

Supporting Palestine towards stronger trade policymaking

Amman, September 10, 2019 - To assist the Government of Palestine and the private sector towards the accession to the Arab Agreement of liberalization of trade in services (2017), UNDP partnered with the League of Arab States (LAS) to conduct the second national workshop on trade in services for Palestine. The 2-day training is part of technical support provided by UNDP and UNCTAD to finalize the draft schedule of commitments on services under the leadership of the Ministry of National Economy of Palestine.



35 officials from the involved ministries, representatives of private suppliers of services and representatives of the LAS held intensive discussion and consultation with experts from UNDP and UNCTAD to clarify the text of the Agreement and related documents. This approach is used to equip governmental officials and the private sector with good understanding on how to benefit from the accession to the Arab Agreement in trade in services towards the creation of more job opportunities in the Arab countries and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 17.10.

Participants expressed high appreciation to the technical support provided by UNDP in partnership with UNCTAD and requested continuous assistance to Palestine's public trade policies and to the private sector to capitalize on Arab economic cooperation and integration. They also thanked the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) for the support provided to Arab countries in deepening regional economic integration, promoting competitiveness and policy coordination.

20 years of partnership to boost Knowledge for Development

New York, 5 September 2019 –The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a new 10-year agreement (2021-2030) with the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF) to continue joint work within the frame of the *Knowledge Project*. The high-level event and the signing ceremony, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York, showcased how UNDP and MBRF are promoting thought leadership and evidence-based policymaking for sustainable development



in the Arab States region and around the world.

The event was organized by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, and witnessed high-level representatives including the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner and the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, Saud Al Shamsi.

“The lessons of the past must inform the development policies of the future, making knowledge a critical ally as we strive to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and shift to a more sustainable and resilient path,” said UNDP Administrator. “In today’s fast-paced world, gaining knowledge, sharing it, and applying it develops capabilities and expands opportunities in every aspect of people’s lives, enriching the nations to which they belong...”.

From his side, MBRF Chief Executive Officer, Jamal bin Huwaireb highlighted the necessity to measure knowledge within the Arab region and around the world: “...The *Global Knowledge Index* addresses this need and takes into account the pivotal role of youth as one of the most crucial elements needed to build knowledge societies. Our constant attempts to spread knowledge and achieve its goals for development can only be seen through the empowerment of youth.”

“The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation and UNDP found each other in 2008 and have been releasing one great product after the other –publications that really document the best thinking on development... With the signing of this agreement, we look forward to witnessing the outcomes of the next decade as this partnership continues to grow”, said the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations.

The event showcased tangible results of UNDP and MBRF partnership in promoting knowledge for development across the Arab States and globally, and explored opportunities for the upcoming decade.

In addition to the 10-year agreement, the event saw the signing of two other agreements, one charting a plan to engage youth from UAE as interns with UNDP, and another, between UNDP and PwC, to produce together the new *Future of Knowledge Foresight Report 2019*, one of the outputs envisioned in the ten-year plan between UNDP and MBRF.

Crisis response: The League of Arab States and the EU cooperate for peacebuilding in the Arab region

July 8, 2019 - The Arab region is heavily burdened by crises and conflicts and capacities among different Member States for crisis response remain variable or uneven. The cross-border nature of many of these man-made crises and natural disasters requires increased regional cooperation. In an effort to ensure effective crisis prevention and management in the Arab states region, since 2012 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States is working to help build up and enhance the operational capacities of the League of Arab States (LAS) to respond to crises and conflicts.

As part of this project funded by the European Union (EU), and with the aim of strengthening cooperation between the two organisations, a selected group of seven staff from the League of Arab States (LAS) Crisis Management Department visited the premises of the European Union in



Brussels to take part in a 3-day study visit on crisis management and prevention. The training touched upon different concepts including early warning indicators, Conflict prevention analysis, stabilisation approach, and Women peace and security with a deep dive into EU external policies on gender.

During the training visit, LAS group also met with EU officials from different departments including the European Union Crisis Room, PRISM (the unit working on “Prevention of Conflicts”), the European Union Civil Planning and Peacekeeping Operations, and the Emergency response unit. Besides this initiative, the project activities for this year include intensive training programs to selected LAS staff for the formation of Civilian Task Forces to be deployed to joint missions in post-conflict settings, and a conference on the role of women in post conflict contexts.

Youth for Youth: UNDP Innovation Camp for Youth Political Participation

As part of the efforts to address the low rates of youth political participation in the region, the UNDP Electoral Support Project for the MENA region held a week-long Social Innovation Camp for Youth political participation in Hammamet, Tunisia from June 9-16. The workshop was organized in partnership with the North-South Center of the Council of Europe as part of the 7th Mediterranean University (MedUni) on Youth and Global Citizenship. The 7th MedUni gathered around 200 participants, from over 50 countries, mainly from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. Participants took part in 11 activities organized by 8 different partners who work on various issues related to this year’s theme of ‘youth and justice: SDG 16’.



The Youth Innovation Camp brought together young women and men from Iraq, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, to develop and share ideas on enhancing youth political participation. "The training provided us with a safe space that pushed and encouraged us to reach our full and highest potential" said Johar Abdulkarim, one of the participants. "We were able to understand different political systems and their characteristics in different Arab countries, with a focus on their electoral processes".

The camp utilized the design-thinking and solution-mapping approach to stimulate innovative ideas and generate new thinking on voter turnout and political participation among the youth. The Innovation Camp was a learning opportunity for the participants who had the chance to come together with other youth from the Arab region, Africa and Europe to be part of a global conversation focused on youth and justice, where they were exposed to global best practices. The activity was co-facilitated by alumni from UNDP’s Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) who offered their experience in the design thinking process. It engaged youth from the YLP network in a rich experience with other civic-minded youth who are involved in their respective communities and come from various backgrounds and skill-sets.

Get to know more about UNDP Social Innovation Camp through this video.

How do you measure PVE? UNDP hosting Unique Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism

On June 18-19 2019, UNDP's Regional Hub for Arab States organized a global forum as part of the organization's efforts to prevent violent extremism (PVE) through development. The *Amman Forum for Measuring, Monitoring and Assessing PVE* gathered some of the world's foremost experts and researchers to discuss how to study and measure radicalization and PVE.

Studying violent extremism is challenging and comes with risks, and gaps remain in understanding violent extremism, its causes, drivers and manifestations. During the Amman Forum, over 70 researchers and practitioners shared first hand experiences and lessons of how these challenges can be overcome. For two days, the forum circled ethics, surveys, risk management, the need to standardize research without losing the context and many other topics.

One of the key challenges identified is bridging the gap between research and programming. Malin Herwig, Regional Peacebuilding Advisor for UNDP's Regional Hub for Arab States noted that "whilst UNDP makes every effort to base our programmes on the latest research, we rely on academia to inform us when this might not be the case." It is important, she noted, to do research at the right levels and to learn from one another in this changing field. Another challenge is how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) from the development sector can benefit broader learning. Multi-sectoral dissemination plan of M&E results and multi-actor involvement in planning PVE projects were two solutions presented.

The forum highlighted how nowadays the online space is becoming important to understand, measure and address violent extremism. Some researchers have increasingly approached the online space for data collection, for instance on questions related to recruitment.

As part of UNDP's effort to use innovation and technologies for better development work, UNDP Regional Hub launched an online platform for designing, monitoring and evaluation of PVE programmes. The website is a unique online resource that targets practitioners in the field of PVE and guides them through developing, monitoring and evaluating their programmes. The main aim of the platform is create and disseminate learning material that will support colleagues and partners in developing robust projects, in order to achieve the highest possible impact.

The Amman Forum was supported by the Government of Canada.

Please see #MeasurePVE for more.

