

PRESS RELEASE



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ALWEHDAH-UNDP PARTNERSHIP FOR “YEMEN OUR HOME” CONNECTS YEMENI DIASPORA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO NEEDY COMMUNITIES IN YEMEN

22 January 2016 – Singapore

The Arab Association Singapore announced a pioneering collaboration to establish regional support for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiative, “Yemen Our Home”.

This partnership will provide an easy platform for Yemeni Diaspora, based in Singapore and surrounding countries, to extend their support to conflict-ridden communities back in their ancestral homeland, Yemen, through UNDP-led projects.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the partnership was signed between Mr. Khalid Basharahil, President of The Arab Association Singapore, and Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, UNDP Country Director for Yemen. Ms. Tanaka officiated at the launch, which was attended by around 100 members of the local Yemeni Diaspora on 21 Jan 2016 at The Arab Association Singapore’s clubhouse. The MOU specifies the intent of mutual collaboration to promote Yemen our Home projects of interest to the Yemeni Diaspora in South East Asia and fundraise for their implementation.

The Yemen Humanitarian Crisis

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen has reached a catastrophic scale. According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), over 84% (21.1 million) of Yemen’s 25 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs like food, water, healthcare and shelter.

Yemen's public services have collapsed, and the prices of basic items such as food, fuel, and cooking gas have soared. More than 50% of Yemenis are facing severe food insecurity and malnutrition. Since March 2015, 2.5 million Yemenis have been internally displaced, over 2,700 civilians killed, and hundreds of thousands have fled to other countries.

The protracted conflict is rolling back Yemen's human development achievements, widening gender disparity and undermining the rule of law and access to justice. Prior to the war, Yemen

was already ranked 154 in the Human Development Index, and had the highest levels of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy of the Arab States region.

"Yemen's strength lies in strong family, community and regional ties, even across borders. The current crisis is destroying these systems as income and assets are depleted, society is torn and the economy is eroded," says Ms. Tanaka. "Families need urgent help to get back on their feet and rebuild their lives and country. UNDP greatly appreciates the partnership with The Arab Association Singapore (Al-Wehdah). This is our first partnership with the Yemeni Diaspora for Yemen Our Home," she added.

Yemen Our Home

Yemen Our Home is a crowdfunding platform supported by the UNDP that links the Yemeni Diaspora with projects targeting affected communities. The Yemeni Diaspora is an important and untapped asset for this realization, and UNDP, through Yemen Our Home, seeks to engage them for the future of Yemen and to alleviate hardships of vulnerable communities.

Yemen Our Home will be articulated into three main campaigns to support the most urgent recovery needs, namely "Green Yemen" (rebuilding and rehabilitating public and socio-economic infrastructure by installing alternative energy and solid waste management systems), "Productive Yemen" (reviving businesses and building the skills required for impact and sustainability), and "Inclusive Yemen" (economically empowering women for self-reliance and improve midwifery services as social businesses).

The Yemeni Diaspora

The Yemeni Diaspora plays an important role in supporting their families back home. Encouraged by trade, Yemenis have continually sought better opportunities abroad. It is estimated that 10 million Yemenis have settled in over 40 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and North America. Of this migration, Arab migrants to South East Asia are in majority descending from Hadramaut Governorate in Yemen.

In addition to the approximately US\$3.4 billion in remittances that have annually been going through official channels, it is estimated that a significant amount of remittances are transferred through informal networks due to the poor penetration of financial services in the country. However, a recent UNDP survey on the impact of the war on livelihoods estimates that Yemeni families' access to international remittances have dropped by half since the crisis erupted in March 2015. This represents a loss of an important source of income for millions affected by the conflict.

Dr. Saalaldeen Talib, Goodwill Ambassador of UNDP's Yemen Our Home initiative announced that "the partnership between the Arab Association Singapore and UNDP Yemen represents a milestone in the efforts to engage the Diaspora in supporting people in their country of origin. Singapore has played that part in different times during the past century. There is huge potential and opportunity to develop this partnership to achieve real impact on lives of people in conflict-stricken Yemen".

“Descendants from the Hadrami Diaspora in Singapore have a special connection with their motherland. The Arab Association is honoured to be handpicked by UNDP as the South East Asian partner for this important initiative”, added Mr. Khalid Basharahil, President of The Arab Association Singapore.

About The Arab Association Singapore

The Arab Association Singapore, also known as Al-Wehdah Al-Arabiah Bi Singhafura, became an officially registered voluntary organisation on 11 November 1946 with the primary objective of promoting and enhancing Islamic virtues and education, as well as the use of Arabic Language locally. As a social entity binding the local Arab community, the Association has also taken on the responsibility of promoting cordial relationships and interaction among Arabs and other ethnicities in Singapore through educational, cultural, social, arts and sports activities. This is achieved through close co-operation with various government organizations including the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY), as well as affiliation with various local institutions, including the National Heritage Board, Yayasan Mendaki, Middle East Institute (National University of Singapore), amongst others.

In April 2014, The Arab Association Singapore launched the Alwehdah Bursary, which provides support to financially-needy Arab students studying in local universities.

To read more about UNDP Yemen’s work during the ongoing conflict, [click here](#).

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You can follow Yemen Our Home on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

For more information on the Arab Association Singapore, visit www.alwehdah.org

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