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Yemen admits failure in fulfilling development goals

By: Mahmoud Assamiee

SANA'A, April 11 — The government has failed to control its public deficit, carry out development plans and control increasing inflation rate, according to Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdulkarim Al-Arhabi.

Al-Arhabi said the government was hardly able to control public deficit within its safe margins of 2.9 percent, or maintain the exchange rate of the Yemeni Riyal in the period 2006-2008.

Al-Arhabi also said that Yemen is in need of financial pledges from donors to maintain the economy: "The government plan aimed for growth at a rate of 7.1 percent but it only achieved 4.3 percent."

With regard to efforts to alleviate poverty he said that although the country's poverty rate decreased from 41.8 percent in 1998 to 34.7 percent in 2006, increasing inflation has hin-

dered efforts to achieve more.

Amid intensified security measures, Yemen and donors held a meeting on Sunday to evaluate the government's reforms and Public Investment Program (PIP). Nearly 300 participants, including Yemen's donors, foreign ambassadors, high-ranking Yemeni officials and representatives of international organizations, attended.

Based on agreement with its donors at London Donor Conference in 2006, Yemen is to prepare a mid-term review on its third five year plan for 2006-2010. Yemen this month completed the third year of this plan for economic and social development.

For this purpose, the donors and the government gathered in Sana'a to evaluate the government's performance in implementing the PIP and the five-year plan. The government also reviewed reforms during the past period.

Obstacles to development

Prime Minister Ali Mujawar reviewed obstacles to the plan's proper implementation. The most important obstacles are the fall in oil prices and the resulting drop in oil production revenue which represents 90 percent of the country's budget.

Prime obstacles to the country's development are terrorism, opposition and floods in the country's eastern governorates. On a regional level, piracy, the high influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa, increases in food prices and climate change.

In judiciary field, the country's reform agenda has enhanced judiciary independence with the president's stepping down from his post as chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council and the increase in women in high-ranking judiciary jobs.

As for reforms in the economy, the plan showed progress in issuing new laws, notably to establish the Supreme

Committee for Tenders.

Administration-wise, the government has implemented the photo and fingerprint system for government employees, as well as the military and security forces. The government also reshuffled the Ministry of Civil Service and Insurance, as well as tax and custom authorities.

The agenda for reform showed the consolidation of the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption and more transparency in the field of industry field.

Admitting failure in some sectors

The government, for the first time, admitted failure in realizing progress in some fields. In the fisheries sector, the government confessed that the performance of this sector during the first two years of the development plan for alleviating poverty was disappointing. Production has dropped to 13.2 percent in the period 2005-2007.

In the tourist sector, the government has drawn a plan to increase the tourism growth by 12 percent to increase the sector's contribution to the GDP by 6.5 percent.

The state admits it could not improve electricity in the country, a sector in which it calls for investment. Only 41.7 percent of Yemenis have access to electricity, according to governmental figures, and demand is increasing.

The Minister of Electricity and Energy was transparent enough when he acknowledged that the electricity situation is not promising: "Lack of funds is the greatest challenge to building power stations," he said, calling for financial support and investment to boost the sector.

Yemen's high unemployment rate was not discussed at the meeting, and neither was the country's private sector's contribution to Yemen's development. The private sector was not

included as a main partner in the five year plan.

In a statement to those attending, the United Nations urged Yemen's government and the international community to address political and security issues challenging the country's development, stressing the need to address the situation in Sa'ada.

"A resumption of hostilities would, in addition to signaling failure of the reconciliation process, create a potentially destabilizing factor," the UN said in its statement.

Despite financial pledges of USD 5.5 billion made by donors in the London Consultative Group Meeting in 2006, the government complains of delay in fund allocations.

Al-Arhabi stated that one of the major reasons behind some failures of the government in achieving success in carrying out the development plan goes back to donors not honoring their pledges.

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US: Ensure Yemenis not mistreated after release

By: Human Rights Watch

NEW YORK - April 9 — The Obama administration should ensure that two Yemenis ordered released from Guantanamo by the US Justice Department and a federal court this week do not face further illegal detention or other mistreatment, Human Rights Watch said last week.

Human Rights Watch said that releasing the two Yemenis from Guantanamo would be an important step towards President Barack Obama's goal of closing the prison.

"The two Yemeni men ordered released are entering their eighth year without charge at Guantanamo," said Letta Tayler, terrorism and counterterrorism researcher at Human Rights Watch and author of a new report on Guantanamo's Yemeni detainees. "But the administration should ensure that they are not simply moving the detainees from one arbitrary form of detention to another."

On Monday, March 30, the US Justice Department announced it planned to release Yemeni surgeon Aymen Saeed Batarfi. The following day, a US federal judge ordered the release of Yasin Muhammed Basardh, another Yemeni detainee, who has said he informed on other Guantanamo prisoners for US authorities. The Obama administration has not disclosed where it will send the two men.

The two detainees are among the estimated 100 Yemenis at Guantanamo, nearly half the prison's current population. The Yemenis pose one of the biggest obstacles to Obama's pledge to close Guantanamo



A snapshot of a movie on terrorism in Yemen entitled "The lost bet".

by January 2010, as documented in the new Human Rights Watch report, "No Direction Home: Returns from Guantanamo to Yemen." The report warns of the need to release detainees swiftly but with a humane repatriation plan.

Basardh has repeatedly asked US officials not to return him to Yemen, where he fears al Qaeda or others might kill him for testifying against other prisoners. The US should take immediate steps to find a third-party country to accept him, where he will not face the risk of retaliation or other abuse.

The other detainee, Batarfi, has close ties to Saudi Arabia, including a Saudi mother, and there are indications he may wish to resettle there. Human Rights Watch urged US authorities not to make Batarfi's release to Saudi

Arabia contingent upon his undergoing rehabilitation for an indefinite period in the Saudi's locked-door religious reeducation program for former Guantanamo detainees. If that is the plan, Batarfi should be given a fair opportunity to challenge any requirement that he be detained or otherwise deprived of his liberty as part of the program.

Human Rights Watch called on the US to fund a genuine rehabilitation effort for these men that includes counseling, medical care, and job training.

"Unless authorities in the US or another country have a genuine basis for prosecuting these men, they should be rehabilitated, not jailed," said Tayler. "The best way to ensure released Guantanamo detainees don't pose a threat is to help them reintegrate into society and repair their lives."

Families of drowned students to be compensated

By: Ali Saeed

SANA'A, April 12— Following the death of eight students in the Red Sea by drowning while under the supervision of their swimming instructor, the government has decided to compensate each victim's family with YR 3 million.

The students were all from the Faculty of Physical Education at Hodeida University. They drowned in strong currents during a swimming lesson with their trainer, who was supervising up to 59 students on his own at the time.

"One of us should bear responsibility toward the incident," Saleh Ba Surrah, Minister of Higher Education said during a press conference, threatening to resign from his post if the rector of Hodeida University Qasim Boray did not.

However, Boray told the press that he had not yet received any official request from any official body asking him or other officials in the Hodeida University to resign.

He also asked why he -not the dean of the Faculty of Physical Education Dr. Abu Ali Ghalib, or the swimming trainer Dr. Hussein Arsan- should resign from his post.

The university council has not yet reached a decision following the incident.

But sources at the Ministry of Higher Education said that Ba Surrah has ordered that the deputy rector of Hodeida University Dr. Mahyoub Abdurrahman be put in charge of the rector's former duties.

The drowning incident took place on Sunday March 29, after 59 second year students went to swim in the sea, accompanied by only one supervisor, their swimming trainer Dr. Hussein Arsan. Following strong currents, eight students drowned and another 13 were rushed off to the hospital for treatment.

Ba Surrah called on the cabinet to fire the three officials at Hodeida University if they refused to resign: Qasim Boray, the rector, Dr. Abu Ali Ghalib, dean of the faculty, and Dr.



Young men enjoying their time at Hodeidah beach. Being less than four hours drive from the capital city Sana'a, Hodeidah remains an attractive destination during holidays for many Yemenis far from the sea coast.

Hussein Arsan, the swimming trainer.

The Hodeida University rector was contacted by the Yemen Times, but refused to comment.

"If this incident had been happened in another country, all ministers would resign," said Ba Surrah, whose ministry has formed a commission to investigate the incident.

According to the minister, what happened was a result of the faculty administration's negligence.

Despite the Faculty of Physical Education at Hodeida University being the only faculty to teach sport in all of Yemen's eight public universities, it is not properly equipped to teach its undergraduates how to swim.

The March 29 drowning incident happened not only because the absence of assistant trainers and lifesaving equipment on the day of the training, but also because the university does not have its own swimming pool.

"Only ten to 15 students are supposed to participate in swimming training at a time, and they should have life saving rings and life jackets with them," said the minister. "They should also be accompanied by qualified assistant trainers, but what happened

was the opposite."

"Up to 59 students went swimming that day, and among them were students who had not attended the theoretical lectures on swimming," he added.

"Moreover, the Iraqi trainer who went with them -Dr. Hussein Arsan- is not specialized in swimming, but in handball," he added. "He was supposed to start training them in a pool suitable for their level."

"Why did Hodeida University not pay the weekly swimming pool fees which do not exceed YR 30,000?" he asked. "Why did the administration not coordinate with the coast guard when they have training in the sea?"

"The coastguard and the local councils in Hodeida are together responsible to advise people on where is safe to swim," said Major Shujaa' Ali Mahdi, general director of coastguard operations in Yemen. "There are signs showing where it is safe to swim along the Red Sea coast, but people do not take notice." "The place where the students drowned wasn't a safe place to swim, and there are signs there warning people not to swim," he added. "It is the students' and their supervisor's mistake."

Muslim charity helps Jews celebrate Passover

By: Khaled Al-Hilaly

SANA'A, April 12— In a kind gesture of religious tolerance, the Muslim Charitable Society for Social Welfare (CSSW) provided Yemeni Jews in Amran with clothes and gifts on the important Jewish celebration on Passover last Wednesday.

"During Muslim celebrations, the society donates clothes and food," said Mohammad Al-Qubati, the general manager of the CSSW. "Jews are part of Yemeni society and we are trying to reach all of society's needy groups."

The CSSW provided about 50 Jews living in Raida with new clothes and gifts for Passover, most of whom are orphans, widows and other less fortunate.

On the occasion, Rabbi Yahya Yussif in Sana'a wished wellbeing and protection for all Yemeni people: "On behalf of all the Jewish community, I thank the President for his constant care of the Yemeni Jews," he said.

Passover is the most important Jewish celebration. Jews eat only unleavened bread made from sorghum during the holiday. They do this in remembrance of the raw dough that their ancestors hurriedly grabbed to take with them into the desert when they fled enslavement in Egypt, according to the Torah.

Before they fled, the Jewish believe that God sent seven plagues on Egypt to encourage the Pharaoh to free their ancestors the Israelites.

The last of these was the slaughter of the first born of both man and beast in his lands.



Yemeni Jewish children playing in their front yard in Raidah Amran.

To avoid the Israelites' children being harmed, God told Moses to make sure that they marked their dwellings with lamb's blood so that the plague would "pass over" them, which is where the celebrations name comes from.

During the days leading up to Passover, Jews clean their houses and dust their furniture in anticipation for the event. During the holiday, which lasts for a week, the families who celebrate sacrifice lambs, wear new clothes and visit each other.

Last week, President Ali Abdullah Saleh ordered to provide Yemen's Jewish families with all Passover celebration requirements like lambs to

sacrifice and clothes.

This is the first Passover since the murder of Moshe Al-Nahari, teacher and well-known figure in Yemen's Jewish community in Amran in December last year. This is the first year his father, wife and nine children will be celebrating the holiday without him.

"Killing is forbidden in all religions," said the Rabbi Yussif. "In Islam, if anyone kills a person, it is as if he kills all people."

Up to 270 Yemeni Jews are estimated to live in Amran and Sana'a. About 110 of these are expected to be evacuated to the U.S. immediately after the Passover

Office Manager.

This project will save further expenses by converting gas into electricity. The electrical sector currently spends almost 60 percent of its expenditures on oil derivatives, estimated at USD 1 billion a year.

Currently Yemen is being powered by outdated power stations operating on diesel that Yemen purchases from Iran and other countries. 85 percent of urban populations are connected to main supply power networks while around 60 percent in the rural areas have access to mainstream electricity.

With a population growth of seven percent, Sana'a has been suffering from a deficiency in electric power for years.

Terrorism and fears of Somalizing Yemen

Tariq Al-Qiziri
Radio Netherlands Worldwide

SANA'A, April 11 — Yemen recently announced that it foiled a terrorist plot being hatched inside the country and accused Al-Qaeda of being behind the plot. The Yemeni Ministry of Interior said that it arrested some people and that campaigns to track down terrorists are being continuously and determinedly carried out. Reports talked about dozens of detainees, some of whom were released following investigations. Pictures of over 150 people wanted by security were also distributed. According to the statement by the Ministry of the Interior, "terrorist" elements are being watched around the clock by different security apparatuses working together to bring down the terrorists in Yemen.

Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for a suicide attack that resulted in five deaths that included four South Korean tourists a few weeks ago. A statement issued by Al-Qaeda said that the attack was carried out "to revenge the relationship of their country with the 'War on Terror' led by the US."

The statement said that two men and two women from South Korea were killed during a suicide attack that targeted a group of tourists in the archaeological city of Shibam, Hadramout governorate. Another attack targeted a Korean security delegation in Sana'a; however, no one was killed except for the suicide bomber.

The leader of Al-Qaeda in Yemen, Nasser Abdul Karim Al-Wihaishi, also known as Abu Basir, recently announced that the two Al-Qaeda Yemeni and Saudi wings merged into one organization named "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula." Al-Wihaishi is one of the most wanted by Yemeni security. He escaped along with others from the Political Prison in Sana'a in February, 2006 after they were charged with forming an armed organization and planning to blast oil constructions in Yemen.

It is difficult to recognize the field capabilities of the new Al-Qaeda in the

Arabian Peninsula. It is largely considered an obvious sign to Saudi Arabia, the most important neighbor to Yemen, that danger has grown closer than ever. Saudi Arabia just breathed a sigh of relief due to the drop of violence on its lands. This drop occurred amidst optimistic talks about the success of local rehabilitation programs to contain and change trends of elements that were involved in jihadist acts.

The merger of the Al-Qaeda branches will be a source of concern for western countries as well. While President Obama's administration is endeavoring to direct its attention and capabilities toward Afghanistan as the most important region in the War on Terror, Al-Qaeda attempts to appear in the Middle East may constitute a potential attempt to divide attention or to employ a tactic of strategic confusion contrary to expectations.

It is not new that Al-Qaeda aims at conducting a war through deployment. Rather, this tactic was considered by the organization as one of the most important factors of success and equal to the intelligence and technical superiority of western countries and their allies in the War on Terror in the region.

On the other hand, Saudi security apparatuses dismantled a terrorist cell of 11 Saudis who were planning to carry out attacks in the Kingdom. The authorities confiscated weapons and ammunition, according to the Saudi Ministry of the Interior.

Saudi Authorities announced a few days ago that "security apparatuses were able to uncover a cell of 11 people having contacts with elements living abroad." The same source added that those elements "initiated preparation to carry out their criminal plans that included attacks against security men, kidnappings, taking hostages, and carrying out armed burglary acts to fund their activities." The source pointed out that elements of the cell "are housed in one of the mountainous caves near the southern borders of Saudi where they stored supplies, ammunitions, cameras, and various kinds of equipment."

However, what increases fears of the

western countries and grants Al-Qaeda real opportunities on the ground is the situation of the state in Yemen. Jenny Heel, an expert in Yemen and Horn of Africa affairs, wrote about problems that political and social structures in Yemen are facing. She said that although there is an international will to support the Yemeni economy, administrative corruption and weak capacity in the field of civil service impedes this support. She further stated that the consequences of its stand that supported Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1991.

Heel reported in an article issued in the Guardian newspaper earlier this month that a Yemen human right activist said, "Following the attack on the Sana'a Airport, the danger is approaching everyone with no exception." The writer says that this observation is also agreed upon by western observers. "Yemenis have the right to be concerned about the future of their country as they are the poorest among all Arab nations. In addition, over one third of the population — seven million people — suffer from malnutrition. According to the world hunger indicator, Yemen is classified among the 'concerning' countries," added Heel. Yemen is also one of the last countries worldwide in terms of portion of water per capita. She reported the warning issued by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation that Yemen might face the fate of Somalia if the government continues to fail on these issues.

Yemen has a strategic position as it separates war-torn Somalia from Saudi Arabia on the one hand and controls the Bab Al-Mandab Strait on the other, where 3.3 million barrels of oil are shipped every day.

British intelligence reports classified Yemen within the four most dangerous regions that constitute threats against the security of the United Kingdom unless it is given active and urgent attention. Heel says that Yemen, along with Pakistan and Afghanistan, will be priorities of western foreign policy during the years to come.

Only three months left with power problems

By: Ola Al-Shami

SANA'A, April 11 — After more than six years, the Mareb power plant project is almost complete. The new station promises to deliver electrical power to more than half of the republic, putting an end to the frequent power cuts.

The largest power station in Yemen comes with a price tag of USD 268 million. "A lot of hard work was put into this project and there have been constant difficulties, especially with the tribal demands concerning the transport lines that crossed through their lands," said engineer Mujahid Al-Ashwal.

The main station in Mareb already started experimental production last

January, and the transport lines, which include 445 towers extending from Mareb all the way to Sana'a, have also been erected. Each of the towers is able to carry a capacity of 400,000 megawatts whereas the older network only carried 132,000 megawatts.

The main delay is in the transformation station which will transfer natural gas into a capacity that can be easily transported.

The main power plant is currently in its third phase called 'Mareb-3' which will mean the increase of the power plant capacity from 473 megawatts to 500 megawatts.

"The station is part of an integrated 700 megawatt power station," said Yahia Moh'd Al-Shaddi, Project

Their News

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FedEx Express Opens New Asia Pacific Hub in Guangzhou, China



Becomes Largest FedEx Express Hub Outside of the United States

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Feb. 9, 2009—FedEx Express (FedEx), a subsidiary of FedEx Corp. (NYSE: FDX), and the world's largest express transportation company, began operations at its new Asia Pacific hub located at the Baiyun International Airport in Guangzhou, China on Feb. 6, 2009. This hub is now the company's largest outside of the United States.

The new FedEx Asia Pacific hub is strategically located in the heart of Guangzhou's Pearl River Delta – a major international center of production and trade in the region. The hub links this dynamic economic region to the FedEx global network, facilitating further development of surrounding industries such as high-tech electronics.

"The launch of our new Asia Pacific hub is a significant milestone for FedEx and reinforces our long-term commitment to this region," said Michael L. Ducker, president, International, FedEx Express. "As part of the FedEx international growth strategy, we are continuously enhancing our operations in markets that are critical to powering the global supply chain. Through our new state-of-the-art hub, we are well-positioned to better serve customers around the world doing business in China and the broader Asia Pacific markets, strengthening global

commerce." The new FedEx Asia Pacific hub represents a US\$150 million capital investment and will be the center point of the company's operations in the region for the next 30 years. There will be 136 flights per week into and out of the new hub, providing access to more than 220 countries and territories served by FedEx.

The first flight that arrived at the new FedEx Asia Pacific hub originated from Indianapolis International Airport. The MD-11 aircraft landed at 11:07 p.m. at Baiyun International Airport in Paris.

"The FedEx role as a global logistics facilitator is to connect the world. The new hub will enhance our competitive edge in managing the volume of trade that will be routed to and within this region over the next few decades," said David L. Cunningham Jr, president, Asia-Pacific, FedEx Express. "The first FedEx flights signaled the beginning of another chapter in our commitment to strengthen the region's competitiveness by providing customers with access to trade opportunities in Asia and around the world."

The trade lane between Europe and Asia continues to grow in significance. With mutual cooperation on issues such as environmental protection, energy and

food security, the EU has cemented its position as China's largest trade partner over the past five years. Statistics from the General Administration of Customs revealed that bi-lateral trade reached US\$425.58 billion in 2008, a year-on-year increase of 19.5 percent. FedEx expansion in Guangzhou is a testament to this unique growth trend and the all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging cooperation between the two regions.

The new FedEx hub offers several unique advantages. The facility features its own ramp control tower – a first for an international air express cargo company

facility in China. This enables FedEx to better manage and control its aircraft movements, delivering even higher standards of efficiency and reliability. It is also equipped with a dedicated customs clearance facility and advanced package and sorting systems capable of processing up to 24,000 packages an hour at the start of operations.

FedEx will decommission its facility at Subic Bay, Philippines, but will continue to maintain its presence in the country, where Manila and Cebu will remain integral parts of the FedEx AsiaOne® network.

Signing contract for Funding Sugar Plant in AFZ Estimated at U\$ 250 million

A contract for funding the establishment of sugar plant in AFZ was signed in Djeddah at a cost of U\$ 250 million between the Islamic Corporation for Private Sector Development, one of the corporations which belong to the Islamic Bank for Development and Saudian Alamoodi Medroc Group.

The project shall be implemented through two years. It shall accommodate 400 workers. Its products shall cover Yemen, African Horns countries and some neighboring countries markets.

Dr. khalid Mohamed Al-Abawi signed for the Islamic Corporation and Abderrahman Omar Al- Amoodi for Al-Amoodi Group.

In a statement to (SABA) the Yemeni Ambassador in KSA, Mohamed Ali Mohsin Alahwal assured that the Islamic Bank for Development expressed its intention to fund a number of developmental projects in AFZ following submission of the necessary studies by the competent bodies.

The establishment of sugar refining plant project considered one of the pioneering projects of the private sec-

tor. "The signing of the contract for funding sugar refining plant in AFZ comes as an enhancement of the distinguished relations between Yemen and Saudia Arabia and regarded as one within project financed by the Saudian private sector in Yemen, and reflexes the strength of relations between both countries " said the Ambassador.

He praised the KSA support and Saudian private sector for the development projects in Yemen.

Worth mentioning Al-Amoodi Medroc Group has concluded a contract with German BMA for supplying equipment for sugar refining plant, in addition to the execution of technical and engineering works for the project.

The signing ceremony was attended by Aden Governor, Dr. Adnan Gefri, the Yemeni Ambassador in KSA Alahwal, the Vice Chairman of Free Zone (AFZ), Chairman of Aden Free Zone Dr. Abdul Galil Al-Shaibi, Chairman of Aden Gulf Ports corporation eng. Mohamed bin Aifan and the Yemeni General Consul in Djeddah Mohamed Saleh Al-Qutaish.



Al Yasimin Co. for Real Estate and Tourist Development Ltd and AFZ sign a land lease in (C) sector, AFZ



Due to the effective role of the Yemeni expatriates in the actual contribution in the economic development and in the employment of capitals for establishing plenty of investment projects in the mother home, the leadership of Aden Free Zone (AFZ) works constantly and dedicatedly in extending all facilities and other assisting services by which emigrant Yemeni capitals are attracted to exploit the legal advantages and facilities granted by AFZ Law No (4),1993.

In this respect a land lease was signed on 23-3-09 located in (C) sector, AFZ, 65962.27m² in area by the above mentioned company.

The Co. intends to establish an integrated tourist project based on

constructing marine tongues and capes involving a group of restaurants and entertainment facilities, beside women club, considered the first of its kind in Yemen and multi-purpose halls at an investment cost amounts to \$ 10,600,000.

The land lease stipulated that Al Yasimin Co. should submit within three months from the signing date all drawings and designs according to the technical specifications with the table of quantities and time schedule for commencing the execution.

Dr. Abdul Galil Al Shaibi vice chairman of Free Zones Public Authority (FZPA), chairman of Aden Free Zone (AFZ) and Waheed Abdul Qawi bin Ghalib, the company general manager signed the land lease.

Hadramout National Plastic Plant (HNPP) Opens a Branch in AFZ

Dr. Abdul Galil Alshaibi, the vice chairman of Free Zones Public Authority (FZPA) the chairman of AFZ and Abdulla Husein Al-Attas the general manager of HNPP signed a land lease on 14-3-2009 at AFZ Headquarter in Caltex area. The area of the leased land amounts to 17420 m², situated in (L) sector AFZ. HNPP intends to establish on it a plant for the production of pipes, plastic tanks and equipments for irrigation by percolation. The project shall cost around \$ 3,320,000 in real investment. It shall be implemented by stages.

The general manager of the plant, who signed the land lease, pointed out that the main plant situated in Mukalla was opened in 2003 and it covers all governorates need and requirements of the plant products. The plant currently has 18 production lines operated by Yemeni working hands.

"The objective of establishing a branch of the plant in Aden is to meet the increasing demands for these products in side the country and abroad, in African markets. The production shall start in the 4th quarter of this year. In the 1st phase it shall operate three production lines to produce 10 tons daily of pipes and tubes and one ton of plastic tanks.100 Yemeni workers shall be accommodated in this 1st phase " stated the g.m.

"The establishment of such projects by the private sector shall surely contribute in providing and availing job opportunities, tackling of unemployment and contributing to our economic development" stated Dr. Abdul Galil Al Shaibi.

Dr. Al Shaibi reiterated his encouragement towards all types of investments, and promised to extend all support and assistance for resolving all difficulties confronting the investors.

Hertz

Announcement

Universal Rent A Car (Hertz) hereby announces that the services of Mr. Khaled A.Rahman Al-Baidani who worked for the company's Sales Department, have been terminated, effective 14 Feb.2009.

Hertz will not be responsible for any actions, agreements, obligations or financial transactions carried out by Mr. Khaled with any party on the company's behalf after the above date.

Signing Land Lease with Bin – Mahfood Corporation and Sofian Corporation



Dr. Abdul Galil Ashaibi vice chairman of Free Zone Public Authority (FZPA), chairman of Aden Free Zone (AFZ), and khalid Mohamed Musa, the legal representative of Bin Mahfood Corporation for Trade signed a land lease on 11-3-09 at the AFZ headquarter in Caltex area. The land leased is for establishing hangars for dry storage at the developed (C) sector on an area of 106655m² with investment cost estimated at \$147000 for the purpose of servicing AFZ projects. The project implementation is in

the scope of the Yemeni investors who wish to participate in diversifying and expanding investment fields that suit the private sector role in the economic development according to the investment law and free zone law No (4), 1993. An other land lease was also signed by Abdul Rahman Sofian Corporation for General Trade on which Tourist Al – Gazeera Restaurant shall be established on an area of 692m² in (J) sector at an investment cost of around \$350,000.





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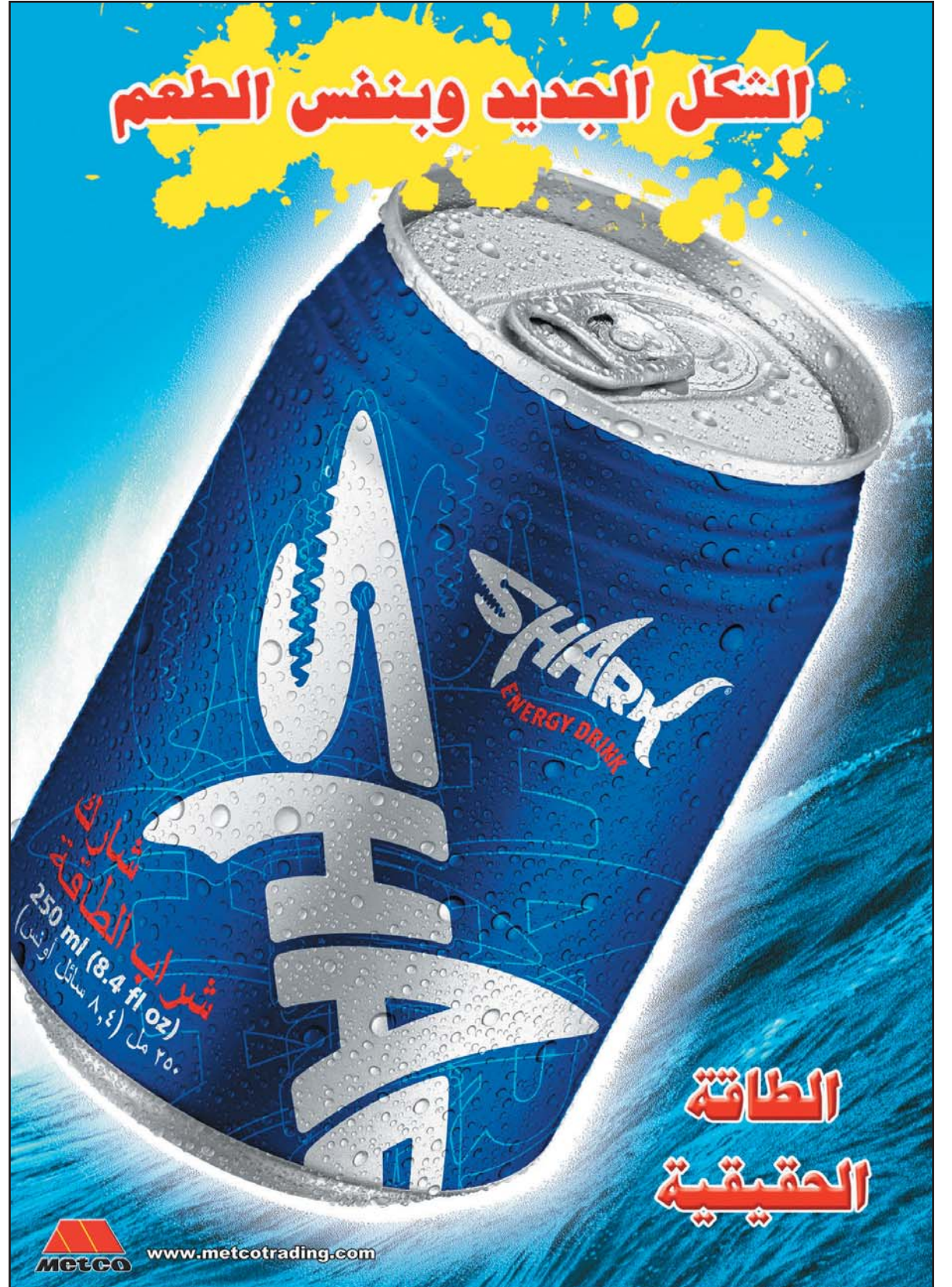
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Expelling the stick from Yemen's schools

By: Alice Hackman

When headmaster Jamil Al-Sharjabi finally decided to ban corporal punishment in his primary school in Al-Mu'alla, Aden, he was mortified to discover that one little boy he was teaching was being beaten on a daily basis, just because he was too poor to have his own uniform.

The 11 year-old told the school councilor that he was always late to class –and therefore beaten- because had to wait every day for his brother to come home from school at lunchtime to take his uniform from him.

"Before being late was two strikes on the hand, but now our councilor talks to the student to find out why," said Al-Sharjabi, explaining that someone has since bought the little boy a uniform so that he can properly resume his education.

Al-Sharjabi is one of the 460 headmasters, teachers and school councilors from Sana'a, Aden, Taiz and Lahj to have benefited from training on alternatives to corporal punishment with the Ministry of Education this and last year.

"All my teachers used corporal punishment before - the stick, the electrical cable or other methods like making a student stand on one leg," he said. "But after the course, I felt guilty that I had used all those negative methods."

Although corporal punishment –the deliberate infliction of pain to punish someone- is prohibited in all Yemeni schools by ministerial decree, teachers are generally not trained to use alternatives and hitting unruly children with a stick continues to be acceptable in some schools all over the country.

Beating not only sends children the message that violence is a viable solution to problems and encourages the reproduction of violent sanctions on the next generation, but could also adversely affect their cognitive development, say psychologists.

The government, backed by Save the Children and the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), is on a mission to eliminate the detrimental practice from schools. Together, they are promoting dialogue and non-violent sanctions in the classroom.

"We were told about very good alternatives, and realized that what we used to do was wrong wrong wrong," said Al-Sharjabi, whose pupils have greatly benefited from the recent change in teaching methods and renewed emphasis on learning at their school.

"At the beginning, all the teachers grumbled, but when they discovered the



Renewed emphasis is put on learning once corporal punishment is expelled from schools.

other methods, they changed their view on corporal punishment," said Mukarram Al-Azab, one of the 20 trainers trained by Save the Children to stop the use of sticks in schools.

"Their ideas about beating were based on false popular beliefs and improper understanding of religious concepts, which we try to correct," he explained. "Some say that the stick was created in paradise, for example."

Challenging popular belief

Trainers are taught to tackle the issue with sensitivity. Teachers are told that Yemen signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child which bans all form of violence against children in 1986, and that hitting a child is not acceptable within Islam.

"There is the hadith on instructing a child to pray which says: Order them when they are seven, and hit them when they are ten," said Al-Azab, who spends a lot of his energy explaining to teachers that this, by no means, justifies lashing out at children.

Between a child's seventh and tenth year, he explained, a parent might have to ask a child up to 5,475 times to pray if he disobeyed him every day, five times a day. The hadith shows that a parent or teacher should explain a rule at least as many times before he or she resorts to beating.

Sanctions do not have to be violent. Students themselves should define the punishment for coming late, missing classes or not writing their homework, said Al-Azab. Once agreed on, these then

apply for the rest of the school year.

Emphasis is put on the individual character of each student, rather than crowd control. Like in the case of the boy with no uniform, teachers are encouraged to understand a student and to ask if he or she has problems at home, before defining a punishment for his or her behavior.

"One of my students always laughed a lot in class and I thought it was disrespectful," said Safia Abdulwahab, English teacher in a girls' secondary school in Taiz.

"But after the course, I asked around and discovered that her father beats her at home. Now I let her laugh."

Abdulwahab now teaches a very motivated group of schoolgirls English, using role play and other games in her lessons. But the message that innovative teaching can be a much more powerful tool to control a classroom than a wooden stick has not yet reached all teachers, or even all of the course's participants.

Participating teacher Khaled Salim, from Lahj, may not use the stick as much as he used to, but he remains convinced that there is nothing wrong with a few lashes when pupils continuously disobey. "We beat children pupils when all other means have failed," he said. "You can ask any minister, and he will tell you that he was beaten when he was a child, and that it makes him the successful man he is today."

Corporal punishment at home

"Corporal punishment is banned by the Ministry of Education, but unfortunately

it is still there," said Aisha Saeed, senior protection officer at Save the Children. "I have been to schools in Sana'a where everybody from the guard to the headmaster is holding a stick: It needs time."

Eliminating corporal punishment from schools altogether is a tough task, said Saeed, especially since up to 80 percent of Yemeni parents in rural areas approve of the method at home, according to the latest Save the Children research.

"Harsh corporal punishment is very common in Yemen," concluded researchers Abdullah Al-Yahri and Robert Goodman in their paper entitled Harsh Corporal Punishment on Yemeni Children, published in August 2008.

The authors stressed the need to challenge the commonly held belief that children will not develop properly unless they are beaten when they do wrong.

"Corporal punishment in both home and school needs to be addressed at the same time," said Al-Yahri. "For example, in South Yemen, 20 to 30 years ago, there was a law prohibiting corporal punishment in schools but no accompanying efforts to abolish corporal punishment at home. So that ban was ineffective."

"The family in Yemen constitutes the basic unit of society," he said. "Succeeding in reducing corporal punishment at home and changing parents' attitudes toward the practice will make the job easier in schools."

The government's next step is to reduce beating at home, still legal by Yemeni law. Its trainers soon plan to hold

courses for 200 parents to use alternatives to corporal punishment within the family setting, said trainer Al-Azab.

Gradual improvement

Until then, training is mostly effective and, although by no means an extinct practice, harsh disciplinary measures are gradually fading from schools' records. If at all, teachers and headmasters -in Sana'a at least- now only use the stick as a last resort.

"We don't hit our pupils at all," said Miriam Al-Aslami, headmaster of the Al-Fatah School for Girls in Sana'a. "A teacher should treat her pupils like her own children."

"We used to use corporal punishment in our school, but then we participated in the ministry's training and gradually stopped," said Mulatif Ajlan, principal of Bilal Al-Rabah Secondary School for Boys in Sana'a. "We only sometimes use the stick."

"We don't use the stick," agreed Fadhliya Zayadi, English teacher at the Mo'ta Primary School for Girls in Sana'a. "It is only used as a last solution, at the end of the year, for those who always break the rules."

Nowadays before using the traditional method of the stick, teachers give disobedient pupils a warning, lower their marks or call their parents, she explained. If they haven't done their homework, they are made to copy it, which benefits the student.

School, after all, should first and foremost be a place for education: "Schools should be a friendly environment for children," said Fauzia Noman, Deputy Minister for Girls' Education. "We are trying to encourage teachers to use methods other than corporal punishment or insults which make students leave schools."

Corporal punishment in schools is prohibited in 13 out of 22 countries in the Middle East, according to grassroots initiative End Corporal Punishment, and Yemen is one of them. But, despite legislation proposals, only Israel has prohibited corporal punishment at home.

Up to 108 of 197 countries in the world have prohibited corporal punishment against children in schools in their legislation, according to a Save the Children Sweden September 2008 report, but this does not protect even half of the world's children.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Qualification and professional requirements

1. Fluently in spoken and written English
2. Minimum of bachelor's degree in English and education
3. Up to six years of experience in teaching
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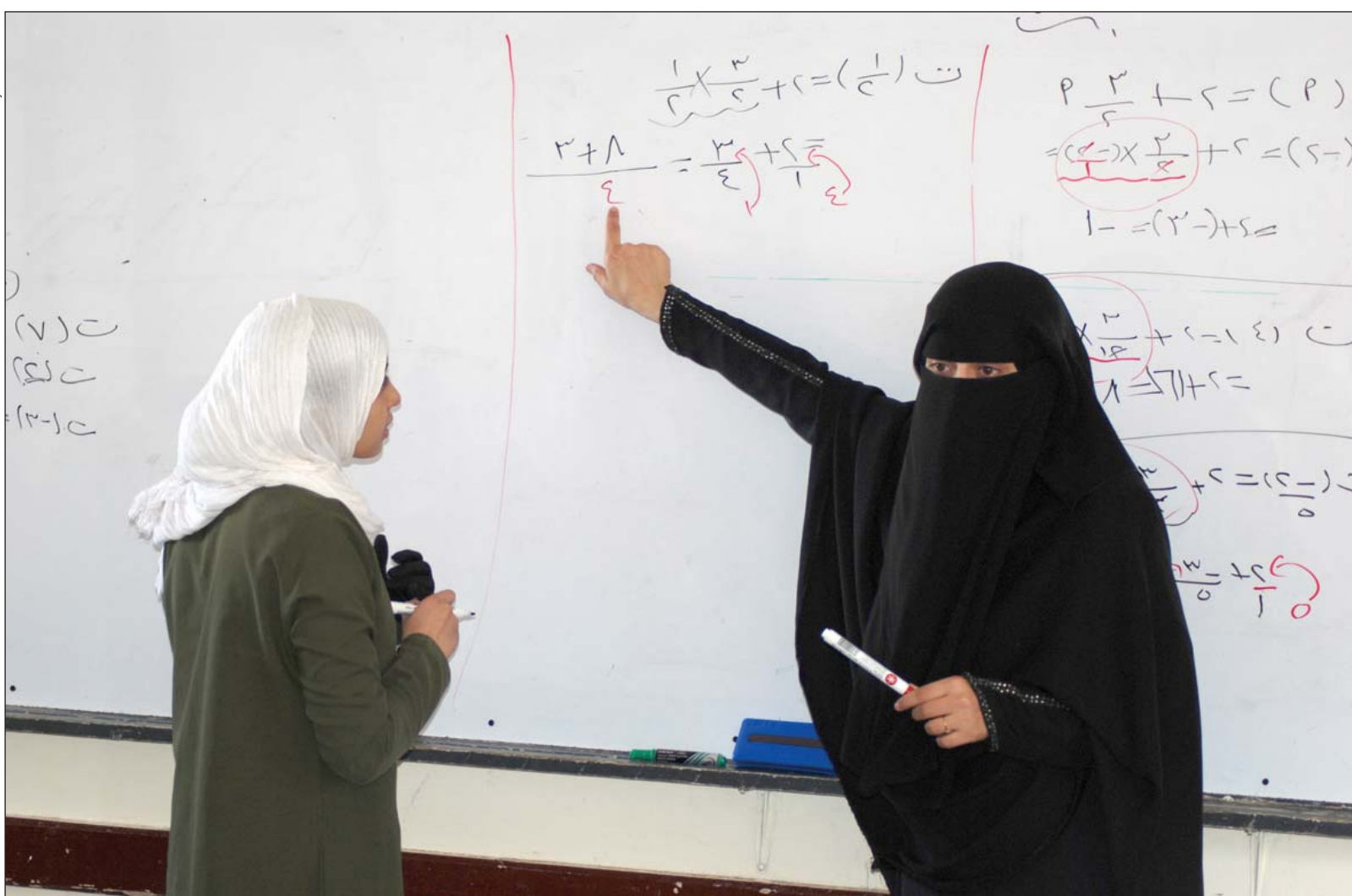
وظائف شاعرة

يعلن الصندوق الإجتماعي للتنمية عن حاجته إلى مسؤول خدمات، للعمل لديه في المقر الرئيسي الكائن في فح عطان على أن تتوفر في المتقدم الشروط الآتية:-

- ١- أن تكون لديه خبرة لا تقل عن خمس سنوات في مجال الخدمات.
- ٢- إجادة اللغة الإنجليزية.
- ٣- أن يكون حاصلاً على مؤهل الثانوية العامة على الأقل.
- ٤- أن تكون لديه مهارات في الإتصال والتواصل، استخدام الكمبيوتر.
- ٥- أن يكون يماني الجنسية وحاصلاً على البطاقة الشخصية

فعلى من تتوفر فيه الشروط والرغبة لشغل الوظيفة إرسال طلب لشغل الوظيفة مرفقاً به نسخة من السيرة الذاتية إلى الصندوق الإجتماعي للتنمية خلال اسبوع من تاريخ نشر هذا الإعلان

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Innovative teaching methods are much more effective than the stick in controlling a classroom.

Government of Yemen
Ministry of Water and Environment — Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
WATER SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

Terms of Reference for M&E Specialist

Background:

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) is a multi-donor initiative designed to support the implementation of the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (NWSSIP). WSSP will provide funds of about US\$340 million on a Sector-wide basis over a five year period (2009-2014) to be financed from the Government of Yemen and their Development Partners (WB — Germany — Netherlands). Under the WSSP, the Executive Secretariat will establish an M&E Unit. Data collection will be based on a participatory approach, where sub-sector groups and representatives are responsible for M&E functions for their respective sub-sector. Staff at each level are responsible for M&E. WSSP's institutional strengthening and capacity building component will provide needed training and technical support.

Objective and Scope of Work

The purpose of M&E Unit is to assist the WSSP Executive Secretariat in design, implementation and coordination of the M&E activities in the Water Sector Support Program and build capacity at the M&E Unit for long term monitoring, evaluation and management information systems. The prime objective of the M&E Unit is to keep decision makers informed of the progress on WSSP activities. Assessment criteria and qualitative and quantitative progress indicators will need to be either refined or newly developed during this period to help clarify achievable goals. The WSSP M&E Specialist will coordinate with the sub-sector working groups, the sub-sector mandated agencies and the core donor group on regular basis to collect, compile and analyze M&E data. This information will be compiled in progress reports to be published on quarterly basis. The quarterly data will feed into Joint Annual Review (JAR) to be held in June-July each year.

Tasks and Responsibilities

The WSSP M&E Specialist shall have knowledge and experience in the areas of monitoring & evaluation of water and agriculture sectors in Yemen using results-based methodology. He/she shall have the ability to produce quality outputs in a timely manner, ability to work under heavy pressure, excellent organizational skills and sound judgment, ability to communicate with different levels of targeted populations, professionals and civil servants. He/she shall be fluent in English and Arabic.

The M&E Specialist would work within the WSSP Executive Secretariat, and report to the Head of that unit. He/she will execute the following tasks:

- ¥ Review related NWSSIP and WSSP documents and participate directly in the WSSP implementation exercises;
- ¥ Prepare the required analytic background for the institutional implementation arrangements based on the M&E knowledge;
- ¥ Plan, design, and organize the proposed WSSP M&E system and draw useful lessons and recommendations from previous NWSSIP JAR exercises;
- ¥ Develop a detailed work plan for the existing M&E Unit at WSSP Secretariat and the human and financial resources requirements to sustain the Unit;
- ¥ Through effectiveness, finalize all baseline indicators;
- ¥ Build capacity within the M&E Unit based on needs as they arise;
- ¥ Assist in the preparation and review of TORs for local staff for the M&E Unit;
- ¥ Upgrade skills in the design of indicators and reporting systems, socio-economic data collection, data analysis, and design;
- ¥ Develop TORs and action plans for data gathering, needed surveys, data analysis, and computerization of the system;
- ¥ Analyze regularly the results from the M&E system, reporting major findings to the project management and formulate options and recommendations for improvements;
- ¥ Work closely with all water authorities as well as the Ministries of: Agriculture and Irrigation, Planning and International Cooperation, and Finance;
- ¥ Work closely with civil society, and the core group of donors in all tasks;
- ¥ Coordinate work with on-going development work by others;
- ¥ Assist in discussing recommendations with GOY Counterpart Committee (MOF, MOPIC, MWE and MAI)
- ¥ Work on other related tasks for WSSP as may be requested to support the M&E component; and
- ¥ Assist in the M&E information preparation and conduct of presentations for stakeholders and donors in the Joint Annual Review (JAR) process.

Outputs

The major outputs will be documents on WSSP M&E Implementation Program:

- WSSP M&E Implementation Workplan — during the first part of the consultancy.
- WSSP M&E Implementation Guidelines — living document prepared throughout the consultancy period.
- WSSP M&E Quarterly Progress Reports — living document prepared each quarter.
- WSSP JAR M&E Document — living document prepared each year before JAR.
- M&E Unit staffing and Financial Plan — during the last part of the consultancy.

Qualifications:

- ¥ University Degree in a relevant discipline.
- ¥ A minimum of 5 years of professional work experience of which at least 2 years shall be in the field of Results-Based M&E Framework in water /irrigation/ agricultural sector in Yemen.
- ¥ Good communications skills and a working knowledge of English.
- ¥ Computer knowledge with expertise in Microsoft Office tools.
- ¥ Good inter-personal skills and demonstrated ability to work closely with professionals from other disciplines.

Duration of assignment:

Initially for a probation period of three months, then annual contract will be offered thereafter.

Interested applications, who strictly meet above requirements, may submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents during working hours to the address below by (April, 29, 2009).

Dr. Abdul Wahed Mukred — WSSP ES Team Leader (Office within Sana'a Basin Project)
West Wide of Al-Seteen Street at end of 20th. Street
Tel. +967 1 469156/7/9 Fax +967 1 469158 Mobile +967 733725348
Email: awmukred@yemen.net.ye

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Government of Yemen
Ministry of Water and Environment — Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
WATER SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

Terms of Reference for ACAP Advisor

Background

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) is a multi-donor initiative designed to support the implementation of the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (NWSSIP). WSSP will provide funds of about US\$340 million on a Sector-wide basis over a five year period (2009-2014) to be financed from the Government of Yemen and their Development Partners (WB — Germany — Netherlands). Under the WSSP, the Government has prepared an Anti-Corruption Action Plan (ACAP) to help ensure the funds provided under this program are used for the intended purposes, and contribute to the achievement of the development objectives of the NWSSIP.

The ACAP consists of seven components, to be implemented over the five years of the WSSP, with a total estimated cost of about US\$3.0 million, as follows:

- Procurement Reform and Capacity Development.
- Financial Management Reform and Capacity Development.
- Enhanced Information Disclosure.
- Education and Awareness.
- Community Participation and Consultation.
- An Anti-Corruption "Hot Line" Program.
- Investigative Capacity Development.

The underlying principle of the ACAP is that this will be a learning-oriented exercise for everyone concerned on both the GoY side and the donor side. Most of these activities will be introduced on a pilot basis. Monitoring and evaluation of results on an on-going basis will be critical in order to adjust the program in real time to opportunities and constraints encountered during implementation of the Plan.

A detailed Implementation Plan has been prepared which sets out the arrangements for coordination of the proposed activities. A key element of implementation will be the role played by the ACAP Advisor, to be located in the WSSP Executive Secretariat.

Role and Responsibilities of the ACAP Advisor

The ACAP Advisor would work within the WSSP Executive Secretariat, and report to the Head of that unit. His/her primary responsibility will be to oversee the implementation of proposed activities under the seven components of the ACAP. Specifically, he/she will:

- ¥ Prepare Annual Work Plans and budgets for the ACAP components, and produce regular reports to government and the donors on the progress of implementation — including progress against plans and issues requiring attention.
- ¥ Take the lead in initiating work in each of the components of the ACAP, including the finalization of detailed Terms of Reference for technical assistance and studies to be carried out under various components, and managing the procurement process for the required inputs.
- ¥ Work closely with the other WSSP advisors and relevant units in MWE, MAI, SNACC, COCA, the High Tender Board, and other relevant agencies to ensure close coordination of activities under the ACAP with the mainstream activities of WSSP, and to avoid duplication of initiatives planned or already underway.
- ¥ Serve as the focal point for receipt of complaints and allegations from the independent operator of the proposed "Hot Line" program, referring those cases to the appropriate agencies/units, maintaining a database on the status of all such cases, and preparing regular reports on that program to government and donors.
- ¥ Monitoring progress of individual activities under the ACAP, recommending successful activities for possible "scaling up", suggesting adjustments in activities that are not meeting expectations, and proposing new activities for consideration, in line with the overall principles and priorities of the ACAP and within the scope of the funds available for such activities.
- ¥ Any other issues that are deemed necessary for the ACAP matters.

Qualifications:

- ¥ University Degree in a relevant discipline.
- ¥ A minimum of 15 years of professional work experience.
- ¥ Good communications skills and a working knowledge of English.
- ¥ Familiarity with major issues facing the water sector in Yemen.
- ¥ Professional expertise with at least one of the major components of the ACAP, with a preference for procurement or financial management.
- ¥ Good inter-personal skills and demonstrated ability to work closely with professionals from other disciplines.
- ¥ A reputation for personal and professional integrity.

Salary and Benefits:

Annual salary within the range of (\$14,400 to \$18,000) with annual increment of 10% on satisfied performance. Other benefits according to the applicable laws and regulations in force.

References:

A minimum of three references required

Duration of assignment:

Initially for a probation period of three months, then annual contract will be offered thereafter. Interested applications, who strictly meet above requirements, may submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents during working hours to the address below by (April, 29, 2009).

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Email: awmukred@yemen.net.ye

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Government of Yemen
Ministry of Water and Environment — Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
WATER SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAM - WSSP

Terms of Reference for Procurement Advisor - Local Consultant

To follow up and support the preparation of (WSSP) Procurement Plan prior to Program Effectiveness and review and support procurement issues during program Implementation

1) Context

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) is a multi-donor initiative designed to support the implementation of the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (NWSSIP). WSSP will provide funds of about US\$340 million on a Sector-wide basis over a five year period (2009-2014) to be financed from the Government of Yemen and their Development Partners (WB — Germany — Netherlands).

For the purpose of ensuring the proper coordination and execution of the Program, the Government shall maintain (Inter Ministerial Steering Committee) assisted with an Executive Secretariat in carrying out its duties. The Procurement Advisor would be a member of the Executive Secretary.

Now WSSP Executive Secretariat invites qualified and experienced local consultants to apply for the post of Procurement Advisor, within the team of program Executive Secretariat.

2) Tasks and Responsibilities

Under the supervision of WSSP team leader, and observing the procurement directives, the nominated (PA) would achieve the following tasks:

- ¥ Act as WSSP Coordinator for Procurement aspects .
- ¥ Develop, coordinate, and implement a comprehensive procurement plan for the whole WSSP period and include the whole sub-sectors activities, such plan shall be deal out annually and updated on regular basis.
- ¥ Provide inputs into the WSSP annual work plan and budget .
- ¥ Follow up on the execution of the WSSP procurement plan and develop related procurement reports .
- ¥ Review and endorse the sub-sector procurement plans.
- ¥ Support and assist the procurement specialists on the sub-sector level to prepare their plans and apply procurement guidelines of the Bank, Donors, and the Government .
- ¥ Follow up with the regional consultant the preparation of the Procurement Manual of Practices (PMP) for WSSP to be adopted before program effectiveness.
- ¥ Define management reporting tools for monitoring procurement activities on the sub-sector level .
- ¥ Carry out procurement needs of the Program Executive Secretariat .
- ¥ To be responsible of the procurement matters during the program review missions from the Donors and Government.
- ¥ Any other issues that are deemed necessary for the program procurement issues .

The consultant will liaise his work with the sub-sector procurement specialists and submit monthly reports to the Executive Secretariat Team Leader on the procurement achievements and the arrangements applied .

Qualifications and Requirements:

- ¥ 10 years of work experience in the field of procurement operations and related issues.
- ¥ 7 years relevant experience with procurement and procedures of Foreign Donors.
- ¥ 5 years overall experience with Government procurement and procedures and regulations.
- ¥ University Degree in Business Administration, Commerce, Law, Economics, Engineering, or related fields.
- ¥ Good knowledge of English and Arabic Languages .
- ¥ Computer literate with strong skills in Microsoft Office and related software.
- ¥ Good command with professional skills in transferring the knowledge.

Duration of assignment:

Initially for a probation period of three months, then annual contract will be offered thereafter.

Interested applications, who strictly meet above requirements, may submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents during working hours to the address below by (April, 29, 2009).

Dr. Abdul Wahed Mukred — WSSP ES Team Leader (Office within Sana'a Basin Project)
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Email: awmukred@yemen.net.ye

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interviews.

Republic of Yemen
Ministry of Water and Environment
National Water resources Authority – NWRA
Water Sector Support Program – WSSP

Announcement of Vacancy Procurement Specialist

Terms of Reference for Procurement Specialist – National Consultant

The Water Sector Support Program (WSSP) is a multi-donor initiative designed to support the implementation of the National Water Sector Strategy and Investment Plan (NWSSIP). WSSP will provide financing of about US\$340 million on a Sector-wide basis over a five year period, from 2009-2014. The sub-sector Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) is one of the WSSP five components, it aims to ensure sustainable and economical water resources management with estimated cost of US\$27.0 million to be financed from the Government of Yemen and the Donors Core Group (WB — Germany and Netherland). The National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) would take the overall responsibility of managing the (IWRM) component.

Now NWRA invites qualified and experienced local specialists to apply for the post of Procurement Specialist to manage procurement issues of the (IWRM) component.

Tasks and Responsibilities

Under the direct supervision of NWRA director who will be responsible for the implementation of IWRM component, the procurement specialist will perform without being limited the following tasks responsibilities:

1. Responsible for all procurement activities of the IWRM component such as goods, works, and consultant services, ensuring that established procurement guidelines of the Government and Core Donors are complied with.
2. Develop, coordinate, and implement a comprehensive procurement plan for the whole period and activities of IWRM component, such plan shall be deal out annually, revised and updated on regular basis.
3. Provide inputs into the IWRM component annual work plan and budget.
4. Work with the relevant Specialists to prepare and revise the different bidding documents of works and goods, call for Expressions of Interest and RFPs consultancy services, staff recruitment notices and obtaining the necessary clearance from Core Donors and ensure their safe keeping and recording.
5. Prepare the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the different consultancy services required by the component.
6. Prepare Bid opening, evaluation and contract award recommendation reports based on the Bid opening and Bid evaluation committee report.
7. Responsible for management and maintaining of proper records of all relevant procurement documentation.
8. Participate with the IWRM team in clearing procured items through customs and arrangements for the transport and supervise their custody.
9. Participate with the IWRM team in the random and annual physical count of the component warehouses and assets.
10. Prepare quarterly and annual reports regarding the progress of procurement matters.
11. Coordinate for review and internal audit conducted by WSSP procurement advisor.
12. Any other issues that are deemed necessary for IWRM procurement issues.

Qualifications and Requirements:

1. 7 years of work experience in the field of procurement operations and related issues, of which at least 4 years experience with procurement and procedures of Foreign Donors.
2. 3 years overall experience with Government procurement procedures and regulations.
3. University Degree in Engineering, Business Administration, Commerce, Law, Economics, or related fields.
4. Working knowledge of English and Arabic languages.
5. Computer literate with proficiency in Microsoft Office software.
6. Good interpersonal and communication skills.

Duration of assignment:

Initially for a probation period of three months, then annual contract will be offered thereafter.

Interested applications, who strictly meet above requirements, may submit their applications with CVs and supporting documents to National Water Resources Authority (NWRA) address given below before 15/04/2009.

National Water Resources Authority
Amran Road, Al Hassabah, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen
Tel +967-1-256926
Fax +967-1-231733 or +967-1-254274
Email: NWRA-HQ@yem.net.ye
NWRAHQ@yem.net.ye

Words of Wisdom



One issue that is so crucial that I can't exaggerate its importance is the need to catch up with the world in computers. I know it looks stupid to call for computer training and education when half the population is illiterate. But, we can't wait to become fully literate to start looking into computers. We can actually embark on multiple parallel efforts.

Prof. Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf,
(1951 - 1999)
Founder of Yemen Times

OUR
OPINIONOne year since
Nujood went
to court

In the beginning of April last year, a nine years old girl shocked Yemen and the world with her story. She was married off against her will to a thirty-something old man and lived with him as his wife for two months. She managed to escape and went to court where, eventually with support of many people, she obtained her freedom and became an icon for early marriage victims in Yemen.

Since then, Nujood has been to the U.S., France, Germany and Lebanon to tell her story. She has been approached by dozens of journalists who came to Yemen to write about the brave little girl selected as one of Glamour Magazine's women of the year 2008. She has been presented with several other awards by the media, given money and gifts, and a book has been published about her.

But on the sidelines of Nujood's story await many other Yemeni girls who are either still locked up in an unjust marriage, or have escaped the ordeal of a premature marriage only to find themselves in a world that is not yet prepared to deal with them.

Even in the case of Nujood, who got all the attention, there has been no medical or emotional counseling whatsoever. Nobody asked whether the excessive media exposure and cultural shock of being whisked away from her miserable living conditions in the slums to five star hotels in the U.S. and Europe for only a few days would leave psychological marks on the now 10 or 11 year old girl.

No concerned body took charge of her future to make sure the grants and money are directed the right way to ensure Nujood's best interest. In fact, those who have given Nujood money could have even made things worse by giving the money to her family, mainly her father, who was the culprit behind her tragedy in the first place.

Today Nujood does not go to school, does not enjoy health care, and lives in poverty with her many brothers and sisters. You can occasionally find her begging in the streets although since she has become quite famous it has become difficult for her to go back to the life she knew, especially after days, no matter how few, when people waited on her hand and foot.

The silver lining is that despite the influence of huge media exposure on Nujood, it has helped draw attention to the issue of early or premature marriage in Yemen. Human rights organizations have lobbied for a law to define a minimum age for marriage and almost got it. I believe that a law will eventually come through. Even if only defining 15 years as the minimum age for marriage, it is still a step forward.

Today one year since Nujood's case became a public issue, we need to take a step back, look at what has been done and evaluate the roles we all played in this regard. Even one year later the fight for rights of a child is still not over. In fact, it is just beginning.

Nadia Al-Sakkaf

The Arab-Latin Doha Summit:
Summit of the weak or the powerful?

By: Zeyad Al-Luhali

The Doha summit gathered together developed leftist countries that came to power through ballot boxes. They nationalized their natural resources, putting an end to the US and European companies that dominated their resources, and escaped from US control and dominance. In addition to these countries, the summit gathered Arab countries that came to power through military coups and nepotism. They rule over their people with iron and fire while absolute US dominance holds sway over everything, giving unlimited obedience to the humiliating US policy. This brings to light a substantial question: do the Arab countries have the power over their own political will to establish economic, trade, and political blocs away from US will?

I believe that the states of Latin America have the political ability to establish any political and

economic bloc to get them ahead in the world. Concerning the Arab parties, they don't look at these summits as more than opportunities for mutual investment and for economic and commercial cooperation in economic, scientific and technological fields that of course don't exceed what is allowed by the US and Europe. They are unable to establish any political bloc that may incur the wrath of the US, Israel, and the European Union.

The Arab regimes can coordinate political stances with Latin America on political issues inside the UN and the headquarters of international corporations. They can build a consensus on joint political statements and in other international issues. However, I don't think that such summits will come up with a political bloc that will affect the international map. The reason is that the Arab regimes are not well prepared to establish any economic or political blocs during the upcoming two decades.

Our ambition in Arab society is that the official Arab regimes live

up to the aspirations of their people and that their foreign relations are based on their people's interests. The pan-Arab commercial exchange interests should look at how the Latin countries cooperate with each other. Their cooperation takes precedence over all individual political and economic considerations.

Gratitude is attributed to the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez who had an idea to change the face of Latin America for the better. He was able to put an end to corruption and hypocrisy, nationalize oil and other natural resources of his country, and expel US companies that had been looting the country's wealth for decades. Chavez also supported many Latin countries and their elected political leaders to bring law and civil peace to a new Latin America.

These actions involved seeking economic, commercial, and cultural relations and new markets to replace the old markets in the US and Europe. Thus the Arab world became the new destination for

their goods since it holds vast amounts of capital, a consumer market, natural resources, and joint concerns that can be relied on to establish political and economic blocs and build mutual cultural, economic, and commercial relations. The Brazil summit in April-May 2005 which increased the level of commercial exchange with Arabs from USD 5 to 23 billion was looked on favorably by the Latin people, according to economists. This is a positive indicator in the right direction if we take the good intentions and the mutual economic and commercial interests between the two sides. This is particularly true after the Doha summit, which is considered a summit of gratitude to South America for its honorable and supportive stand toward Arab issues, particularly the Palestinian issue.

The Doha summit is expected to pave the way toward establishing economic and commercial blocs as well as joint companies in all fields. It is also expected to create mutual

investments to enhance relations, facilitate opening markets, and reinforce mutual trade between the Arab countries and their counterparts in South America. In addition, establishing joint banks and maritime and airways, facilitating movement between the countries, and creating a convenient climate for investments are encouraged.

The Doha summit is also expected to enhance cultural, scientific, and academic exchange between Latin America and the Arab world. This is particularly true given that over 20 million Arabs live in Latin America, and that some of them hold important positions. Such an exchange will help encourage cultural relations.

It is further expected that the Doha summit will help to establish a political bloc that coordinates efforts and political stances to support joint issues, particularly the Palestinian issue. This partnership will indeed contribute to finding just and peaceful solutions to many major issues and joint concerns.

Yemen's development challenges;
Towards more sociopolitical international
cooperation and environmental approaches

By: Ahmed Hezam AL-Yemeni

Yemen main development challenges rise from three main factors. The first is the ruling regime and the political presidential well. The second is related to management and institutionalization. And the third has to deal with natural resources and public general common sociopolitical awareness.

Yemen as so many countries in the developing world must have a strong and determined leadership to put things in/on track. A clear political will to build and reform putting national and people interests first. In such Yemeni domestic environment; in such regional atmosphere; in such distractions and attractions Yemen leader(s) must have a clear assessment of Yemen today and Yemen tomorrow.

The presidential will to act and perform; to achieve and accomplish is the only and first guarantees for Yemen prosperity regardless of the other development challenges. All challenges can be overcome, all the lines of the body can be cured, and the march can be launched if the head is wise and healthy.

Another development challenge for Yemen comes from bad if not absence of modern management and institutional work within government authorities and bodies. A real management that is based on strategic planning, qualified, team/staff, and a mechanism/dynamics of sustainable development.

Moreover, one of Yemen development challenges is some of (if not almost all) its socioeconomic and socioeconomic development indicators. The literacy rate is 44%. Life expectancy is 55-65 years. Lack of water resources. Lack of arable lands. And the wide gender gap. Yet, all is design with weak educational system, bad health care, and unbelievable fertility and mortality rates.

However, what really make it worse for Yemen is some of its traditional tribalism that is mixed

with radicalism and extremism and poor security and judicial spheres that makes it pure in the bath of international and regional and even domestic terrorism - forcing and making the State and secondly the donors community are the main stakeholders and key players in such atmospheres in addition to the elites and common within the classical development approaches.

In the last decade, almost all the international governmental development agencies started to move more and more from the traditional classical approaches of direct tangible development to the sociopolitical ones believing that good development outcomes are clearly and obviously related with the world human principles of freedoms and democratic rights.

In Yemen it become very obvious that this or that international development program/assistance who used of decades to work only in health and education for example, can know work and deal and support issues/program and proposal of local NGOs and initiatives that have to do elections, woman rights and gender, youth, and the Ministry of Human Rights.

Therefore, such international western development and aids involvement in such Middle Eastern countries and beyond needed such a sociopolitical small programs and initiatives to complex the whole picture. An approach and a human common ground that has to be yet linked, built, and enhanced more to finally find its different implementation forms and shapes.

Lots of international program in Yemen is working in form of small grant approaches and methodology. Based on its specific form, demands, requirements, priorities and fields doors are opened for those local promising CSOs to compete and submit proposals for its grants (though it is a comparison between bad and worse with few exception. So, good luck who ever is going to be an international consultant or coordinator dealing with such issues in Yemen!

Sometimes partners can be hunted for; an idea/an initiative

might be jointly developed to sustain as an out come from previous project of phase with the same partners and/or the stakeholders. Financial and administrative steps must be followed clearly. A process of transparent approaches must be fulfilled. And a continuous assessments and evaluation mission must be always there.

Therefore, I think an international sociopolitical or socioeconomic development program can contribute to Yemen sociopolitical development by:

Focusing on small pilot projects models.

Always working with new promising CSOs staying away from those big names as they are already too empowered and too corrupted.

Always presenting new lines and colors.

Focusing on the media awareness and advocacy in the proposal and implementation phases.

Always should be in partnership and on line with the gov. What and how so ever this or that sociopolitical treatment/proposal/partner is a

dangerous zone or even beyond the assumed red lines.

Focusing on weakness and gaps here and there - as the budget is limited and approach is on the short run and small scale.

Thus, by that and more I think an international sociopolitical program might or can contribute positively and with an impact in Yemen's sociopolitical development.

On the other hand, there are so many Environmental Challenges in Yemen; in its direct tangible development sense and in its sociopolitical spirit.

So, symbolically and metaphorically for those who can read eyes and what is there between the lines, Yemen main sociopolitical environmental challenges are:

Lack of movement technical means, tools, and measures + training and rehabilitation.

Government capacity building and set of other developing priorities.

Poverty and economic situation; as attract more attention that other environmental affairs or concern.

Absence of good qualified

NGOs/CSOs in such field.

Sovereignty and security?!?! As waste and fisheries affairs and smuggling and traffic is interacting with lots of environmental affairs.

Public common awareness as it is the main and mile stone of such file.

Lack if not absence of Institutionalism at all levels, types and fields.

Educational and cultural behaviorism as the heart and brain of such civilized cultural story.

Modern equipments and technology; the need for that professional supported exchange programs and visits.

Legislations and the sociopolitical priorities more than any other issues such as environment.

Yemen stability; as environment affairs is only been observed and taken care only after that certain level of stability and prosperity FIRST.

Ahmed A. Hezam AL-Yemeni is a young Yemeni activist working in the sociopolitical development field holding and MA in Political Science from UK.



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Yemen Press Review



26september.net, affiliated with Yemeni Army
Thursday, April 9, 2008

Top Stories

- Information Minister confirms continuity of peace and development efforts in Sa'ada
- Anti-corruption authority investigates a complaint filed against National Blood Transfusion Center
- Liquefied gas production to reach 6.7 million metric tons

Project of liquefied natural gas (LNG) reached 92% of its accomplishment, the website quoted Yemen LNG Company as saying in its main story.

It went on to say that the company revealed the progress in pipeline reached 99.7 percent in Balhaf terminal and 56 percent in Al-Manba installations.

Oil and Minerals Ministry's undersecretary, Engineer Abdulmalik Alamah said the project's cost is estimated at \$4billion, and therefore it

is one of the biggest strategic investment projects in Yemen, which would stand for a significant feeder to the country's economy and its budget.

He affirmed that the plant would have capacity to produce 6.7 million tons per year of gas.

Addressing the media's representative, Alamah underlined the production phase which gives Yemen a strategic position for producing and exporting gas, particularly under positive promising indicators in gas field.

It is predicted that Yemen's revenues would reach \$50 billion over the coming 20 to 30 years.

Running the first production line is expected at the end of second quarter of 2009, while the first delivery of liquefied natural gas is due to take place by the 3rd quarter of the same year.

The shareholders of the Yemen LNG Company are Yemen Gas Company (16.73 percent), Yemen General Authority for Insurance and Pensions (5 Percent), Total (39.62 percent), Hunt Oil Company (17.22 percent), Korean Oil Corporation (6 percent) and Hyundai Corporation (5.88 percent).

On a side note, the website reported

that the Supreme Committee for Crude Oil Marketing approved on Thursday during a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Ali Mujawar, May's sales of crude oil at a total quantity of 2.2 million barrels. The sales were agreed according to the competitive bids submitted by international companies specialized in this field.

The committee was briefed on the technical committee's report on measures taken for receiving, analyzing and choosing the best bids. It affirmed the necessity of finding an international consultancy company to help identify the main challenges that could face the future marketing process and also called for the establishment of a limited mechanism for the development of a group of operations related to crude oil marketing.

The technical committee was directed to put all the information related to oil sales on the marketing process' websites on a monthly basis to enhance the transparency in all stages of the process.

The supreme committee praised the distinguished efforts of the technical committee, directing it to start the procedures for next June's sales and commence the offers process. The committee has also sought the help of

an international expert house for the development of operations relevant to next June's sales which will pinpoint the best available alternatives.



Al-Sahwa.net, affiliated with the Islah Party (major opposition party)
Thursday, April 9, 2009

Top Stories

- Aden governor accused of hindering compensation for an AIDS victim as a result of public hospital's negligence
- An armed tribal group attacks manager of Dhamar endowment office
- Senior YSP official calls for women's political empowerment

Secretary-General of the Yemeni Social Party Yassin Saeed Noaman called for empowering women in political life, the website reported.

During a seminar arranged by the National Consultation Committee headed by Sheikh Hamid Al-Ahmer, Noaman said that Yemeni women could

not get their rights away from public national struggle.

"Women should not be misguided in a state where political participation, human rights and democracy continue to deteriorate" said Noaman.

Horia Mashoor, chair of the Women National Committee, said that no changes would be honored unless political parties are persuaded to merge women in all authorities.

Nabila Saeed, deputy head of the Islah Party said that women in Yemen face many economic, medical and social challenges and are in need for special support, pointing out that illiteracy rates among women are very high.

Bilqis Alhabi, human rights activist, praised the Islah party as it allowed women to be in the leadership, as well as play major roles in the party's plans and policies.

Several symposiums focusing on women issues have been so far held in Yemen, one of which was titled "Women Political Empowerment: A Necessary Step toward Political Reform", and attended by 36 participants from the government, the private sector, and Aden University.

The General Administration of Activities at Aden University in

collaboration with the Human Rights and Democracy Center and the University Students' Union organized that event.

The symposium emphasized the necessity of women playing a central role in the electoral process - including registration, voting, and nomination. It stressed the significance of helping women fill decision-making posts in government and increasing their presence on elected councils.

Additionally, the symposium called for spreading awareness among women regarding the need to vote in order to bring attention to their needs and be more able to lobby for issues of concern at the highest levels.

Participants at the event suggested that the attainment of equal citizenship and the end of discrimination against woman, will only be realized when leading figures among women and society in general support women who have been nominated. In this way, women will increasingly be seen as being able to play an acting role in the process of achieving development.

The symposium addressed the limited political participation of women, explaining how it is affected by the domestic culture, traditions and customs.

Encountering peace: Multilateral engagement, involvement and imposition

By: Gershon Baskin

Is the new [Israeli] government on a collision course with the United States? It would seem so. President Barack Obama and his secretary of state have let Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu know in no uncertain terms that the two-states-for-two-peoples solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the only plan on the table. In a statement appearing on the Web page of the Foreign Ministry, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman stated: "We will act exactly according to the road map, including the Tenet document and the Zinni document. I voted against the road map, but that was the only document approved by the cabinet and by the Security Council—I believe it was Resolution 1505. It is a binding resolution and binds this government as well."

Lieberman further stated in interviews that he is obligated to the "road map as the government of Israel voted" implicitly referring to the 14 reservations decided by the Sharon government on 25 May 2003. Those reservations emptied the road map of its primary content and watered down all of Israel's obligations. In response, US officials, including President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that both sides would be obligated to fulfil the road

map as it was drafted.

Before getting into the issues, a few corrections for Lieberman: It was UN Security Council Resolution 1515 not 1505. That resolution calls on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to implement their road map obligations, and there is no mention of Israel's reservations. Resolution 1515 makes no mention of the Tenet or the Zinni documents. UN Security Council Resolution 1397 from March 2001 makes mention of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell understandings, as does the road map itself. Lieberman would do himself honour and limit Israel's embarrassment if he would actually read those documents and become somewhat familiar with them.

Lieberman and Netanyahu should take note that the road map, to which the government of Israel is obligated, demands a total freeze on all settlement building, including for natural growth; that it takes all necessary steps to help normalise Palestinian life; that it withdraws from Palestinian areas occupied from 28 September 2000 and that the two sides restore the status quo that existed at that time. Furthermore, Israel is obligated to reopen the Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and other closed Palestinian institutions in east Jerusalem (such as Orient House) based on a commitment that these institutions operate strictly in accordance with prior agreements

between the parties; and that Israel immediately dismantles settlement outposts erected since March 2001. Since the issuing of the road map in April 2003, Israel has not fulfilled even one of its obligations.

NOWHERE IN the road map or the UN resolutions does it state that the implementation of the obligations of the parties are sequential—meaning that first the PA must fulfil its obligations and only then will Israel begin to fulfil its obligations. The PA, on the other hand, has, at least in the West Bank, fulfilled almost all its obligations, attested to even by senior IDF officers. US monitors, including Obama's National Security Adviser Gen. James Jones and US Gen. Keith Dayton have been greatly satisfied by the commitment of the PA in the West Bank under President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salaam Fayyad in taking decisive and determined actions against the infrastructure of terrorism and in removing corruption from their government, whose finances are strictly monitored by the international community.

Will the Netanyahu government freeze settlement building? Will Defence Minister Ehud Barak instruct the IDF to remove unauthorised outposts? Will the IDF withdraw to positions held prior to 28 September 2000? Will Lieberman and Netanyahu allow Palestinian institutions in

Jerusalem to reopen? No, no, no and no!

Netanyahu has declared his intention to restart negotiations with the Palestinians. He has stated that Israel has no desire to control the lives of the Palestinians; however, he has also stated that a future Palestinian state would have no control over its external borders, not be allowed to have an army, not be allowed to determine its own foreign policy, not have control over its airspace or its electro-magnetic sphere. There is not a Palestinian leader alive who would agree to these terms. Netanyahu offers no platform to the PA on which it can stand to even open up negotiations. If these are the terms for bilateral negotiations, they will not even begin.

In this case, the first decision that Obama will have to make, once the economic crisis allows him a moment, is that negotiations will be shifted from a bilateral process into a multilateral one. It could begin as a trilateral process with talk mediated and facilitated by the United States, but a more constructive path would be to empower the Quartet, which is a creation of the road map process which Lieberman claims to accept.

THE ROAD MAP itself states that "the Quartet will assist and facilitate implementation of the plan... The Quartet will meet regularly at senior levels to evaluate the parties' performance on implementation of the

plan. In each phase, the parties are expected to perform their obligations in parallel, unless otherwise indicated... the Palestinians will have the active support of the Quartet and the broader international community in establishing an independent, viable state... Quartet members promote international recognition of a Palestinian state, including possible UN membership."

The Obama administration does not need to devise a new plan. The road map provides the mechanism for direct international involvement, engagement and even imposition. The conflict will not be resolved by Netanyahu and Lieberman in negotiations with Abbas and Fayyad. Even if Hamas were not in control of Gaza, there would be no bilateral Israeli-Palestinian progress toward peace.

The international community may not be able to force the parties to sign agreements to which they do not agree, but the international community can take a very active role in pushing the parties in that direction. The conflict is resolvable and most of the international community agrees on the parameters of its resolution. There is no time to waste on bilateral negotiations that have no chance of moving forward.

The Quartet is the international mechanism existing to push the two parties forward. A real partnership of the United States, the European Union,

Russia and the United Nations represents the primary actors with the interests and power to lead toward the resolution of this conflict which so endangers the stability of the world. The road map and the Arab Peace Initiative, supported by Obama, provide the tools and the direction. Obama's leadership is the ingredient that has been absent.

Israeli political intransigence or elements of Palestinian fanaticism should no longer stand in the way of bringing the conflict to closure. The majority of Israelis and Palestinians are tired of this conflict, yet because of the failures of the peace process, which was entirely dependent on bilateral agreements and willingness to move forward, they have lost hope. This conflict will not be resolved solely on the basis of bilateral agreement. Now is the time to demonstrate that the international community has the tools and the determination to lead us all to a more peaceful future.

Gershon Baskin is co-CEO of the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information. He can be reached at gershon@ipcri.org. This article is distributed by the Common Ground News Service (CGNews) with permission from The Jerusalem Post. Source: The Jerusalem Post, 6 April 2009, www.jpost.com. Copyright permission is granted for publication.

Responsible journalism series: A vital medium

By: Khaled Diab

Although the Israeli-Palestinian media battlefield is bitter and deeply entrenched, journalists have a responsibility to venture into the no-man's-land between the two sides, even if it means getting caught in the crossfire.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most protracted and bitter in the world. The acrimony and polarisation associated with the conflict has transformed the media itself into a veritable battlefield. In fact, the question of bias itself has become its own theatre in the media wars, with one camp accusing the media of possessing an anti-Israeli slant, while the other alleges an anti-Palestinian bias. The exchange of fire over this issue became

particularly heated during the recent war in Gaza. Faced with such hostility, even the most well-intentioned and balanced journalist can get caught in the cross-fire. Nevertheless, it is crucial that more journalists, particularly Israelis and Palestinians, abandon the narrow "us and them" dichotomy and pursue a line that is fair to both sides.

While the power of the media should not be overstated, it has the potential either to fuel the conflict by entrenching and confirming negative stereotypes, perpetuating hostility and beating the drums of war—or to advance the quest for peace by challenging and changing people's perceptions, building understanding and mending fences.

So, what can the media do to be more constructive?

The media should highlight positives and not just fixate on negatives. In the

western media it often seems that the Middle East produces little but violence. We all know that violence makes headlines, but non-violence and grass-roots peace efforts should also be given prominent coverage. The Palestinian, Arab and Israeli media all need to dedicate more coverage to positive stories from the other side and not always view the other through the prism of the conflict. They also need to dedicate more space to building a deeper understanding of the cultural and social make-up of the other side.

The media should be a channel for creative and novel approaches to the conflict, as well as a conduit for debate. Online forums and social networking sites are playing a crucial role in this respect by enabling Arabs and Israelis to cross geographical and political divides and communicate directly.

Opinion writers and columnists can

also exercise significant influence. Column writing is about opinion and opinion is essentially subjective. But subjectivity, if coupled with balance, can be extremely helpful.

Personally, I try to use my Guardian column as a platform to: humanise both sides of the conflict; uphold consistent values when judging actions; challenge perceptions; think outside the box; and reflect the complex human, social and cultural reality of the two peoples in order to give space to those who dare to cross "enemy lines". In one series of articles I tackled head-on the stereotypes and misperceptions Arabs and Israelis have of each other. I have also explored alternative routes to peace, such as non-violence and a civil rights movement.

More creatively, I once wrote a column where I imagined a fictional and peaceful future in 2048, which led a

reader to point-out an essay-writing contest (sponsored by the One Voice organisation and published by the Common Ground News Service) in which Israeli and Palestinian kids imagined their own peaceful futures. I was so moved by their visions for the future that I used another column to urge the adults to "let the children take over the peace process and bring to it the sensibility and competence of childhood".

My approach has come under fire from both pro-Israelis and pro-Palestinians, often in reaction to the same text. Despite the entrenched hostility, such an approach does pay dividends. It is heartening to see that reaching common ground is possible. As one reader pointed out: "One-sided historical narratives are toxic. In attempting a unified narrative, you're doing good work." Another wrote: "Thanks for this

encouraging article that can positively challenge everybody's perceptions of this conflict."

I am often pleasantly surprised by the maturity of the debate that develops between readers of my articles. It is truly inspiring to see how constructive the voices of the "silent majority" can be when brought into the debate. That is why a more balanced, media is essential if we want to see a positive outcome to this conflict.

** Khaled Diab is a Brussels-based journalist and writer who contributes a regular column to The Guardian in the UK. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews). Source: Common Ground News Service, 9 April 2009, www.common-groundnews.org. Copyright permission is granted for publication.*



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On Saudi driving rows, reform, and women's rights

In commemoration of International Women's Day last year, Saudi women's rights activist Wajeha Al-Huwaider posted a video of herself driving on the popular video-sharing site YouTube in a bid to pressure the Saudi authorities to grant women in the Kingdom the right to drive. MENASSAT met with pioneer "driving activist" Su'ad al-Mana in Riyadh to discuss driving bans and women's rights in Saudi.

By: Alexandra Sandels

"For women, to drive is not a political issue. It is not a religious issue. It is a social issue. And we know that many women of our society are capable of driving cars. We also know that many families will allow their women to drive," said women's rights activist Wajeha Al-Huwaider in a video appealing to Saudi interior minister Prince Nayef bin Abdel Aziz to allow women to drive in the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has come under constant criticism from rights groups for its treatment of women. Under Saudi law, women must obtain a man's permission in order to travel or have surgery. The Kingdom remains the only country in the world where women are officially banned from driving.

The last time women publicly challenged the Saudi authorities over the driving ban was on November 6 1990, when a group of 45 women demanded their drivers hand over the car keys and drove through Riyadh. The women ended up getting arrested by the religious police and the planned action resulted in a fatwa, a religious ruling from the highest ranking cleric in the Kingdom, officially prohibiting women from driving in Saudi cities.

"A clear message"

The timing of the driving row was crucial, taking place during the lead-up to the Gulf war when there was an international media focus on Saudi Arabia. The women wanted their public demonstration to put pressure on society and on the national authorities to change the law and allow Saudi women to drive.

"It was a clear message we sent. I didn't drive just for the fun of it. It was the time of war and we should have been able to drive if we needed to," pioneer Saudi "driving activist" Su'ad al-Mana, who was involved in

the driving row, told MENASSAT.

Al-Mana remembers the day of the driving row in detail.

"We met at the Tamimi (a well-known supermarket in Saudi Arabia) parking lot. All together we were 45 women and 15 cars. So we asked our drivers to park the cars and told them to get out of the drivers seat and give us the keys to the car. They were astonished," Al-Mana said with a giggle.

The guerilla drivers, who all possessed driving licenses issued from abroad, divided themselves into groups of three or four in each car and drove along Riyadh's long dusty boulevards before gathering back in the supermarket parking lot.

Steering her dark blue Cabris onto the lot, content over the fact that she hadn't been caught by the police, Al-Mana was greeted by a fellow driving female friend who cheerfully told her that the group had not completed its mission. They were supposed to drive two laps around town, she said, not just one.

Arrested

It was during that second lap that things went bad.

According to Al-Mana's account, the group was first stopped by a couple of police officers who did not know how to respond when the women flashed their driving licenses before them. But at a crosswalk further ahead, the caravan finally attracted the attention of Saudi's religious police, the "Muttawa."

"They (the Muttawa) came and stopped our cars, violently. The women drivers were immediately ordered into the backseats with a representative from the Muttawa to drive the cars," said Al-Mana.

She specifically recalled the Muttawa officer who told Al-Mana that her and her friends would ruin Riyadh.

"He was a young and ugly man. He didn't know how to speak in a polite



Saudi Arabia remains the only country in the world where women are officially banned from driving.

manner. He told us that these women would spoil everyone in Riyadh," she said.

Al-Mana then remembers being transferred to a local police station with the rest of the women where they were held together in a small room until 3am the next morning when their male guardians were summoned to retrieve them.

Before leaving the police station, Al-Mana said that they were forced to sign a paper stating that they "would not do the same thing again."

Criticism and expulsion

Although a media blackout on the driving row had allegedly been ordered, the driving women of Riyadh soon became the talk of the town.

"There was lots of talk about us at the time in mosques and in the streets.... I just don't understand it. Women have been riding camels for centuries. Why not cars?" said Al-Mana.

According to one report, posters

condemning the women's actions, with their names listed, were plastered on the walls of Riyadh mosques.

Al-Mana was one of several Riyadh university professors who participated in the driving demonstration.

In her interview with MENASSAT, Al-Mana discussed the response to their public action and change in Saudi.

MENASSAT: How did the public respond to the driving row?

Al-Mana: "A few days after the row, I was called by my dean, who advised me not to go to university to teach anymore. I thrown back by the phone call, but was also surprised by the reactions coming from some of the students."

"The girls started demonstrating and distributing leaflets."

MENASSAT: They were demonstrating against you?

Al-Mana: "Yes, they were against us, us drivers. They said that 'if you

drive, it's the first step towards bad things.'"

MENASSAT: Why do you think they reacted in that way?

Al-Mana: "Somebody stuffed their minds."

MENASSAT: So 19 years after your public demonstration, when do you think you will be granted the right to drive in your country?

Al-Mana: "You know, in 1990 I thought we would be able to drive within five year. But here in Saudi things are different than anywhere else in the world."

MENASSAT: "So if we come back here in 19 years again, do you think you will be driving then?"

Al-Mana: (Laugh). "I can't predict and don't like to predict these things. Things are changeable but our customs will stay stable."

MENASSAT: But you feel things are changing in the Kingdom?

Al-Mana: "Things are improving here. But change at the moment is stemming from things that are not important. Girls nowadays just repeat what they hear from society. Girls are thinking about what clothes to wear and what handbags to buy. In essence, they're thinking about superficial things."

Al-Mana and the other professors were subsequently laid off from work for 15 years. Their passports were confiscated by the Saudi authorities.

After the uproar had died down, the Saudi monarch at the time, King Fahd, reportedly gave the women back their passports then reinstated their teaching posts.

Over the past year, persistent rumors have surfaced that the Kingdom might soon be removing the driving ban on women drivers.

One report issued in February 2008 said that Saudi Arabia was to lift its ban on women drivers and that government officials had "confirmed the landmark decision" and planned to "issue a decree by the end of the year".

While Al-Mana thinks the driving ban constitutes a problem, she appears far more concerned about education and teaching young Saudi women to "learn how to think for themselves" than not being able to drive a car.

Many Saudi girls these days, complains Al-Mana, go to university only to be able to say that they have a degree and not to become critical

thinkers, spurring close-mindedness among the young, she says.

Reform hopes and mixed signals

Recent developments in Saudi Arabia that appear to be aimed at reforming Saudi's hard-line religious establishment raised hopes of a potential reform taking place.

On Valentine's Day, a day when media coverage of Saudi Arabia often focuses on the banning of red roses and clamping down on couples celebrating, this year the focus on a highly-publicized reshuffle in the Saudi government.

The Saudi monarch, King Abdullah dismissed the head of the religious police and removed a controversial hard-line cleric who declared last fall that it was permissible to kill the owners of television stations that broadcast immoral content.

Of particular interest was King Abdullah's appointment of a woman as a deputy cabinet minister.

Prominent technocrat Noura Al-Fayez was chosen to head girls' education in the Kingdom, marking Saudi's first female minister.

But a number of new controversial developments have made Saudi intellectuals voice concern over the notion of "mixed signals" being given in the reform process.

Last week, Saudi's National Society of Human Rights (NSHR) published its second report on human rights in the Kingdom, in which the organization pointed piercing criticism towards several government agencies for not protecting human rights. The report also urged the need for better promotion of women's rights in Saudi.

But only a few days after the release of the report, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif publicly declared that there is no need for female members in the Parliament or in the elections.

Following the remarks, King Abdullah appointed Prince Naif as second deputy premier, leaving room for yet more confusion about the Kingdom's reform process.

The popular Saudi blogger "Saudijeans" referred to the recent developments as "confusing signals" about what's going in his country.

"Now this is exactly the kind of mixed signals that makes the world question the commitment of our country to its much publicized reform plans, not to mention how it leaves the people confused about where their nation is heading. So what's going on here? Frankly, I don't get it. I. Just. Don't. Get. It.," Saudijeans wrote.

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- ¥ Outreach with extractive industry companies, civil society and donors.
- ¥ Support to the data reconciliation and publication process.
- ¥ Liaison with EITI and country teams in Washington including participation in World Bank missions that usually take place every 3-4 months.

Desired qualifications and experience

- ¥ University degree in economics, petroleum management or other relevant discipline.
- ¥ Fluent Arabic and English language both verbal and written.
- ¥ At least 5-7 years of relevant professional experience and of implementation support including monitoring progress and impacts achieved.
- ¥ Prior experience in working with civil society, media or other actors would be a strong plus.
- ¥ Some knowledge of EITI and/or World Bank and Republic of Yemen financial, procurement and related procedures is a plus.
- ¥ Strong communication skills and teamwork including with donors and clients, and the judgment to advise others.

For full consideration, please send your CV with supporting documents before April 25, 2009 to wbyemen@worldbank.org, clearly marking the position.

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The World Bank Office in Sana'a is seeking a local **Short-Term Consultant** to work as an **Education Researcher/Analyst**. Education sector in the Republic of Yemen is one of the top priorities in the government strategies and the World Bank is currently supporting education through Basic Education Development Project, Secondary Education Development and Girls Access Project, and Education for All, in addition to projects in technical education and vocational training. Objective of the consultancy is to support analytical and operational work as a member of Yemen education cluster team. Initial period will be three months eligible for renewal based on business needs and performance. Consultant will be stationed in the World Bank Office and is expected to work 5 days a week.

Duties and accountabilities

The consultant, under the guidance of the education task team leader will:

- (i) undertake relevant research as required in the field of education,
- (ii) support the finalization of the Project Appraisal Document for the Education For All Fast Track Initiative Grant Phase III,
- (iii) prepare all the relevant documentation and seek clearance for restructuring of a project, and
- (iv) provide inputs as necessary to relevant activities associated with the entire education sector, economic sector, donor coordination, and various surveys and researches. The task will require frequent interactions with government and donor counterparts as well as operational units within the World Bank.

Desired qualifications and experience

- ¥ Masters degree in education or economics
- ¥ Good knowledge in research;
- ¥ Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English and Arabic;
- ¥ Motivated and committed personality and attitude to learn;
- ¥ Familiarity with World Bank procedures preferred, and
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For full consideration, please send your CV with supporting documents before April 20, 2009 to wbyemen@worldbank.org, clearly marking the position.

Hygiene in public food places

By: Ali Saeed

Yusuf is a university student. Every day he gets breakfast on his way to college from local cafeterias or restaurants, but he first makes sure that the restaurant kitchen is clean and that the food is prepared in a healthy way.

One day Yusuf had breakfast in a cafeteria. He ate two egg sandwiches and drank a glass of lime juice. While he was eating his breakfast, he was thinking about his upcoming exams. However, before reaching the exam hall after eating his breakfast, he started feeling nauseated and began to vomit. Instead of attending his exams, he went to the doctor and did some tests. Yusuf was diagnosed with food poisoning.

Like Yusuf, there are many others who suffer from the carelessness of food supply kiosks and restaurants. A lot of the staff at cafeterias and restaurants are not aware that their job can be a threat to others' health if they don't implement hygiene standards.

Using their bare hands to make food is very common among workers in cafeterias in Yemen. They even spread the eggs and cheese with their fingers in the sandwiches in front of the customers who have become so used to it that they don't even mind.

The Food Observation and Circulation Law of the Ministry of Public Works and Urban Development and the Health Inspection Regulations were created to enforce adequate health and safety precautions at food establishments. "There are laws and

regulations to protect consumers from potential food hazards, but the problem is the application of the rules," said Mahmoud Al-Naqeeb, General Secretary of the Consumers Protection Association.

Established in 1992, the main law allows inspectors to enter all places where food is stored, processed, or served, and also allows them to take samples of the food and test them. The laws indicate that foodstuffs must be complaint with the Yemeni standards for food specifications. Yemeni standards are in line with international standards for food as per composition, color, form, smell, taste, and minimum or maximum levels of artificial substances, artificial flavors, and colors.

"Two years ago, the cabinet released a decree to attach health inspection and food observation to the Ministry of Health, but after the concerned bodies met, they gave this task to the Ministry of Public Works," said Al-Naqeeb. "Most health inspectors at restaurants and cafeterias are unfortunately not qualified enough to do this job. They end up making friends with establishments' owners and cover up violations."

Performing health and safety inspections at food establishments is the job of the Environment Health Administration at the Ministry of Public Works. Dr. Mohammed Abdul Kareem Al-Asbahi, Director of the Health Environment Administration in Sana'a, admitted that the number of inspectors is not enough since there are around 120 employees at the administration and they are distributed to 12 districts across the Sana'a governorate.



Around one third of Sana'a's 2.7 million inhabitants are single men who come from rural areas to earn a living. Many of them eat in public restaurants and cafeterias which are relatively cheap but expose them to health risks.

According to the latest statistics from 2008, there are 15,000 various food establishments, from industries to services and supplies, in Sana'a alone.

"Employees at the administration are distributed according to the needs and the size of the districts," explained Al-Asbahi. "Health, safety, and hygiene are not just limited to restaurants and cafeterias, as the above-mentioned laws and regulations specify that the entire food industry should be inspected."

Food establishments that must be inspected according to law are restaurants, cafeterias, bakeries, food importing corporations, food production labs in factories, slaughter houses, fish shops, and tourist hotels. All of these places must apply the health and safety rules to provide customers with healthy and useful products.

To ensure the health, safety, and hygiene at these establishments, the local councils in each district send a health inspector to food service providers. "Some of these establishments are inspected every day, such as slaughterhouses and fish shops," said Al-Asbahi.

Restaurants, bakeries, and cafeterias are inspected once a week and water purification stations and tourist hotels are visited biweekly. Food production labs at Yemeni factories and corporations that import food are inspected every month.

The local council authorities in each district are responsible for observing and evaluating the work of environment health departments in their dis-

tricts. In addition to the standard food processing and serving requirements, inspectors have to check for clean uniforms, health cards of staff, the cleanliness of the food process and serving places, expiry dates of used food materials, and the reuse of leftovers.

In Sana'a there are twelve departments distributed throughout ten districts. In every district there is a health environment department except Bani Al-Hareth and Al-Sabi'een districts. Here they have two departments each since they are heavily populated districts.

Food industry violations

- Using toxic, harmful, fake, expired, or strange substances unfit for human consumption in food processing. Acts of making, selling, donating, exchanging, or even displaying food with any of these abovementioned substances is illegal according to the law.
- Any wrongful or misleading processing, packaging, or advertising of foodstuffs.
- Falsifying ingredients, hiding the origin of manufacturing, or covering up or falsifying the expiry dates.

"Some of the employees at the Health Environment Administration are qualified and even have PhDs, bachelor's degrees, diplomas, or certifications form specialized courses in food science or health control.

However, the problem is with the local council's members," said Al-Asbahi. "Some local council members do not understand their duties towards this issue and consequently their performance is weak. This is unlike other members of the Local Councils who are very well informed and know their tasks, and thus their performance is very good."

Closure of restaurants

The Health Environment Administration supervises restaurants and cafeterias in Yemen. If they find any restaurant or cafeteria that is in violation of the health and safety rules, the administration notifies that establishment by letter of the problem and tells the establishment to correct the mistake committed.

Sometimes the mistake leads to the closure of the establishment. In 2008, around 398 food places were closed in Sana'a due to health or safety violations they committed. Moreover, 10,746 letters concerning health and safety violations were sent out in 2008 to various restaurants and other food establishments around Sana'a.

Some of the more serious violations are referred to court for legal proceedings. In 2008, around 1,059 such cases were brought to court.

Moreover, the Health Environment Administration issues health cards to people who work in restaurants and cafeterias. In 2008, 5,551 health cards were issued for workers in Sana'a. In addition to that, the administration requires restaurant and cafeteria staff to

renew their health cards annually. If an employee is found in a restaurant or cafeteria with no valid health card, the establishment is fined.

"Regretfully, food suppliers keep committing health violations unless they are punished by paying fees," said Al-Asbahi. "In 2008, fines from violating establishments in Sana'a exceeded eleven million Yemeni Riyals - YR 11,123,200 to be exact. However we do not focus on these revenues as we consider ourselves a service oriented authority."

According to Al-Asbahi, most health and safety violations reported by inspectors are either from using expired food materials or from reusing leftovers.

The administration reports such malpractices and destroys the expired food materials. In 2008, it destroyed 586 tons of expired food materials from food establishments in Sana'a.

The director of the administration in Sana'a called on all food establishments to apply the health and safety conditions. If any inspector tries to blackmail them, they should report him and "we will do our best in punishing the offending inspector," said Al-Asbahi.

4 U

To report health violations in any food supply or service establishment, call +1-277038



Delicious watermelon on a hot sunny day, but at what cost? The environment and health administration at the Ministry of Public Works is responsible for ensuring that any provision of food items is according to international standards, yet with its shortage in resources, it is virtually impossible to trace street vendors selling foodstuff.

What's the worse food you can eat? (Part II)

Toxic mercury

By: Anna May Kinney

Healthy things you would never expect to find in are some Kraft and other brand salad dressings, Miracle Whip, cottage cheese with fruit, Yoplait yogurt, wheat thin and Ritz crackers. It's also in most processed luncheon meats, hotdogs, canned meats, fruits in syrup and most cough syrups. Most people eat a few servings of corn syrup a day without knowing they eat any.

Some say that High Fructose Corn Syrup is a totally natural sweetener and can safely be part of a healthy diet, others, like myself blame it at least partially for the obesity epidemic we are see-

ing today and also for the rapid increasing epidemic of type II diabetes that's taking over North America.

HFCS is a sweetener that's made from cornstarch. It's made up of about 50% Sable sugar, fructose and 50% glucose; normal corn syrup is very high in glucose. By processing the enzymes the fructose content of HFCS is increased to a level similar to that of table sugar. Winding up with the corn syrups, which are used for soft drinks being 45% glucose, 55% fructose. The proportions in HFCS that is used for other products, such as jams and cookies are 58% glucose/42% fructose.

The mercury connection

Mercury in any form - either as water-

soluble inorganic salt, a lipid-soluble organic mercury compound, or as metallic mercury- is an extremely potent neurological toxin and you might be asking yourself how it got into something that is considered natural? And you probably assume that this is a shocking new discovery that researchers just found out and IF they had known about this something would have been done earlier right? Well apparently from all that I've read it was way back in 2005 that the FDA tested samples of HFCS and found mercury in nine out of twenty samples. Yet NO ONE told us consumers about this, changed the way they produced this stuff or did more testing. To me it looks like we need some FOOD police watch-

ing over those who are suppose to be watching out for us.

Some of us have always warned of the dangers when the human body comes into contact with mercury, and over the last few years it's been linked to the increasing numbers of children developing autism. This is no harmless little chemical we are talking about, even small amounts need to be avoided and yet a known process puts it into our food and we are not told about it, and it's allowed to continue to poison our children.

HFCS is produced using quite a few chemicals; toxic mercury has historically been used as an anti-microbial and from what I've read that there's a mercury cell called chlor-alkali that is used

in the manufacturing of HFCS as well as in making sodium benzoate and citric acid. (and no one is yet addressing mercury being also in these two products and the many things they are added to each day.) These said chemicals are manufactured at various facilities, some of these manufacturers still use an outdated process when making two of the chemicals, which are then sold to the High Fructose Corn Syrup producers, this process is what's responsible for the mercury being there.

Different samples of high fructose corn syrup were taken from three different manufacturers and analyzed for mercury content.

The samples were found to contain levels of mercury ranging from below a

detection limit of 0.005 to 0.570 micrograms mercury per gram of high fructose corn syrup.

In the fall of 2008, one study tested 55 products and found that one third of them contained mercury. A few of the foods tested and found to have mercury are Hershey's chocolate syrup 257 ppm, Quaker Oatmeal to Go 300 ppm, Kraft Original Barbeque Sauce 200 ppm, Smucker's Strawberry Jelly 100 ppm, and Yoplait Strawberry Yogurt 60 ppm.

This is just to name a few of the products that WERE tested. With the average daily consumption of high fructose corn syrup averaging 50 grams per person, I'm sure most everyone got their daily supplemental mercury.



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Society and culture embody concepts that defame girls

By: Hanan Mohammed Far'e

“Marry an eight year-old girl and I ensure safety.” Many proverbs that continue to be circulated promote the discrimination of girls in today's society. Families remain worried that they may give birth to girls. Their pressure and trouble increase in fear for the girl's virginity. Under this pretext, girls are restricted, their rights are confiscated, and trusteeship is imposed on them. By giving birth to newborn girls, a state of alert and readiness is announced inside the family as if it is preparing for a potential danger.

Burying childhood

Islam forbids burying newborn girls alive, but this act continues to be committed in a different way. To circumvent the Islamic principle that forbids burying girls, some families marry their daughters at the tender age of eight. They neglect their education and impose household chores on them. Thus, girls are bred to be a wife as soon as they are born. These ideas prevailed in society and became common culture and social heritage. The phenomenon of marrying girls aged between 5 and 15 prevailed too.

Poverty is the sword through which girls' childhood is slaughtered to alleviate the material burden that girls impose on the family. It also theoretically preserves the grace and dignity of the girl, and, consequently, the grace and dignity of the family. Urban societies don't differ from rural ones; they are also controlled by traditions and norms. The negative attitude towards girls remains dominant anywhere you turn. As is usually said, a girl remains of low status even if she attains the highest certificates in education and highest positions. Boys are looked at as a means of preserving the race of the family, but the girl is des-

tinued to go with the husband.

Yemen Times spoke to a number of girls who stated their opinions about the discrimination their families practice against them and the prevailing perception that girls are a heavy burden on their families.

“Trust is almost absent between my family and me,” said Sabreen, 18. “What gathers me with them is the incessant fear and suspicions toward my behavior or any movement I do. I feel that my rights are marginalized inside my family. I am in despair and extremely frustrated. Sometimes I understand why my family is concerned about me, but when this continues to such an extreme level on a daily basis I feel sad. I wish I had been born a boy to escape the dominance and unjustified doubt of the family which always monitors me.”

Girls are restricted and prevented

Manal, 20 said that families don't have the right to look at their daughters in such a backwards and suspicious way, preventing their daughters from doing anything which obliges them to lie to their families to escape punishment.

“Girls use lies as a means to maintain the trust of the family,” said Manal. “Nowadays, girls are like boys and very often better. What is wrong are the misconceptions and the double standards through which families deal with boys and girls. With the current development that the world is witnessing, women are proving their merit in different fields. Those who pretend fear for their daughters don't raise them properly. They should respect the identity of this soft creature.”

Severe battering

Arwa recounted a painful situation she went through with her family as a result of male dominance and the discrimination between boys and girls. “My mother is always concerned when I go out of the house,” said Arwa. “When I come back, she asks me a lot of questions about the details of my

outing. Once I went to an English language institute at 11 am. I was supposed to be back at one o'clock. At the institute I took the exam and came back home one hour late. When I reached home, my brother was waiting for me by the gate. He slapped me in the face and insulted me in the presence of my mother.”

Broken glass is never recovered

18 year-old Rasha said that it is normal that families worry about reputation of their daughters. “A girl is like the rose that needs to be put in a suitable place to grow. Ethics of girls are not equal, as some of them are impudent. I don't feel bothered by my family's worry about me. Rather, I feel happy that my family is afraid that bad company may spoil me. Girls are controlled by emotions and, consequently, can be easily seduced. Any young man can seduce girls who are like glass that can never be recovered if broken.”

Boys also are subject to temptation and seduction

Bilal Al-Saba'ie, 22, said that nowadays families should be as worried about their sons as they are about their daughters. “A boy might be subject to bad company which leads him indulge in robbery, drugs, and other things,” said Bilal. “If not raised up properly, boys may be subjected to seduction and temptation. However, traditions that marginalized girls' rights under the pretext of fear of disgrace is only meant to cover up what is really going on, as they neglect bringing up their daughters properly. Therefore, their daughters are easy to seduce.”

Obsession and suffering of the family

Parents were asked about the reality of their fear for their daughters. Khadija, in her forties, said that human beings always long for things that they miss. “I had three sons but I was yearning to have a daughter,” she said. “Since my daughter was born until now, when she

is a teenager, I am much more worried about her than her three brothers. I am afraid that she may fall prey to a boy and destroy her reputation. I will never relax until I die. Even after she gets married, I will be concerned about the way her husband deals with her. I will also be concerned that she may get divorced and come back home to suffer from the society's viewpoint toward the divorced women.”

Girls are roses of life

Abu Hana, as he likes to be called, is a father of three daughters and wishes to have more. “The home that lacks girls is tough and depressed,” he said. “Girls are usually the source of emotion and tenderness. They are the roses of life. It is not a shame that a father wishes to have daughters. People's awareness developed and their old norms changed. Nowadays, depending on a disobedient son, as daughters care more about their parents when they grow old.”

The Future

Slowly things seem to be changing for women in Yemeni society. More and more women are working outside of the home and are achieving high positions in both public and private sectors. On the other hand, women are dressing more and more conservatively and the stranglehold on women's rights, while loosening in some ways, appears to be tightening in others. Family law still favors the husband and father, and parents watch over their daughters as though they will go astray the moment they're let loose.

Only time will tell what the future holds for women in society. The choice will be made by pioneering women who will need all the support they can get in championing women's rights.

This article was first published in Arabic in Youth & Student's Cultural House Newsletter

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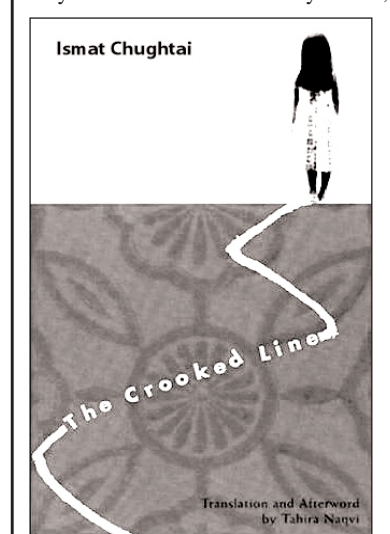
Chughtai Ismat An iconoclast Muslim dame of Urdu fiction

By: Eyad N. Al-Samman
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Chughtai, Ismat, was an Indian Urdu short-story writer, novelist, and scriptwriter. She was born into a middle-class family on August 15, 1915 in Badayun, Uttar Pradesh, state in northern India and grew up largely in Jodhpur City. Her brother was a major early influence and taught her English, history, the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. She had to fight for her education before she was allowed to enroll at a university. In 1936, she attended the first meeting of the Progressive Writers' Association in Lucknow, Capital City of Uttar Pradesh State, and later was associated with the membership of the Urdu Progressive Writers' Movement.

After obtaining her Bachelor of Arts in Aligarh City, she worked for a Bachelor's in Education in Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow, thus becoming the first Indian Muslim woman to have earned both degrees. Subsequently, she was appointed principal of a girls' college in Bareilly City before going on to teacher training at Aligarh Muslim University. From 1939 to 1941 Chughtai taught at the Raj Mahal Girls' School in Jodhpur and later was an inspector of schools in Bombay.

Chughtai is considered one of the most prolific writers of Urdu short stories. The better part of her writing shows a deep and enduring preoccupation with ordinary women's issues, particularly their cultural status and their myriad roles in Indian society. She was an inimitable writer so that no other Urdu fiction writer has approached women's questions with the same degree of sensitivity and concern. In the early 1930s,



she started writing in secret about women's lives and daily experiences. She kept her writings hidden at a time when the voices of women writers were still muffled and any attempt on their part to write literature was viewed as intellectual vagrancy.

At age 23, Chughtai wrote her first short story “Fasadi” (The Troublemaker) and publish it in “Saqi”, a prestigious literary magazine. In 1941, she wrote his controversial short story entitled “Lihaf” (The Quilt) which dealt with the issue of women's carnal desires. The story brought her both notoriety and fame and consequently she was charged with obscenity by then government. The trail at the end of which the court dismissed and dropped the case as it could not find any obscene four-letter words in the literary work. In 1943, Chughtai turned utterly to writing in Urdu as a career. Her first two collections of short story entitled “Kalyan” (Buds) and “Choten” (Wounds). Her other collections that came later include: “Chooi Mooi” (The Sensitive One), “Ek Baat” (A Word), “Ek Qatra-e Xoon” (A



Drop of Blood), “Do Haathi” (Two Hands) and “Thori Si Pagal” (Just a Little Crazy). As a novelist, Chughtai penned novels such as “Ajeeb Aadmi” (A Very Strange Man, 1972) which was about the Bombay movie industry as based on the life of a movie producer who committed suicide after the dancer whom he made into a big star left him in a difficult situation. This novel is an insightful and critical examination of the Bombay movie scene of the time, by one who knew it at first hand. Her masterpiece was entitled “Terhi Lakir” (The Crooked Line) in which Chughtai reveals the core of the female psyche. In her effort to seek and define connections between culture and female experience, especially in the middle-class Muslim societies, Chughtai tries in this novel to explore and analyze custom and ritual with a keenly sensitive eye.

Her published novellas include “Dil Ki Dunya” (Realm of the Heart), “Ma'suma” (The Innocent) and “Ziddi” (The Stubborn One) which was turned into a movie in 1948. Her other literary and critical books include “Ham Log” (We People), a collection of short stories and essays; “Yahan se Vahan Tak” (From Here to There), a collection of essays; “Saitan” (The Devil), a collection of plays; “My Friend, My Enemy”, a selection of Chughtai's prose writing comprising essays, commentaries, reminiscences, and pen-portraits of her renowned contemporaries, and “Afsane Drame” (Stories and Plays). Her book entitled “Lifting the Veil” brings together her fiction and non-fiction writings with its twenty-one pieces marked by the author's brilliant turn of phrase and ironic humor. Fiction of Chughtai has been collected posthumously in four volumes published in Urdu under the title of “Ismat Chughtai Ke Afsaney” and holding more than 99 short stories.

In collaboration with her husband, Chughtai wrote 12 movie scripts and made five movies independently. Among movie scripts that she wrote in Urdu the one entitled “Arzoo” (1950) and “Sone Ki Chidia” (1958) and in 1978, Chughtai also plays the role of the aging British grandmother in the movie “Junoon” (Madness). In 1974, Chughtai was awarded Ghalib Award in Urdu Drama for her best novel “The Crooked Line” and also received the Filmfare Best Story Award for her 1973's movie story entitled “Garam Hawa” with Kaifi Azmi. Also, she was belatedly awarded the Samman Award for Urdu Literature in 1990.

Ismat Chughtai died in Bombay on October 24, 1991 and was cremated in Chandanwadi crematorium according to her wish. Chughtai was a brilliant writer, expressing her views with candor, vivid imagery, and a sharply sarcastic sense of humor. She wrote about the world that she knew, bringing the idiom of the middle-class to Urdu prose, and totally transformed the complexion of Urdu fiction. Chughtai's outspoken and controversial diction of writing made her the passionate voice for the unheard, and she has become an inspiration for the younger generation of writers, readers, and intellectuals in India.

“I taught myself reading, writing, tailoring, and driving”

Fatima Mohammed Jarallah was born in Sana'a in 1953. She has been a widow for 16 years and has three children: two sons and a daughter. Although she is only a high school graduate, she has held many important positions, including head of the Motherhood and Childhood Council, Sana'a branch. She is currently the director of the Women Association for Woman and Child Rehabilitation and Care. She is also head of the Talha Center for Handicrafts. Omar Al-Ansi interviewed Jarallah for Yemen Times and asked her about her life and career.

How were you able to study?

My study was difficult because at that time girls were not allowed to study. This prompted me to study secretly without the knowledge of my family. In the beginning, I couldn't finish high school, but after I got married when I was 14 years old, my husband supported and encouraged me to pursue my secondary school studies. Even this was secret from my family. I studied at the Um Salamah Institute and Um Salem Institute in Sana'a. I took the high school examination soon after I gave my first birth. My family wondered how I could study and take the exam just after I had given birth.

What were your husband's qualifications?

My husband didn't have any qualifications but he was able to read and write. He was older than me and had five children from an ex-wife.

How did he agree to allow you continue your study?

In the beginning, he encouraged me to study on the condition that I fulfilled all duties toward our children and him. After that, people intimidated him because he allowed me to study. As a result, he refused to allow me continue studying at university although I was a first year student in the department of Islamic Studies.

Concerning your mother, did she know that you were studying in secret?

Yes. She tried to keep the secret, but in the end the matter was disclosed.

What about your sisters? Did they study?

They couldn't go to school in secret. Therefore, they studied the Holy Quran, also in secret.

What was your father's reaction when he learned that you were awarded a high school certificate?

He was very surprised, but at the same time he was so happy that once he wished that I was a man. He used to call me “teacher” until he passed away.

Who taught you tailoring and how?

I taught myself to make clothes by cutting new cloth based on the measurements of the parts of old clothes that I had taken apart. In the end, I learnt to be a tailor.

Why did you learn tailoring? How did you work in this field?

I was interested in tailoring. In the beginning, I heard Mrs. Fateheya Al-Jirafi, wife of the late famous poet Al-Baradoni, speak about tailoring. She was working in what was called in the past “the Affairs Authority.” She was looking for women to work with her and advised families to allow their daughters to study. Once I met with her on the street by chance. We started talking and then we became intimate friends. She eventually learned about my living standards after my husband became bankrupt. She knew that both



my family and my husband's family renounced us after he was bankrupt.

Once she visited me at home and suggested that I work to help my husband. I refused to work at that time, as work was shameful for a woman. My husband also refused to allow me to work. After many attempts and continuous insistence by Al-Jirafi, I started work as a teacher in a girl's school outside the Shu'ub district in Sana'a. The school, which consisted of four classes, used to teach reading, writing, tailoring, and handicrafts. The school then changed to become the Family Development Center, which is considered the first of its kind in Yemen to encourage productive families.

I stayed working in secret for six months in that school. I couldn't continue to hide it so I told my husband and convinced him to let me work. He agreed on the condition that I perform all duties at home as well. I used to get up early in the morning and prepare breakfast and part of lunch and come back home at around 11:00 to finish household tasks before my husband came home from work.

With regards to children, I would leave them with my mother who took care of them while I was at work. I

would take them with me when I came back from work. This process was tiresome, as it would take a long time to take the children every day in the morning and at noon. Sometimes my husband would help me by taking them to my mother's and bringing them back at noon.

After a short period, I started looking for women to work myself, instead of just Al-Jirafi who would look for women to work in the past.

We changed the location of the school. In the new school, empty bottles of baby formulas were used as chairs, blackboards were either bits of cardboard or wood, and chalk was substituted by plaster. The process of moving from one location to another continued until we finally reached the Sheraton neighborhood, although our salaries were low and the schools were not lucrative.

Following 16 years of work in the field of education, I moved to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. There, I was nominated as Director of the Motherhood and Childhood Center, Sana'a branch and continued in that position for eight years. After that, I retired.

What do you currently do?

Now, I run the Women's Association for Woman and Child Rehabilitation and Care which was established in 2001. I have also worked as Manager of Dar Al-Amel [House of Hope] for Girls' Care which belongs to the Al-Saleh Foundation for Development since 2004. In addition, I am head of the Talha Center for Handicrafts.

How did you learn driving cars at this late age?

I used to ask my sons to give me a lift to anywhere I needed to go, but they would refuse. As a result, I bought a car and practiced driving. The whole family benefited from me as a driver.

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