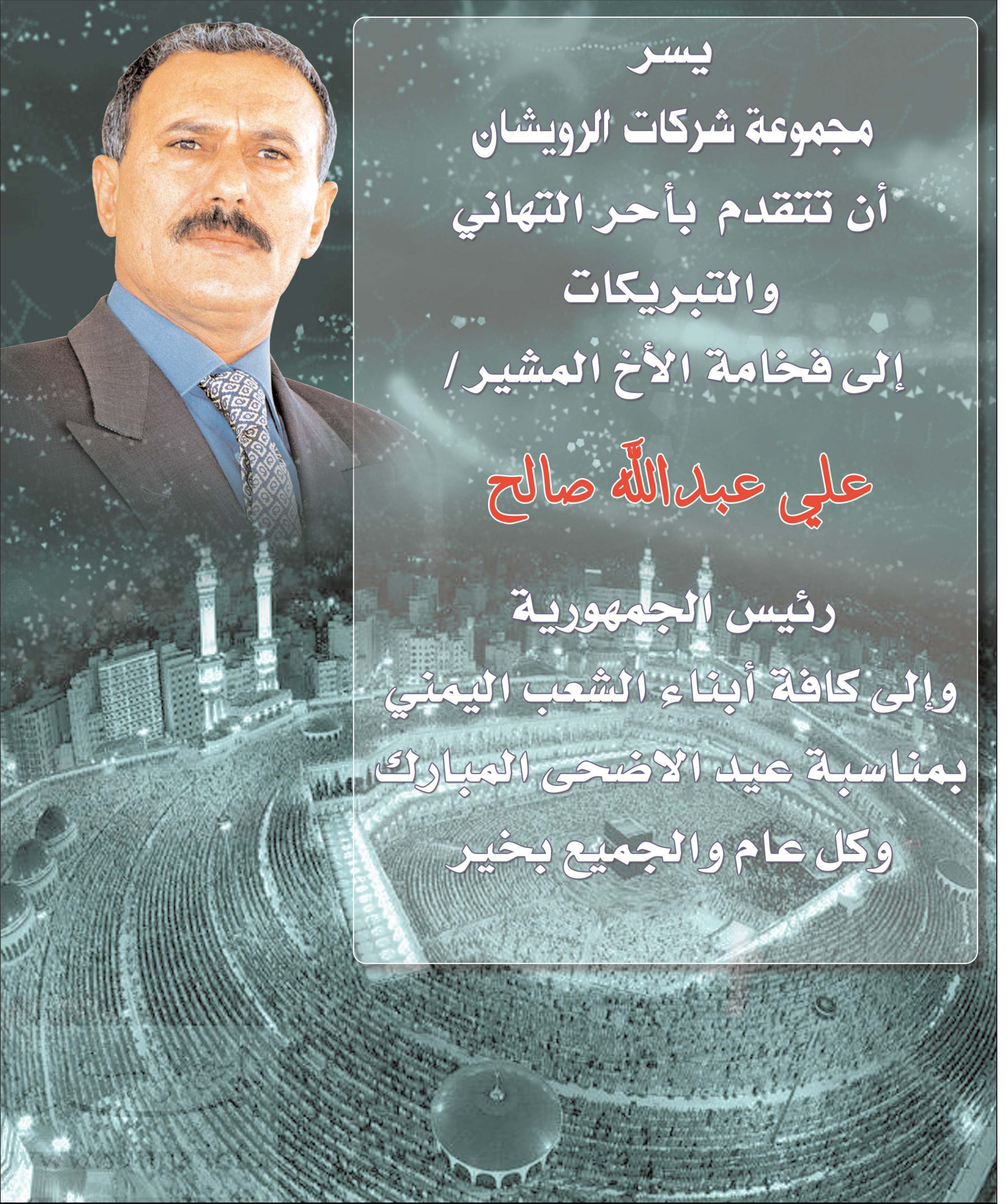
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On the occasion of  
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وإلى كافة أبناء الشعب اليمني  
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# Culture as an economic resource

By: Mohammed Shamsaddin

The cultural aspect and historic heritage play an important role in the progress and development of peoples worldwide. And, as the cultural area is closely related with the economic one, it is of crucial importance to study the economic, cultural and historic situations of countries that reached exceptional economic growths without having natural resources. On the contrary, there are countries that are rich with natural resources but can not achieve any economic development while other countries reached great economic growth, but can not retain that growth steady.

Having the second strongest economy in the world, Japan offers a unique example for contemplation by underdeveloped countries, specifically as the east Asian nation has no natural resources, and therefore has been exposed to natural disasters and devastating wars. But within a short period of time, the Asian tiger managed to join the list of great industrial states.

Most of the peoples throughout the world know about Japan via its products, but in my opinion a country like Japan is impossible to ignore the

cultural aspect and the historic heritage, which both made out of the nation an unparalleled economic and military power in the past, as well as an economic giant in the present.

The Asian tiger will certainly remain an unparalleled economic power in the future as long as the Japanese economy depends mostly on the cultural and moral development of man and sees man as the primary element for the national development.

During the time span between 1603 and 1868 or the so-called Edo Period, which was the last time period in the ancient history of Japan, the country witnessed many reforms in the educational system and its development while researchers sat on extracting texts from religious books and ancient references to strengthen the spirit of nationalism among Japanese people. Those books and references also encouraged the Japanese man to pursue knowledge in the areas of astronomy, mathematics and cartography, as well as work harder for the sake of Japan's progress and prosperity.

The Edo Period saw legal legislations, which were characterized by toughness and objectivity. Laws enacted to regulate works of farmers banned any sales, purchasing or negligence agricultural

lands, as a means to encourage citizens to increase production. In addition, the law prohibited the sale and purchase of farmlands in order not to allow the rich exploit the modest economic conditions of peasants, thereby obliging them to become idle citizens and dependents on others.

The principles of sacrifice, honesty in work, showing respect for work values, plus repeating attempts without any feeling of submission, exercising work with the spirit of nationalism, and bequeathing these principles from generation to generation all helped Japan occupy a prestigious status among world countries.

The East Asian state provided a unique lesson for the underdeveloped nations to utilize and improve their deteriorating situations.

A look at development in Asia reveals no clear Asian model of development. For instance, the trade and investment patterns of many developing Asian nations are completely different from those of Japan during its period of development. Japan was determined to make whatever it needed itself, and so excluded foreign currency, allowing in only technology and borrowing capital from the World Bank and similar institutions.

Regarding trade, Japan's approach was to use quantity adjustment to keep foreign products out, no matter how inexpensive.

Thus, Japan's postwar development model centered around quantity adjustment, with no price adjustment necessary because of fixed exchange rates. The Japanese government was extremely selective about which foreign firms, no matter how competent, would be allowed to establish wholly-owned subsidiaries.

This policy lasted until about 1970. Korea is the closest to this model, and Japan and Korea share a similar problem, namely, their current difficulty in attracting foreign firms now that they need foreign capital.

The rest of Asia, in contrast, is allowing large amounts of foreign capital in. China has been doing so somewhat selectively, but is still much less selective than Japan was in its developmental stage. The most important between the Japanese and Chinese models is that China's stance is to allow inexpensive products in, and has from the beginning incorporated price adjustment into its policy toward foreign capital.

According to famous European economic analysts, close government-industry cooperation, a strong work ethic, mastery of high technology, and a comparatively

small defense allocation have helped Japan become the second largest economy in the world, after the United States, at around US\$ 4.5 trillion in terms of nominal GDP and third after the United States and China in terms of purchasing power parity.

Banking, insurance, real estate, retailing, transportation and telecommunications are all major industries. Japan has a large industrial capacity and is home to some of the largest and most technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles and processed foods. It is home to leading multinational corporations and commercial brands in technology and machinery. Construction has long been one of Japan's largest industries, with the help of multi-billion dollar government contracts in the civil sector.

Distinguishing characteristics of the Japanese economy have included the cooperation of manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and banks in closely-knit groups called keiretsu and the guarantee of lifetime employment in big corporations. Recently, Japanese companies have begun to abandon some of these

norms in an attempt to increase profitability.

However, because only about 15% of Japan's land is suitable for cultivation, a system of terrace farming is used to build in small areas. This results in one of the world's highest levels of crop yields per unit area.

However, Japan's small agricultural sector is also highly subsidized and protected. Japan must import about 50% of its requirements of grain and fodder crops other than rice, and it relies on imports for most of its supply of meat. In fishing, Japan is ranked second in the world behind China in tonnage of fish caught.

Japan maintains one of the world's largest fishing fleets and accounts for nearly 15% of the global catch. Japan relies on foreign countries for almost all oil and food.

Now, it is time for the underdeveloped and poor countries in the world including Yemen to make use of the Japanese experience, but upon condition that regimes of these countries should have a political will to recover the ailing economies of their nations and improve their people's living standards.

Source: *Newsyemen.net*

# Supreme Commission for Violations and Fraud

By: Raima Al-Shami

For decades, force, corruption and fraud have been the main pillars of Yemen's totalitarian regime while the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referenda plays the role of coordinating these pillars and directing them toward their main goal, which is granting fraudulent legitimacy to a totalitarian regime whenever a presidential election is conducted. Public funds, government media, state facilities, the army and the likes have become the intrinsic tools of Yemen's democracy. These tools are always used to control elections and manipulate its result in favor of the ruler and his party while SCER's duties are limited to this context, thus providing a constitutional and legal cover for the repeatedly committed frauds and violations at the expense of will of the people. This commission then presents a fraudulent victory certificate to the ruler in recognition of his fraudulent win.

As a result, it is impossible for a rule, based on corruption and its legitimacy originates from frauds and violations, to make a deal on one of its tools it always employs to encourage exercise of corruption and lengthen its stay in power by counterfeiting will of the people. The regime also deceives the outside world by the most recent presidential elections conducted in its country, which featured the ugliest forms of frauds and result manipulation.

Almost all the state's facilities including public funds, official media and army were exploited in favor of the ruling party, as well as to help in committing numerous frauds and violations, which had been recorded by various international and local observation missions. SCER even didn't remain at least silence to such violations, but its media officer

turned to exercise propaganda in support of President Saleh, slamming the opposition and describing Saleh as the 'Father of Democracy'. According to the SCER media officer, without Ali Abdullah Saleh, there will be neither democracy nor elections, forgetting about his post at a commission, supposed to be independent and neutral in managing the electoral process.

In general, Abdu Al-Janadi's SCER represents a wonder of Yemen's democracy and it performed its tasks in the required way proceeding from the production of counterfeit voter registers containing more than one million and half a million ghost and minor voters. All such registers were approved to defend all the forms of violations and frauds seen throughout the different stages of the election process. This series of frauds and violations culminated with granting a fraudulent legitimacy to a corrupt regime.

For this purpose, the authority proved to be loyal with its commission, thereby suggesting an extension for this commission to be in charge of managing the coming votes, however, reports made by international and local election observation missions disclosed mass frauds and violations that accompanied the election process. These reports suggested a package of regulations and criteria to reform SCER, notably the recommendations included in the report submitted by the European Union Election Observation Mission, which were signed by the government and the opposition. Some time earlier, there was the agreement of principles, followed by the dialogue regulations, but as usual, the ruler breached all the agreements and conventions because he is unable to quit one of its tools, which he is using to ensure his stay in power for a longer period of

time, if not for decades to come.

## Parliamentary majority:

In order to maintain its dominance over SCER, the authority uses its parliamentary majority (the majority of MPs belong to the ruling party) as a justification to retain the same majority in SCER's formation. But, what is the parliamentary majority's relation with an election body like SCER, which is supposed to be neutral, independent and contain a balanced membership from both the government and the opposition as well, to ensure its being able to run a free and fair election, or at least to reduce electoral frauds and violations.

Suppose that all the members of Parliament, totaling 301 MPs, belong to the ruling party, will there be any objective or logical justification in order for SCER to be formed from the majority party to represent its will as we usually see at Parliament?

## JMP has multiple options:

Well done, the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) diagnosed an important aspect in the national crisis and the deteriorating situations experienced in the country, plus the numerous threats posed to the national unity. The JMP uncovered all the aspects of oppression, corruption and totalitarianism that have been so far exercised since the current SCER was formed. The opposition parties suggested various alternatives to the deteriorating situations, one of which is really reforming SCER in order to liberate it from its being dominantly exploited by the ruler to enhance its counterfeit legitimacy. The JMP wants SCER to be a neutral mechanism and a balanced element, as well as an independent staff performing its constitutional and legal duties in a way ensuring free and fair elections. These parties want to have a SCER that prevent any exploitation of public funds and

state's facilities in favor of the ruling party.

The most important thing is that JMP has provided a national and serious vision for reforming SCER to help enhance the democratic experience in the country and prevent any attempts to defraud the popular will. According to the opposition parties, reforming SCER is key to conducting other comprehensive reforms in different areas and resolving the poor situation in the country.

The People can no longer tolerate false promises of reforms and real cures to the deteriorating situations, as well as other similar pledges to help the nation get rid of corruption and corrupt individuals. The people

have understood well that the consecutive outputs of the electoral process are responsible for rampant corruption in almost all the government offices, starvation, poverty and high unemployment rates. The JMP's attitude was demonstrated in an appropriate time giving a glimpse of hope after it was about to vanish and get lost.

## People don't suffer, authority alleges:

For a long time, the authority has been denying that people are suffering from its poor policies that exacerbated their living standards and encouraged corrupt and influential persons to exercise property theft. President Saleh has

been repeatedly claiming that there are no congestions in the nation but congestions do exist in the heads of those who try to machinate standoffs and crises. All the tools exploited by the failed authority such as the army and security forces could not prevent citizens of the southern governorates from revolting against corruption and the liquidation policies. Instead, citizens staged huge protests against corruption and oppression, thus encouraging people in other parts of the country to revolt against the failed regime, which is exclusively accountable for the constant sufferings of its people.

Source: *Al-Wahdawi.net*



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P.O. Box 2579, Sana'a, Yemen  
E-mail: editor@yementimes.com  
Advertisement: ads@yementimes.com  
Letters: letters@yementimes.com

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## Offices

**Aden Bureau:**  
Ridhwan Alawi Ahmed  
Tel: +967 (2) 347-057, 346596  
Fax: +967 (2) 347056  
Email: ytaden@y.net.ye

**Taiz Bureau:**  
Imad Ahmed Abdullah  
Tel: +967 (4) 217-156,  
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P.O.Box: 5086, Taiz  
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# Surge in Piracy off Somalia Sparks Global Outcry

By: Daniel Ooko, The Media Line Ltd.

The Chinese Consulate, which received *Ching Fong Hwa 168*, a Taiwanese vessel and its crew after months of captivity, knew the fishing vessel had a dead sailor aboard, who could have been turned into chopped meat for sharks in the unfriendly waters off the Somali coast.

Chen Tao was killed several months after the vessel was hijacked by 15 heavily armed pirates, when he and another sailor were shot by the hijackers. The other sailor survived the attack.

When the pirates attempted to feed his dead body to the sharks, the ship's captain, Xinshen Ling, saved his body by threatening to throw himself overboard instead.

After six months of living in a pirate's hideout in a foreign land, Ling was becoming immune to the indignity of seeing his sailors subjected to mock executions and hearing his wife wailing for the life of her husband and son aboard the Taiwanese vessel.

"He (Chen) was very unlucky because they just took him at random and then I heard six shots," Ling recalled on arrival in Mombassa, Kenya, last week, 10 days after a joint reconnaissance mission helped free his vessel.

Ling knew just how painful the loss of a crewmate to cruel Somali pirates could hurt, to the extent that he had threatened to end his own life in Somali's coastal waters.

"It was a real test. I wanted to know if they valued me, but I knew their position would be weakened without a captain," Ling told The Media Line (TML) soon after his ship docked in Mombassa following nearly seven months of strict captivity in the dangerous waters.

"We are very sad it had to end this

way. We are transporting the dead body to Pandya Hospital in Mombassa for preservation as we wait for directions from his family regarding their burial wishes," Bing Xue, the Chinese consul in Nairobi told TML.

Xue had some diplomatic explaining to do as to why a Chinese diplomat was at hand to receive a Taiwanese vessel, while the region claims autonomy from China.

"I am here to receive the Taiwanese vessel because Taiwan is part of China and this vessel is from Taiwan," the consul said.

The vessel's arrival in Mombassa was a miracle of sorts. After enduring a series of hardships, Ling managed to convince the Taiwanese owners of the vessel, which was hijacked in Somalia in April, to pay an unspecified amount in ransom.

The Somali pirates had demanded \$1.5 million for the release of the vessel, but as soon as the ransom was paid in mid-October the pirates demanded more money.

The Taiwanese ship was saved by a United States Navy ship patrolling the increasingly dangerous coastal waters off Somalia, where ships are advised to keep at least 200 nautical miles distance to guarantee their safety.

For Ling, what was a routine fishing expedition turned to catastrophe when 15 armed pirates stormed the ship, wielding rocket launchers, automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, overpowering the ship's crew and taking them hostage.

Aboard the fishing vessel were sailors of different nationalities, among them a Filipino, Chinese and other Asian nationals. The members recounted their life in captivity in the Horn of Africa country with pain and fear.

They related that, because the Somali pirates could hardly speak any foreign

languages, they endured heavy beatings from their guards, who kept them at sea for seven months, while also vandalizing the vessel.

Somali pirates have, over the last few months, hijacked 26 ships near Somalia's coastal waters, including a luxury cruise ship that, after rockets were fired at it, managed to escape to Mombassa by scaring off the pirates using artificial sound instruments.

These bizarre incidents of piracy have led to loss of life and often last from three to six months, during which time commercial ships are relieved of their cargo, vandalized and the crew terrorized and thoroughly beaten.

Sailors who have suffered captivity at the hands of Somali pirates point to a well-organized, criminal syndicate that commands a heavily armed, well-trained and well-equipped "army," led by former army generals with direct links to the country's weak interim authority.

Korean sailor Han Seok-ho, 40, the captain of *Mavuno 1* and *Mavuno 2*, was held in captivity for six months in Somalia, where his interaction with the world was in a village of about 300 homes, where everyone seemed to have links with the syndicate.

"It is difficult to express how harshly we were treated," Han said on arrival in Mombassa this month after he and his boat were released together with four sailors and 20 other Asian nationals after being in captivity since May 15 this year.

The scale of the hijackings indicate the Somali pirates have infiltrated the worldwide marine communication system and have a mastery of the routing of international marine liners plying the east coast of the Indian Ocean, where they carry out sophisticated attacks.

Somali's rate of hijackings soared in May this year, when the pirates attacked and successfully seized international liners, humanitarian convoys along the Indian Ocean and held sailors from Brazil, Denmark, Taiwan, Japan, India and Italy.

The ruthlessness with which Chen, Ling, their crews and passengers were treated while in captivity highlights the high stakes involved in fighting the humanitarian disaster that the rising cases of piracy has visited on the war-scarred people of Somalia.

In February this year *MV Rozen*, a U.N.-contracted vessel was hijacked when offloading its humanitarian cargo in northeast Somalia, causing a three-month aid standoff. The incident, which involved the alleged theft of millions of dollars worth of U.N. food aid, led relief agencies to shift aid routes. The World Food Program, which had chartered the *MV Rozen*, pleaded for its release, using Somali traditional elders as mediators.

Somali's traditional elders have



become more powerful and are believed to control clan militias, which have also become more powerful and are able to dictate the pace of the country's return to peace initiatives.

Efforts to curb the wildcat piracy along Somalia's coast have been riddled with controversy since 2005, when Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) signed a contract with a U.S. firm, TopCat Securities, to help fight piracy along its coastline.

Somali's Planning Minister Abdi Rizak says the plans to deploy equipment in the fight against piracy in Somalia are ongoing and would begin to show results when the appropriate equipment is installed in Somalia.

However, critics have cast doubts on the ability of the U.S. firm to deliver on the contract, questioning the firm's financial capacity and its links with contracts in Iraq in the 1990s.

Several countries with historical, security and strategic interests in Somalia have offered various forms of assistance to combat the piracy catastrophe, with Italy promising to help beef up coastal patrols alongside the U.S. Navy.

The regional coordinator of the Seafarers Assistance program, Andrew Mwangura, says the hijackers have extensive knowledge of international shipping law and know that U.S.-led coalition warships in international waters cannot touch them.

"According to information, these are not pirates but security guards hired by the local agents of the ships," says Mwangura. "You know there are these weak international laws and you know these gunmen – they are clever and they know much about international laws and some of them have a military background," Mwangura told TML.

Officials and experts say that seizing the boats is a lucrative business for the

hijackers. Ransom is often paid to win the release of the ships and their crews, and the pirates are in little danger of getting nabbed unless coalition forces intervene, which is rare, says Mwangura.

Ransoms of hundreds of thousands of dollars have been paid to secure the release of a number of the vessels hijacked this year and part of the money is paid through bank accounts of individuals in (Kenyan cities) Nairobi and Mombassa, according to Mwangura.

He adds that individuals who negotiated the release of some of the vessels gave him the information, adding that the companies that owned the vessels did not directly pay the ransoms, but did so through risk management companies they have hired.

"That is one of the biggest reasons why the pirates have a free hand, doing pretty much whatever they want along the coastline," says Mwangura.

"At this point in time, for hijackings Somalia is a very dangerous place. Hijacking for them is an easy source of money more than anything else. What exactly happens to the money after it has been paid is extremely debatable."

Vessels often have little choice but to pass near the Somali coast, which sits along an important shipping route between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. While boats are urged to stay 200 nautical miles from the coast, many drift closer. The area has also been plagued by illegal fishing.

The problem of piracy off Somalia has become so bad that the U.N. Security Council has urged member nations to be vigilant and protect merchant ships and U.N. agencies

Analysts say the piracy is centered on drugs, weapons and human smuggling, primarily across the Gulf of Aden and back into the war-ravaged nation. Warlords have used piracy to fund their

militias.

The coast has been a major trade route for key commodities such as oil, grain and iron ore. Oil tankers, for instance, travel from the Middle East down the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and then on to the southern regions of Africa. These ships have become targets for Somali pirates.

"The seafaring industry is very concerned about this," says Mwangura. "There is absolutely no regard for law in that area. Not only is it not good for business in Africa, but it blocks humanitarian aid and is bad for the general stability of the continent."

He also says the political instability in Somalia has given pirates "totally free rein without any sort of deterrence from the law."

However, during the six months that the Council of Islamic Courts ruled most of southern Somalia, where Somali pirates are based, piracy abated, Mwangura claims.

At one point, the Islamic group said it was sending scores of fighters with pickups mounted with machine guns and anti-aircraft guns to central Somali regions to crack down on pirates based there. Islamic fighters even stormed a hijacked UAE-registered ship and recaptured it after a gun battle in which pirates – but no crewmembers – were reportedly wounded.

Mwangura says piracy increased this year after Ethiopian forces backing Somali government troops ousted the Islamic Courts in December. He says that a "few elements" in the Somali transitional federal government and some businessmen in Puntland, a northeastern Somalia region, are involved because "piracy is a lucrative business."

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## End of the Jewish state

Debate over the Jewish state, its borders and its demographic composition, is likely to pick up pace as Palestinian-Israeli negotiations proceed, in keeping with the Annapolis final statement, over the next few months. I have already received numerous reactions to last week's article, in which I discussed the borders of the Jewish state. This is a topic that needs to be reconsidered in light of the intricate fabric of religions and ethnicities in the region. History is part of reality in the region and mustn't be given a backseat in any final settlement just because the Arabs lack political clout today.

Since it was created, Israel has boasted of being a democratic country, an oasis of democracy surrounded by military or monarchical dictatorships. Israel claims to be a pluralistic state, one that combines the Sephardim with the Ashkenazi, one that welcomes Jewish immigration from across the world. Jerusalem, we're told, is open to all religions. And Islamic and Christian sanctities are looked after, apparently, by a secular state that believes in freedom of worship. Muslims may have a claim to the above ground part of Al-Aqsa Mosque, but Israel has rights to the underground Solomon's Temple, so goes the argument.

Interestingly, the Palestinian National Charter offers more than that. Since its creation, the Palestine Liberation Organisation has called for a secular, pluralistic state in which all citizens have the right to live equally, regardless of race, religion or sect. Israel doesn't recognise that principle, for it wants to remain a purely Jewish state, one devoid of Arabs, Muslims or Christians. The pluralistic, secular image that Israel projects to the West is sheer propaganda, as well as its claim that its neighbours want to throw it into the sea.

Before the Annapolis conference, Israel made its recognition of a would-be Palestinian state conditional on the latter's recognition of Israel as a "Jewish state". In his opening speech, President Bush stated that Israel was the national state of the Jews, in line with the partition plan of 1948. The aim of that remark is to defend the Zionist entity in the long run, for right now Israel is having trouble with its expansionist policies – especially holding on to the land it has occupied since 1967.

For their part, the Arabs refuse to recognise Israel until it pulls back from the occupied territories. The Madrid and Oslo meetings made this clear. And the Arab Peace Initiative reiterated the need to exchange land for peace: full withdrawal for full normalisation. So Israel's colonialist tendencies and expansionist

policies cannot go on forever. Resistance is still going strong and the Arab boycott has not run its course. Rejection is still the position Arab nations maintain, regardless of what their governments think or do.

Israel wants to be recognised as a Jewish state for several reasons. First, Israel wants to expel the 1948 Arabs from Israel. There is one million Arabs living in Israel now and by 2050 their number will surpass that of the Jews, even with Jewish immigration running at the current rate. In the long term, there will be a majority of Arabs in Israel, not counting Arab Jews. Once this happens, Israel's identity, as well as its legitimacy, will be at stake. Once Israeli Arabs become the majority they will shed their second-class identity and become first-class – or ordinary – citizens. This is why Israel wants to get rid of them, perhaps to swap them for the 750,000 or so Israelis living in Palestinian areas.

Second, Israel wants to resolve the problem of the 1948 and 1967 refugees, now living in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere. Israel claims that refugee camps are a breeding ground for



By: Galal Nassar

terror, providing recruits for organisations such as Hizbullah and Hamas. Israel wants the refugees to understand, once and for all, that they are not going to be permitted to return to their homes and land, for what they used to call home is to be a purely Jewish territory, out of bounds for Muslims and Christians. Israel wants the identity of its citizens to be subsumed by their creed.

Third, Israel wants to bring in additional immigrants. There are eight million Jews living around the world, including American Jews. Should they all come to live in Israel, the latter would have a population of 14 million people, which would reduce some of the imbalance it feels versus Muslims and Arabs (there are 350 million Arabs in the region and 1.25 billion Muslims worldwide). Since the 1973 War, and especially since the Lebanon war of 2006, the Arabs have become credible military foes. And with Islamic fervour rising in faraway places, including Indonesia, Bangladesh and Central Asia, Israel is seeking security in numbers.

Fourth, Israel wants to back its messianic ideals with geopolitical feats. It is hoping to divide the region into sectarian states: Sunni, Shia, Copt, Turkomen,

Kurd, etc. If it succeeds in doing so, Israel would cease to be an aberration, for all its neighbours would become sectarian states as well.

For all its pluralistic rhetoric, the US seems to favour regional sectarianism. But what about Levantine Christians? Will they join the Arab nationalist state, or would they have to form their own Christian state? What about Lebanon? Would it assume an Arab, Maronite, Sunni or Shia identity? How about Yemen? Would it become a Zayidi or Shaffiyyi state? What about Sudan, would it become an Arab, black, Muslim, Christian or animistic state? And what about the Maghreb countries? Would they become Arab, or Berber?

The US is up in arms against Iran, accusing it of involvement in terror. It is vilifying the Sudanese government and trying to take the south away from it. It is opposing the rule of the Islamic Courts in Somalia and backing Ethiopian incursions into that country. And yet, it backs military rule in Pakistan.

The US is adopting democracy as a slogan in the "Greater Middle East", but it is worried about the Islamists taking office in Turkey and Morocco. The US is still opposed to the admission of Turkey into the EU, simply because Turkey has a different culture and religion. Yet it wouldn't mind Israel joining

the EU. There is no difference between the neo-conservatives and the neo-Zionists. Both are fundamentalist groups with messianic callings.

The Jewish state, just as any other theocracy, has no future. For one thing, Judaism doesn't come in one colour. There are orthodox and liberal Jews, oriental and occidental Jews, Arab and Western Jews, rational and text-abiding Jews. Any Judaism on which the new legitimacy of the Zionist entity would be founded would eventually fade away, as did the myths of the "promised land" and a "light unto nations". Israel's fate is not going to differ much from that of the racist regime of South Africa.

Israel's best option is to become a secular state and live in peace with its neighbours. Israel's leaders and their friends in the White House and in Congress need to acknowledge this fact. They need to state their position on the borders of Israel, which must be defined in keeping with UN resolutions. Israel can pull out of all the areas it occupied in 1967 and live in peace thereafter. Israel can become a state for all its citizens, irrespective of religion and race. Should this happen, the US would have achieved its primary strategic goal in the Middle East: it would have guaranteed the security of Israel.

Source: [weekly.ahram.org.eg](http://weekly.ahram.org.eg)





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# Defining good management practices in Yemen: A survey

By: YemenTimes Staff

Effective management is a concept which continues to puzzle not only businessmen and executives, but is a concern for all employees in the privet sector. Yemeni privet sector is no exception, a business environment dominated by entrepreneurs, family businesses, and tycoons, every person in management or has sufficient authority is always in search of better, more effective, and more efficient ways of undertaking business.

However, the key issue is understanding and identifying what is better, and how to measure effectiveness and efficiency, is it the direct costs incurred, the ability to marshal staff and resources promptly, the ability to create and cope with change, or the ability to increase profitability is an increasingly more competitive business environment. In this survey, YemenTimes surveys several managers from cross-cutting industries and asks these questions.

## Defining good management

We start in-house, with YemenTimes' own Financial Manager Hayaf AbdulRahman, who stated that sound financial management has got to come from the ability to meet your targets, in the world of numbers and budgets, success depends on continuously achieving the objective with the least number of glitches. He adds that good management starts from setting a challengeable objective, and striving to successfully achieving it with the minimum costs possible.

AbdulRakim Al-Ba'adani, General Manager of Net Technology corporation, says that the management style is successful when you can automate the process of management, and result in the ability of the organization to run itself through dependence on a system, he states that a few years back the management of his corporation was heavily reliant on the interference of the General Manager to run its day-to-day operations. He stated: "But now things

have changed, we have institutionalized management and advocated for specialization, following this change the corporation have grown at a rapid pace, and I am very happy with the outcome of delegation and systemization".

AbdulRahman Al-Haiday, General Manager of Al-Haidary corporation, reiterated that the core essence of management is decision-making, the ability to make the right decisions at the right moments.

This is a leadership quality which is critical to the success of any managerial job. He also stated that the manager must win other employees and partners on board with any strategy that he might have, in order to ensure their collaboration or any project or expansion plan the manager might envision for the establishment.

Abdullah Sofan, Managing director of NIIT information technology institute, stated that a manager must be able to network and connect with people on more than one level, adding that a good manager must have social skills that

enable him to become friends not only with his staff but also with his customers. He emphasized on the importance of this skill for the success of any manager especially in the Yemeni business environment, which depends heavily on social networking.

## Redefining good management

From an employee's prospective, good management is an admirable talent not only because it helps the organization achieve its goal, but it also helps all employees live up to and exceed the expectations from them.

Hana Abdullah, a public relations officer at an oil company says that her view of good management depends highly of what your staff think of you. She explained saying that if the staff would like to continue giving their job 100 % of their efforts and enjoy the work environment, then the manager is a successful one.

Hassan Ahmed, a human resources clerk, adds to that saying that management is not a forceful activity, it

depends on the willingness of the staff to voluntary exert additional efforts and excel in their jobs, this is not derived by harsh or restrictive management, he states, "it is a matter of feeling a part of the organization".

Wajdi saeed, executive officer at a travel & tourism company says that good managers have two signs, the first is that they lead by example, they show up to work first and leave last, and exhibit high willingness to get their hard dirty and become a part of the team.

The second sign is that they tolerate mistakes, they know humans are humans and are bound to make mistakes, therefore a mistake or an error is understandable and one should take measures to rectify it and make a system to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

## Signs of bad management

The other side of the argument helps further define good management, one of the most popular notions about bad

managers is their inability to manage time. Muneer Abdullah, personal assistant, says: "the worst managers are those who do not have respect for time, they are late for their appointments, always late for their meetings, call you at the late night or holidays requesting something, they are very disorganized and unwilling to respect time".

Najib Alawi, phone operator, adds: "you find examples this type of managers at the government, they hold their official meetings during qat sessions, discuss critical and official business at the late hours of the night, make an appointment at 9 in the evening, and notify you with you fifteen minutes before".

This survey interviewed large number of businessmen and employees to define what good management is, however, apparently there is no single definition of good management, it depends on achieving the desired results while considering all the other factors that might contribute to the success of the job.

# Out of step at the ECB

By: Melvyn Krauss

The European Central Bank remains seriously out of step with other key central banks in the industrial world despite recently announced coordinated efforts to increase short-term liquidity in the banking system. The United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom all have cut interest rates recently. But the ECB holds firm against cutting; indeed, after the Governing Council's December meeting, ECB President Jean-Claude Trichet said that some members were in favor of raising rates.

Who are they kidding? Everyone knows that the ECB cannot raise interest rates now, and for some time to come. In the midst of the most serious financial crisis in recent memory, the

ECB has resorted to an unconvincing bluff, because it has an inflationary expectations problem.

Past policy missteps are responsible for the ECB's present predicament.

The first misstep was the ECB's delay in tightening monetary policy, long after it had become obvious that interest rates had been held too low (at 2%) for too long (from June 2003 to December 2005). The ECB's hawks, understanding the dangers of abnormally low interest rates for a central bank whose primary objective is price stability, had been eager to start raising rates earlier. But the leadership was too timid.

A faster pace for rates hikes could have offset the slow start, but the ECB again erred on the side of caution. For reasons that are unclear, Trichet, in contrast to the ECB's first president,

Wim Duisenberg, has wanted to raise rates by only 25 basis points at a time. Many in the Governing Council wanted to go faster, because they knew they had a long journey in front of them, but Trichet refused.

The hawks were right to be in a hurry. Because of the late start and slow pace, the Governing Council had reached only the 4% mark when the current financial crisis effectively put a lid on further rate hikes. Trichet even had to rescind the rate hike he had signaled for September, though he still claims the increase has been merely postponed, not abandoned.

Not a chance. The truth is that ECB would not be in its current predicament if the central bank had reached the 4.75% or even 5% level by now. Higher rates would have meant lower inflation, so that inflationary expecta-

tions would not be the issue they have become. Moreover, from a higher rate level, the ECB would be in a better position to cut rates now that the economy is slowing.

Several frustrated hawks on the Governing Council are dead set against cutting interest rates precisely because they believe that, at 4%, rates already have been "cut" from the 5% or so levels they had expected to achieve. They don't want to go further, and one can understand their chagrin, if not agree with their policy stance.

The ECB will have to cut interest rates in 2008 if it wants to avoid a hard landing for the euro-zone economy.

Being out of step has consequences. The euro has sharply appreciated, for example, causing Trichet to condemn "brutal" currency moves. When the Canadian dollar sharply appreciated,

the Bank of Canada did more than talk – it cut interest rates.

The ECB has the same option, but refuses to use it. Along with its empty threats of interest rate hikes, there is a real danger the ECB will be labeled the central bank that barks but doesn't bite (animal behaviorists know that barking and biting are substitutes, not complements).

The ECB's credibility is on the line. How seriously, one wonders, did the Chinese take Trichet when he came to China to protest the euro's "brutal" appreciation against the renminbi? Cut your own interest rates, they must have thought to themselves, and you will have less to complain about.

Being out of step also focuses attention on the fact that the ECB is in danger of losing control over inflationary expectations. The US Federal Reserve

can cut 100 basis points from the federal funds rate and not lose control over US inflationary expectations. Yet, the ECB cannot cut interest rates 1 basis point because it fears euro-zone inflationary expectations are becoming unglued.

This is clear and convincing evidence of the ECB's previous policy missteps in the normalization of interest rate process. If Europe's central bank had not been too late and too slow in the past, it would have been truer to its own price stability mandate, and not now out of step with central banks in other industrial countries.

*Melvyn Krauss is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2007.*

# Stability, skilled labour and infrastructure top locational factors for foreign affiliates

UNCTAD Investment Brief  
Number 3 2007

Macroeconomic and political stability are the most important locational factors according to the Worldwide Survey of Foreign Affiliates conducted by UNCTAD and the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA). While generally optimistic about the future prospects for more investment in their respective host countries, executives of foreign affiliates also stressed the importance of access to skills, low corporate income taxes and high-quality telecommunications. Most affiliates called for policy improvements in the regulatory and institutional environment. They also called for lower taxes.

Executives of foreign affiliates of transnational corporations (TNCs) often play an important

role when investment decisions are made. Their views on the local investment

environment are transmitted to headquarters and taken into account when different locations are considered for new and expansion investments or for the downsizing of existing operations. Against this background, UNCTAD and WAIPA jointly conducted the Worldwide Survey of Foreign Affiliates from February to April 2007. This first study of its kind aimed to examine the views of foreign affiliates with regard to investment prospects and local business environments in host economies. The questionnaire was sent to chief executive officers (CEOs) of 850 foreign affiliates. A total of 96 CEOs completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 11 per cent. The distribution of responses corresponded relatively well to that of the full sample, although Latin America was somewhat underrepresented.

## Bright investment prospects

Most respondents were optimistic regarding the prospects of new investments in their host economies. About 76 per cent expected their investments to increase, while only 7 per cent expressed the opposite view. Almost a third of the foreign affiliates predicted a large increase in their investments in the host country during the period 2008–2010. UNCTAD obtained similar findings in its World Investment Prospects Survey 2007–2009 of parent companies of TNCs. More than two thirds of the responding companies in that survey expected their foreign direct investment expenditures to increase each year until 2009. A third of the respondents expected an increase of more than 30 per cent (www.unctad.org/en/docs/wips2007\_en.pdf).

## Investors yearn for stability

CEOs of foreign affiliates were asked to rank various locational factors according to their importance in investment decision-making. Macroeconomic and political stability were given the highest average score of 4.3 (see figure 1).

This applied to foreign affiliates across regions and industries. Other factors deemed very important include the quality of telecommunications, the supply and costs of skilled labour, corporate taxes, and banking and other financial services. At the other end of the spectrum, one finds rail and sea transportation, availability of natural resources and the supply and costs of low-skilled labour. However, the results depend on the industry. For example, rail and sea transportation and access to natural resources were considered important by foreign affiliates in resource-based industries.

## How well do countries perform?

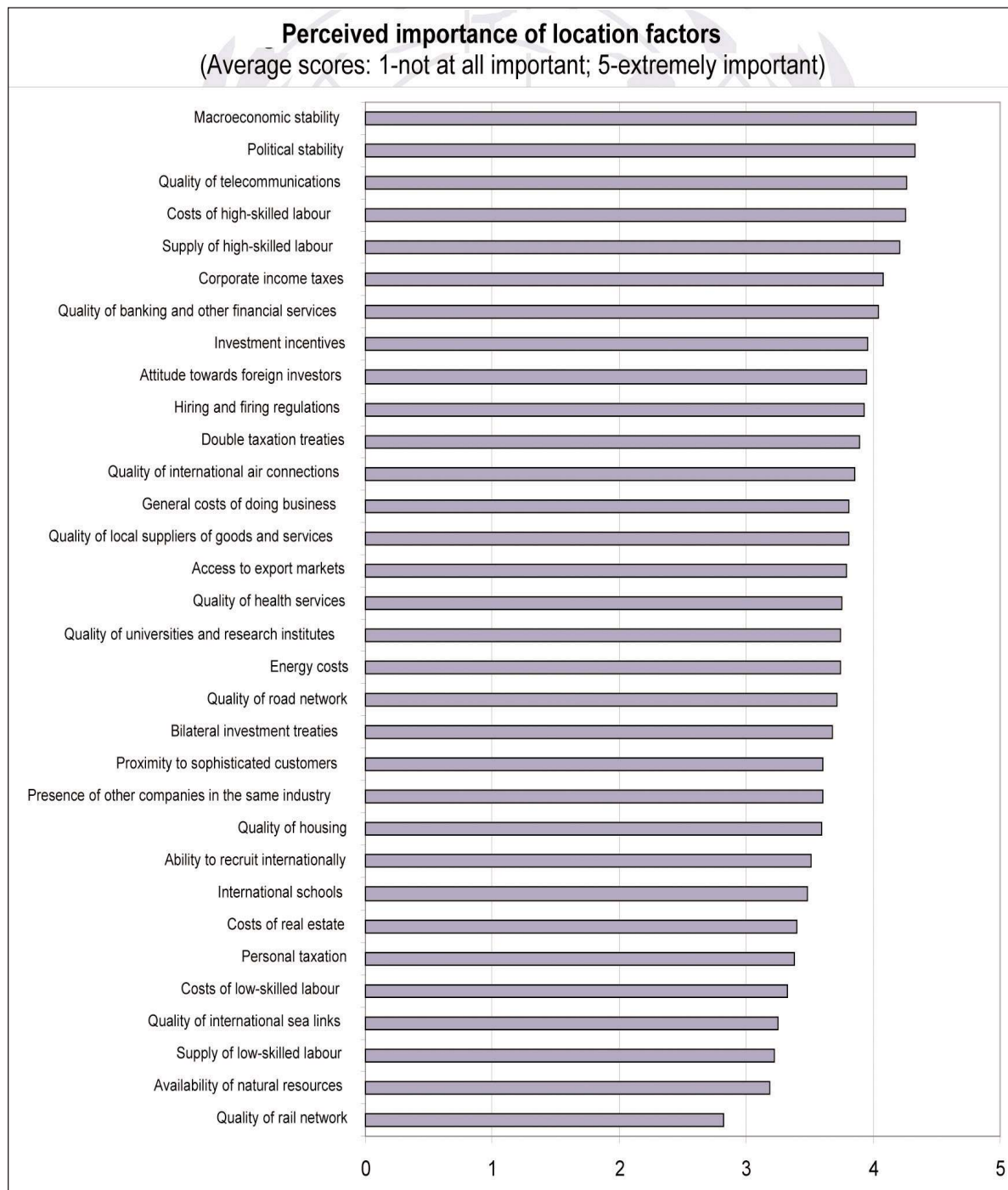
Executives were also asked to assess

how well their host countries performed on the various factors. The highest scores were given to countries' attitudes towards foreign investors, corporate income taxes and double taxation treaties. In contrast, the five factors for which host countries received the lowest scores on average were rail, road and sea infrastructure, natural resources and real estate. Developed countries generally scored better than developing and transition economies. They did particularly well with regard to double taxation treaties, telecommunications and financial services, as well as stability

factors. Not surprisingly, developing and transition economies received higher scores in the supply of low-skilled labour.

## Implications for IPAs

Locational factors vary in importance for different kinds of investments and for different countries. Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) therefore need to consider carefully what factors are of the greatest relevance for the kinds of investment they are targeting, and analyze how well they are performing in those areas. IPAs may subsequently highlight the areas in which they are performing particularly well in their marketing materials, survey suggests that developing and transition economies may need to pay attention to political stability and telecommunications infrastructure, whereas developed economies should be aware of their relative weakness in the areas of incentives and corporate income tax rates. Overall, policymakers may have reason to improve the supply of highly skilled labour. While IPAs may have little power to change things on their own, they may provide useful inputs to government ministries when setting priorities for future policy developments. Source: UNCTAD.





يتقدم كلاً من

السيد / جريجور ماويني  
الرئيس والمدير العام

و

الأستاذ / علي محمد السحيقي  
المدير التنفيذي

شركة كنيديان تكسن بتروليم يمن - قطاع المسيلة " ١٤ "

وشركة كنيديان تكسن بتروليم شرق الحجر المحدودة - قطاع " ٥١ "

والإدارة العليا وجميع موظفي القطاعين

بأحر التهاني والتبريكات إلى

فخامة الأخ / **علي عبد الله صالح** حفظه الله  
رئيس الجمهورية اليمنية

بمناسبة حلول عيد الأضحى المبارك أعاده الله علينا وعلى الأمة العربية

والإسلامية بالخير والبركة وحلول العام الميلادي الجديد ٢٠٠٨

Mr. Gregor S. Mawhinney,  
President & General Manager

&

Mr. Ali Mohammed Sohaiki,  
Executive Director

of Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen - Masila Block (14)

&

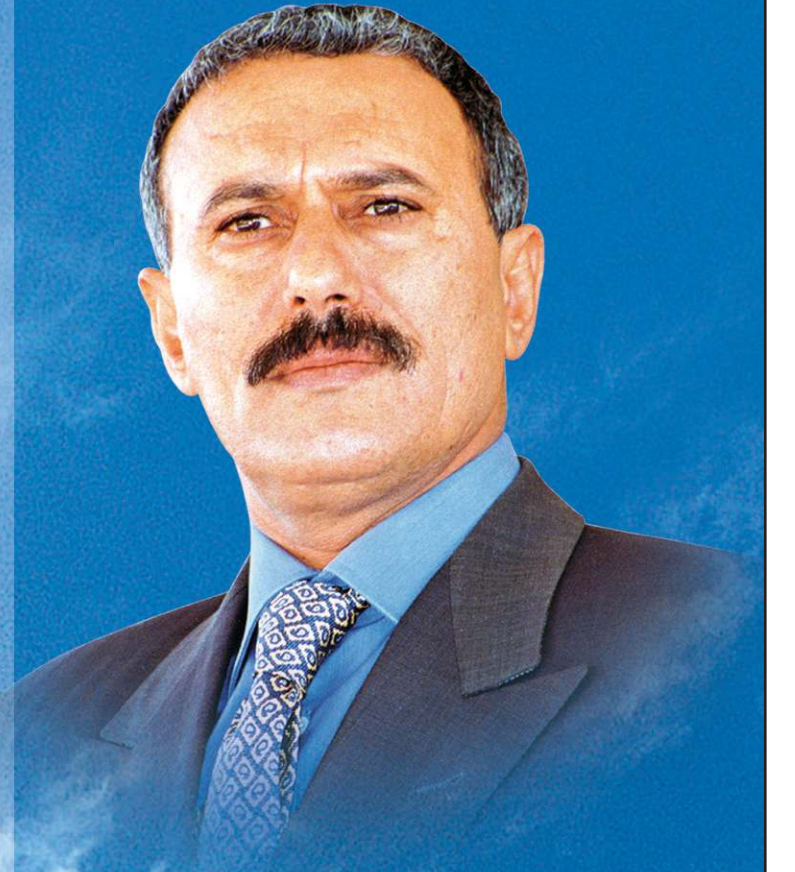
Canadian Nexen Petroleum East Al Hajr Ltd. - Block (51)

As well as the Management Team & All staff of both  
Blocks, present their warmest Congratulations to

**H. E. Ali Abdullah Saleh**

President of the Republic of Yemen

On the occasion of Eid Al-Adha Al-Mubarak  
And the New Year 2008



كنيديان تكسن بتروليم يمن وشركاؤها في  
قطاع المسيلة " ١٤ "  
Canadian Nexen Petroleum Yemen  
Masila Block (14)

**CANADIAN  
nexen**

كنيديان تكسن بتروليم شرق الحجر المحدودة  
قطاع شرق الحجر " ٥١ "  
Canadian Nexen Petroleum East Al Hajr Ltd.  
Block (51)



## Jealousy is a right like ambition, Teacher Lamis !

By: Adel Hassan Al-adlany  
English language graduate  
Amran faculty  
aladlany@yahoo.com

As a matter of fact, I was attracted by the article entitled " Jealousy not a right at all, dear Maged," written by Lamis Abdulkarim Shuga'a in issue No. 1109, which was in response to Maged Al-Kholidy's article in issue 1105, entitled "Jealousy : is it men's or women's right?" I was more dazed when I swam among the lines.

First of all, I would like to thank teacher Lamis for her beautiful and delicate writing which paid my attention to express my own standpoint as frankly as I can with my esteem to all. I think it is evident from the first reading that there is an apparent paradox in Lamis' article . I'm sorry to say that, but I bring my justifications forward to the reader to evaluate at the end.

In the brilliant title, she says, "Jealousy is not a right at all." If we suppose that's completely right, it means we deprive humankind of feelings, and while reading, we find there is a paradox in her words, for example when she says, "Jealousy is considered to be an inner sense which exists inside every normal person just like love, hate, hunger, fear, hope, etc.", and, "wherever love exists, jealousy also exists." Ok, I have a quiz for teacher Lamis just to deliver the idea in a clear way. As I read, you are currently doing an M.A., so my quiz is: do you hope to complete your PH degree?! If your answer is "yes" (and I'm sure it is because you seem diligent), it means you have the right to be ambitious; then similarly, you have the right to be jealous.

Besides, it seems that teacher Lamis focuses largely on the negative side of jealousy since it can be beneficial and I will come to explain it later. It is noticed also teacher Lamis exhausted herself when she went to ask a Christian friend about jealousy, neglecting the Islamic and Arabic view; however, Mr.Maged

restricted it to the Arabic and Islamic world, viz, it must be taken into account the limitations of time and place. Of course, big differences will be found when comparing jealousy in the Islamic and Arabic culture to the Western. If there is jealousy there will not be disintegration and spiritual bankruptcy.

Jealousy, in my own outlook, is not as some think, ie, that it is absolutely negative and destructive. On the contrary, it is a kind of love and interest towards the person you love. It is very important to distinguish between jealousy and envy. Jealousy involves wanting to keep something you already have, whereas envy involves wanting something you don't have. In other words, when I get jealous for you it means I respect you.

Consequently, jealousy is a right of woman as of man. A wife might not be jealous for any member of her family except her husband. She tries to defend and praise him in front of her peers, why?! – jealousy, of course. It can contribute to enhancing relations between married ones. Although, there are special cases of women in particular who mislead the aspect of jealousy. For instance, some wives use jealousy as a sharp weapon against their husbands, which results in destroying the nest of marital life due to this sort of woman feeling psychologically feeble, but I believe a wife can be strong enough to attract her husband's attention and convince him to live only with her. A wife can make her husband see her as a twinkling star at night or a red rose at the daytime, which is surely via treating him gently and "offering all means of comfort and enjoyment" as Mr. Maged referred to. In this way, there couldn't be any chance or desire for her husband to look for another when he feels spiritually stable, even if there is a damsel glittering with beauty and glamour. A husband in this case will willingly exchange love and sympathy with his wife.

On the other hand, a man also has the right to be jealous for his wife, similar to women. A man's jealousy can be aroused when he sees risks and challenges surrounding his wife, whether rumors,

destructive thoughts, models of bad new fashion or the eyes of malevolent people. This inclination of jealousy doesn't exist only in genus homo but in animals too. For example, if there is a strange male camel flirting with a female one, there would be jealousy of the male camel that loves it.

By the way, teacher Lamis puts a question: "Who is more jealous and why?," thinking she will give a clear persuading answer to the reader, but in contrast, she elaborates further from the focus of the issue. Despite this, I will answer it as best as I possibly can, hoping the idea is conveyed . On the basis of my knowledge, the degree of jealousy is not determined by men or women; rather, it depends on the external stimulus and situations. There are situations which force men to be more jealous than women and vice versa. But I understand that a woman's jealousy is different from a man's. The former involves craziness and hysteria, as getting out of reasonable bounds, while the latter is rational to some extent, as most say. A man likes to have a wife so as to be a place of his cordiality and love without other sharing him these feelings, whereas a woman cannot have that except by good treatment and not committing any type of follies as some do; otherwise a man will go to happily live at another place (wife) .

In sum, we can say jealousy is a right as any feeling, such as love, sorrow, ambition, etc. Jealousy is as exactly as the sun ray which may be burning to the tender eyes or warming to the chilly bodies and the selection is left for you ,dear reader, in order to get the suitable with your life .Thus be aware and contemplate well .To here, I think it is enough for those to conceptualize the conception well.

Last but not least, I want to advise all dear readers not to be idealistically influenced by the thoughts hidden in the dress of neutrality. It is better to be realistically logical.

In conclusion, I don't forget to thank Mr. Maged for every effort done for evoking the critical and thinking skills of readers, and pleasant days to all!

## Lessons on American accent

By: Abdullah Saleh Ali  
heart\_nicer@yahoo.com

### The American R

The American R is like a vowel because it does not touch anywhere in the mouth. In Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Italian, Greek and many other languages, the R is a consonant because it touches behind the teeth. The American R is produced deep in the throat. Like the French R and the German R, the American R is in the throat, but unlike those two consonant sounds, it doesn't touch. Let's contrast two similar sounds: [ä] and [r]. Hold your hand out in front of you, with your palm up, like you are holding a tray on it. Slightly drop your hand down, and say ah, like you want the doctor to see your throat. Now, curl your fingers up slightly, and say [r]. Your tongue should feel in about the same position as your hand.

æ

Let's start with the [æ] sound. Although it's not a common sound, [æ] is very distinctive to the ear, and is typically American. As its phonetic symbol indicates, [æ] is a combination of [ä] + [e]. . To pronounce it, drop your jaw down as if you were going to say [ä]; then from that position, try to say eh. The final sound is not two separate vowels, but rather the end result of the combination. It is very close to the sound that a goat makes: ma-a-a-ah

ä

The [ä] sound is a more common sound than [æ]; To pronounce [ä], relax your tongue and drop your jaw as far down as it will go. As a matter of fact, put your hand under your chin and say [mä], [pä], [tä], [sä]. Your hand should be pushed down by your jaw as it opens. Remember, it's the sound that you make when the doctor wants to see your throat

uh

Last is the schwa, the most common sound in American English. Depending on how fast you speak, how smoothly you make liaisons, how strong your intonation is, how much you relax your sounds. Spelling doesn't help identify it, because it can appear as any one of the vowels, or a combination of them. It is a neutral vowel sound, uh. It is usually in an unstressed syllable, though it can be stressed as well.

Whenever you find a vowel that can be crossed out and its absence wouldn't change the pronunciation of the word, because it is so common, however, the wrong pronunciation of this one little sound can leave your speech strongly accented, even if you Americanize everything else.

Remember, some dictionaries use two different written characters, the upside down e & [^] for the neutral uh sound.

### Silent or Neutral?

A schwa is neutral, but it is not silent. By comparison, the silent E at the end of a word is a signal for pronunciation, but it is not pronounced itself: code is [kod]. The E tells you to say an [o]. If you leave the E off, you have cod, [käd]. The schwa, on the other hand, is neutral, but it is an actual sound, uh. For example, you could also write photography as puh-tah-gruh-fee.

The schwa is a neutral sound, (no distinctive characteristics), but it is the most common sound in the English language. To make the uh sound, put your hand on your diaphragm and push until a grunt escapes. Don't move your jaw, tongue or lips, just allow the sound to flow past your vocal cords. It should sound like uh, not ah.

Once you master the two sounds [æ] and uh, you will have an easier time pronouncing 'can' and 'can't'. In a sentence, the simple positive 'can' sound like [k'n]. The simple negative 'can't' sounds like [kän(t)].

Intention	Spelling	
Pronunciation		
Positive	I can do it.	I k'n do
Negative	I can't do it.	I k?n(t) do it.
Extra Positive	I can do it.	I k??n do it.
Extra Negative	I can't do it.	I k?nt do it.

The American T is influenced very strongly by intonation and its position in a word or phrase. It can be a little tricky if you try to base your pronunciation on spelling alone.

There are, however, 4 basic rules: [T is T], [T is D], [T is Silent], [T is Held].

### The American T

1/Top of the Staircase [T is T]

If the T is at the beginning of a word (or the top of the staircase), it is a strong, clear T sound.

In the beginning of a word: table, take, tomorrow, teach, ten, turn Thomas tried two times.

With a stressed T and ST, TS, TR, CT, LT and sometimes NT combinations: They control the contents.

In the past tense, D sounds like T, after an unvoiced consonant sound — f, k, p, s, ch, sh, th (but not T).

picked [pikt], hoped [houpt], raced [rast], watched [wächt], washed [wäsh]

It took Tim ten times to try the telephone

2 Middle of the Staircase [T is D]

If the T is in the middle of the word,

intonation changes the sound to a soft D.

Letter sounds like [ledder].

Water, daughter, bought a, caught a, lot of, got a, later, meeting, better

What a good idea [w'd' güd'?i deey']

Put it in a bottle. [pü di di n' b'd'l]

Get a better water heater. [gedda bedder w'der heeder]

Put all the data in the computer.

[püdall the dayd' in the k'mpyuder]

Patty ought to write a better letter.

[p?dy ?d' ride a bedder ledder]

3/[T is Silent]

T and N are so close in the mouth that the [t] can disappear.

Interview [innerview]

International [innernational]

Advantage [ædvæn'j]

Percentage [percen'j]

If the T is at the end of a word, you almost don't hear it at all.

Put, what, lot, set, hot, sit, shot, brought.

4/ Bottom of the Staircase [T is Held]

With -tain, -tten and some TN combinations, the T is held. The "held T" is, strictly speaking, not really a T at all. Remember, [t] and [n] are very close in the mouth. If you have [n] immediately after [t], you don't pop the [t]—the tongue is in the [t] position, but your release the air for the [n] not the [t]. Make sure you don't put a schwa before the [n]. you need a sharp upward sliding intonation up to the "held T," then a quick drop for the N.

### The American L

The American L has two different pronunciations in English (of course, otherwise it would be too easy!). In the beginning or middle of a word, the tongue tip touches just behind the teeth on those hard ridges. In this position, the L should-n't give you much trouble. The difficulty begins when the L is at the end of a word. Because the letter L has a shorter, sharper pronunciation in other languages, this will carry over into English, where the whole word will just sound too short. At the end of a word, the L is especially noticeable if it is either missing (Chinese) or too short (Spanish). You need to put a little schwa sound before the final L. If you want to say the word ball, [bäl], it will sound too short if you don't say [bä-uh]. You may even need to add a tiny schwa at the end to finish off the L, [bä-uh-luh].

In the end some words r pronounced in american accent

I shuda tol joo= ishould have told u

ledder gedda bedder wada heedr = let her get a better waterheater

and so on i ll tell some rules

kwee geddit = can we get it

jeet= did you eat

noo joo= no did u

# Through The Mind's Eye

By: Maged Thabet Al-kholidy  
maged\_thabet@hotmail.com



## Jealousy as a social phenomenon, not as a mere feeling

With reference to L a m i s A b d u l k a r i m Shuga'a's article, e n t i t l e d

"Jealousy not a right at all, Dear Maged," published in issue No. 1109, December 6th, 2007, I want to comment on some points by Lamis commenting on my article entitled, "Jealousy: is it a men's or women's right?".

Firstly, what Lamis said about jealousy as an "inner sense existing inside every normal person just like love, hate, hunger, fear, hope, etc.," can be considered as her opinion. But that is 'not true' in all respects. Actually, this contradicts the fact that jealousy is a feeling related to love, not another feeling like love or hatred as Lamis said.

In my article, I said jealousy is a basic feeling, but it cannot exist without the feeling of love, and at the same time it is not related to other feelings like hatred or hunger. For this, I want to ask Lamis: can anybody have jealousy without love? And: can anybody feel jealous for a person that he or she hates? To answer these two questions, I hope Lamis realizes the scope and domains of jealousy as a feeling.

Lamis attacked me for talking about jealousy as a right. I do not know if she could really understand the purpose of my article or not. She said at the beginning of her article that she likes my interesting topics which "have been various social, moral, and religious". Actually, I wrote about that matter not

as a mere feeling, because nobody denies this. I talked about it as a social issue that may have a negative impact in our society. The purpose is to get different opinions and views of different people so that the topic can be taken through the mind's eye as a social phenomenon, not only as a mere feeling.

With respect to this point, jealousy may cause many problems among families. Though some may not care about that, some others, such as wives and husbands, may take it seriously, connecting it with other social or religious terms. Accordingly, many cases can be taken as instances of the good or the bad cases of jealousy.

Lamis does really raise an important point, which is if "a woman asks her husband [for a] divorce, telling him that she will marry another one...". Here, Lamis reveals her opinion that a husband will not accept if the wife asks for a divorce to marry another one. The example is really good, but Lamis generalizes her opinion for all such similar cases.

Actually that is the right of the wife "only to ask for divorce", but the husband is not forced to divorce her. In this case, if he loves her, he will not divorce here, that is all. He will not die of jealousy, as Lamis said. It is true that the wife may go to court(s) to complain against the husband and ask for divorce. It happens, but there are only rare cases of this example. I think we should not generalize such cases according to rare cases.

In case that husband does not love

her, and it is she who asks for divorce, I think he will be the winner. He will not feel jealous but happy, because he is not going to pay her any rights, especially if the matter reaches police court for settlement. This also happens only from time to time, and is not common, so that we make generalizations accordingly.

What I want to affirm is that what would be the reactions and sequences of the common cases when a husband loves or marries another wife or wives. Similarly, what are the reactions and results if the woman has "moral relations" with other men? Would the husband accept it?

I think that Lamis, as a woman, can take real examples to tackle the different domains of the topic. The topic would be more interesting to look at all the sides and actual cases of this phenomenon in our society.

To conclude, I do not say that jealousy is a right of men or women, but I ask all readers to answer this question, taking real cases and viewpoints that exist in society. The purpose of this is to reach an impartial conclusion through which every one of us can know how, when and where to use jealousy. Accordingly, I hope Lamis and other readers share opinions through writing articles for this interesting page in Yemen Times.

*Maged Thabet Al-kholidy is a writer from Taiz, currently doing his M.A. at English Dep, Taiz Uni. He is an ex-editor of English Journal of the University.*

(( وبشر الصابرين الذين اذا اصابتهم مصيبة قالوا إنا لله و إنا إليه راجعون ))

سرق الله العظيم

بقلوب مؤمنة بقضاء الله وقدره تتقدم بخالص العزاء وصادق

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# The village that turned into qat fields

By: **Saddam Al-Ashmouri**  
For the Yemen Times

Qaren, a mountainous area in Amran, has experienced qat cultivation since 2004. Now the process has increased remarkably. Despite the mountainous nature and terraces of the area, qat crops reached 2,176,000 square meters in 2007. Springs and streams do not exist in the area, which depends mainly on the rainy season for water. Therefore, locals were obliged to drill wells randomly to meet qat's water demand. Individual efforts are being exerted to educate the public about the risks and dire consequences caused by qat cultivation. Rashad Al-Qareni, a local, said that locals committed a mistake by planting qat trees in the entire area, which demand huge quantities of water, while they live in a twenty-



Qat is cultivated over 2,176,000 square meters in Qaren village.

house village suffering from a lack of water. According to Rashad, it has forced locals to resort to big water trucks to transport water from the water supply system. Water brought from others areas did not go to all lands cultivated with qat, making locals drill four wells, of which two dried up. Rashad used the leverage of some locals to stand against further water depletion. His attempt was futile, as concerned parties remain deaf toward the issue. Qaren is famous for the good quality of its qat. Recent price hikes in qat resulted in Rashad? cultivating 4,400 square meters over the last three months, reaching 7,480 square meters of his land, 11,000 square meters in area. Local used to cultivate their lands with cereals such as corn, barley, wheat, and other crops. Now it has been changed into qat saplings grown in the area.

However, Ali Al-Qaren, one of the locals, argued that qat cultivation is more profitable than cereals cultivation. Qaren qat branches are the best in quality; therefore, qat is more expensive there, compared to other areas. For that matter, Ali Al-Qaren resorted to planting qat on 5,720 square meters of his own land. Cereal crops are harvested only once a year, whereas qat can be harvested more than twice annually. Despite warnings against qat cultivation made by certain parties, the process of planting qat trees is increasingly growing. Abdu M. Humran, Dean of Education of Faculty in Amran, considered the situation very dangerous, in addition to the impact he claims is inflicted upon Yemeni families by buying qat at exorbitant prices and its negative impact on agriculture. "Qat depletes a huge quantity of ground water. It also consumes a lot of pesticides, which is the key reason behind the price hikes of other agricultural crops such as vegetables. The non-availability of growing alternative crops such as fruits and vegetables, and the lack of agricultural equipment caused the citizens to resort to growing qat for increased profit, assuring that qat is a real danger in our country," Humran further explained. The Yemen Times reporter attempted to contact local authorities in the governorate to ascertain their role in this issue, but they were unavailable for comment. It appeared that those appropriate parties are unable to come out with a vivid vision and strategies about how to deal with the qat issue, in order to reduce its cultivation and find other alternatives to encourage farmers to grow new crops. Najeeb Dahan, a Qaren local, criticized



Qaren is famous for the good quality of its qat.

the responsible parties as being silent towards this problem. He further stated that the government should help facilitate agriculture by providing farmers with new and sophisticated equipment, to educate the public about the impacts of qat. Official statistics indicate that 136,138 hectares are cultivated with qat, an increase from 123,933 hectares in

2005. 260 million qat trees have been planted. Agricultural office statistics also show that coffee cultivation declined from 33,545 hectares in 2002 to 32,260 hectares due to qat cultivation. Money spent to purchase qat increased to \$1.2 billion annually, according to agricultural statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Qat cultivation threatens Yemen with drought due to a huge depletion of groundwater supplies, 800 million cubic meters of which are used for qat irrigation, bringing Sana'a into jeopardy. 4,000 water wells are used for qat, reducing groundwater reserves by 3 to 6 meters annually, which could lead to a drought disaster in the country.

## A Museum to promote international understanding

The "Museum With No Frontiers" is the largest - and most convenient - museum in the world. It is open 24 hours a day, and doesn't even charge for admission. Anyone can go online and view 18 exhibitions from 14 countries, click their way from Islamic art to Arabic calligraphy and stroll along the exhibition trails. This article contains an interview with the museum's founder, Eva Schubert.

In 1994, you inaugurated the "Museum With No Frontiers". This is an unprecedented project dedicated to the discovery of Islamic art. What is your goal? Our goal is both straightforward and highly complicated at the same time. The idea behind the "Museum With No Frontiers" is to deepen people's knowledge of history, art and culture so as to encourage cooperation between Europe and its neighbors. We believe that works of art, be they museum exhibits, monuments or archaeological sites, are ambassadors of the different civilizations and their history.

Which impression do you wish to give of Islamic art? One essential feature of Islamic art is the fact that it is an integral part of life. It is not merely decorative or religious, but has an important bearing on everyday life and on the family and its domain. It is to be found in all areas, and is omnipresent. Presenting Islamic art and architecture in its broad-ranging social context is one of the main objectives of the virtual museum.

What can the Western world learn from Islamic art? The first thing that every European should learn is that Islamic art is not "foreign", but was for many centuries also an integral part of the European identity. Its presence can be strongly felt in Spain, Portugal and Southern Italy; what is more, there are close ties with Christian and also in Jewish art. The distinction between the Orient and the Occident which is so often claimed to exist is merely an artificial one. In the area of culture and art, the two have influenced each other in many cases, and this continues to be the case today.

This is what we wish to make clear.

Is it the museum's intention also to change the image of an Islamic cultural landscape which people today tend to perceive first and foremost as a crisis region? Yes, absolutely. The problem with all crises is that they are only triggered by a small group of people, yet so many people suffer as a result. Countering this is certainly one of the tasks of the "Museum With No Frontiers". We definitely regard our agenda as being a political one, as we insist that art and culture have a role to play in promoting international understanding, and that we must take advantage of this.

What do the Islamic countries hope to gain from the museum? Is it also a question of saving their art treasures? For the Palestinians it is doubtless particularly important to document their cultural wealth in the virtual museum, as this allows them to demonstrate that there are important objects bearing witness to the Palestinian history which are at risk of falling victim to the conflicts, and indeed have already done so. Some objects we exhibit no longer actually exist in reality. They have long been destroyed and can now only be viewed in the virtual museum. This is certainly an important aspect. However, generally speaking our primary aim is to document cultural history and make it accessible to people, thereby fostering international understanding.

On your website, however, you not only present museum exhibits, but also offer a program of "exhibition trails". Yes indeed. Basically, we aim not to transport works of art. After all, every country should have the chance to organize exhibitions of their cultural

assets without any major investment. At the same time, however, we like to present certain exhibits in their respective environments, which is why we created the exhibition trails. These are virtual paths along which monuments and archaeological sites can be viewed in their natural environments. Thematic itineraries covering Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt or the "lights of the Mediterranean" take the visitor on a journey past oases, caravan stations and historic sights. This makes for a more illustrative presentation of the exhibits in their original locations.

Your museum's perspective is always focused on the past. Are you also interested in modern art? Absolutely. Our next theme will address the colonial times, bringing us another step closer to the present day. We are of course also interested in contemporary art - the only problem is that it is very difficult to get permission to reproduce current works, so unfortunately our hands are tied.

How is the museum's portal used? Is it a success story? It certainly is - at the moment, we have around 3,000 visitors to the museum every day. That's a really huge number, and very many of them come from Arab countries. However, people in the West have also shown increasing interest in Islamic art and culture during the years of crisis, and we are constantly trying to attract new groups of visitors. Just now we are in the process of broadening our "Learn with MWNF" program as a platform for schools. Our aim is to give teachers easier access to the virtual museum, allowing them to "work with the museum" and pass on the contents to their students. What could be better than having teachers encourage their students to acquire knowledge of different cultures at an early age? After all, that must be the basis for any form of mutual understanding.

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