

## **RESIDENT COORDINATOR ANNUAL REPORT (RCAR) 2009 – YEMEN**

### **Introduction:**

2009 was a successively challenging year for Yemen on development, humanitarian, political and security fronts. The 6<sup>th</sup> war in the Northern governorate in Sadaa started in August and continued until 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010; secessionist protests accelerated in the south and at times resulting in violent demonstrations; tribal grievances increased mainly because of lack of services; piracy around the Gulf of Aden surged; number of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers from the horn of Africa increased; terrorism and security concerns took an international turn in December when a Nigerian allegedly trained in Yemen was caught in an aborted attempt to blow an American flight. The incident led the government to launch military operations against “Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula” (AQAP) strongholds in the country. While Yemen ranking on HD index slightly improved, MDGs remained off track with an overall bleak economic situation with a double digit fiscal deficit and dwindling oil revenues; high unemployment and income poverty; IMR and MMR remained high while the country ranked lowest on the global gender index. In addition to chronic development deficits, the country faced humanitarian challenges with an estimated over 250,000 IDPs as a result of the 6<sup>th</sup> Sadaa war, over 160,000 refugees registered at the reception centres, nearly seven million food insecure households and one of the highest prevalence of malnutrition in the world. Chronically low development coupled with new challenges led to the first UN Policy Committee meeting on Yemen convened by the SG in October 09 and an international meeting called by the Prime Minister of UK in Jan 2010 leading to the establishment of Friends of Yemen and two working groups, one on rule of law and another on economic development and governance.

Continuation of Phase 3 and non-family duty station seriously affected our ability to attract competent new staff and in addition lack of donor interest in funding multilateral system in Yemen posed huge challenges for the UNCT to manage increased expectations on all fronts. Throughout the year the RC Office did not have a regular Coordination Officer, due to lack of funds for a fixed term contract following the new Human Resources’ Policy Reform of UNDP, and relied on a series of staff on Detail released from Mozambique, Turkey and Sudan RC Offices. Departure of the senior economist in the RC office in July 2009, who could not be replaced because of lack of funds, hampered UNCT technical capacity for policy advocacy and donor coordination. While the year was very challenging, collaborative spirit and joint efforts helped the UNCT focused on results and making significant contribution by re-positioning itself for a scaled up humanitarian response and coordination; launching of new human development initiatives to help achieve MDGs and in conducting a mid- term review of UNDAF. To support the RC/UNCT, OCHA deployed a series of SURGE in the RC office and finally opened its office in October while UNFPA placed a gender expert in the RC office to support the UNCT in mainstreaming gender, both in the development and humanitarian response.

### **UN Reform, UNDAF and MDGs:**

The GoY prepared the first MDG report in 2004. Given that the new Four Year National Development Plan for Poverty Reduction (DPPR) is due in 2010, the UNCT advocated for the preparation of the second National MDG report so it could also serve basis for the 4<sup>th</sup> DPPR. The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation initiated the process of developing the 2<sup>nd</sup> national MDG report with overall support from UNDP and the HQ selected Yemen as one of the ten countries for the UN global MDG report for the 2010 September MDG summit to be convened by the SG. Unlike in 2004 when the

process of report preparation suffered from inadequate data, in 2009 the process benefitted from results of monitoring of DPPR by the Central Statistical Organization using the DevInfo and several sectoral analyses conducted by the Line Ministries, many supported by various UN agencies. UNICEF led the support to institutionalize DevInfo to monitor implementation of the 2006-2010 DPPR. A cohort of trained resource persons for DevInfo was created by training 124 officials from 10 Ministries at central and sub-national levels and several staff from UNFPA, UNICEF and the CSOs were trained in the latest Version 6 of DevInfo. Sustained capacity development efforts and advocacy led to a Prime Minister's decree (no. 339) issued at the end of 2009 calling on the line Ministries to create sectoral databases using the DevInfo platform at central as well as local levels which will go a long way in regular monitoring of the results. To support in the implementation of Paris Declaration, UNDP supported the formulation of a National Aid Coordination policy and establishment of Development Assistance Database (DAD) to track aid flows. Efforts are now underway to create an interface between the DAD, Public Investment Plan (PIP) and DevInfo to reinforce links between aid flows, MDGs and monitoring results of development assistance, all three important indicators of the Paris Declaration.

To scale up efforts to achieve the MDGs, UNCT worked jointly and launched several new programmes such as support to diversify economy to non-oil based and generate pro-poor employment (UNDP, IFAD); a joint programme on labour statistics which will also contribute in manpower planning (UNDP/ILO); UNICEF and WHO provided coordinated support to national polio and measles campaigns as a result of which measles cases have dramatically dropped and it is highly likely that Yemen will be declared polio free in 2010. Harmonized approach was instrumental in attaining all targets of round 3 of the HIV/AIDS grant of the GFTAM, for which UNDP was designated principal recipient in 2009 and UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO are sub-recipients. WFP and UNICEF continued joint efforts to provide supplementary nutrition to the under five years old malnourished children and through school feeding programme targeting girls but also benefiting the entire family thus also encouraging girls enrolment in schools. Through the UN thematic group chaired by UNICEF and UN Joint Team chaired by UNAIDS, the UN system continued support to the national strategic framework on HIV/AIDS prevention and control and effective participation of PLWH association in scaling up of universal access to treatment. "We Care" initiative continued with learning strategy on HIV/AIDS to promote awareness among UN staff was implemented in UN Agencies. A joint assessment of food and nutrition was conducted by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP among the refugee population leading to a joint plan of action of support. To give further boost to achievement of MDGs, the UNCT will jointly support localization of MDGs by scaling up the Basic Development Needs Programme led by WHO and the joint UNDP/UNCDF local governance programme.

The UNDAF Core Group led by UNDP with four UNDAF Outcome Groups, chaired by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP continued. So far the UNCT has been conducting joint annual UNDAF (2007-2011) reviews, however, given the various new challenges impacting human development in general and MDGs in specific, the UNCT decided to conduct a mid-term review to take stock of the results and review possible course corrections, especially to factor conflict sensitivity and climate change, in the remaining period of UNDAF. The UNCT decision also corresponded with the SG decision after the Policy Committee meeting in October. The UNDAF core group/ outcome groups with assistance from two consultants funded by the RC budget helped the UNCT in conducting an ambitious MTR. The UNDAF/MTR findings indicate that despite several challenges such as security phase 3 as well as unexpected emergencies also requiring UN attention, the UNCT achieved some crucial results in building individual, institutional and society level capacities under all the four Outcomes. While conflict prevention was not an explicit objective of the UNDAF, implicitly all four outcomes are to contribute in the prevention. The UNCT delivered nearly 75% of the committed resources and in addition mobilized and

delivered over USD 150 Million for humanitarian assistance. Given the huge and chronic development deficits, all regional and other international partners urgently need to scale up their development assistance, especially by bridging the huge financing gap to reduce poverty and other MDGs related programmes and help increase the absorptive capacity in Yemen. A UNOPS mission was invited to explore possible ways to assist the government and others to accelerate delivery and build implementation capacity and received a positive initial response from the government. The dialogue will continue in 2010.

The regular donor coordination forum to follow up on the CG and National Reform Agenda co-chaired by the UNRC and WB continued all through the year, although the meetings could not be held every month due to inadequate capacity in the RC office as described before. In response to the growing need for better analysis of conflict and development, a roundtable on conflict and development was established chaired by RR/RC in October to promote information sharing with donors and NGOs and in addition a first ever national stakeholder workshop for participatory analysis was held funded by UNDP. The analysis will not only serve as basis for new initiatives but will also input in the new CCA/UNDAF cycle. The UNCT was also fully engaged in providing inputs for the Policy Committee meeting as well as for the 2010 London Meeting on Yemen and the RC was part of the UN delegation.

### **Humanitarian Response:**

Yemen has been facing crisis on an on-going basis but since 2008 it has been facing multiple crisis of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sadaa war; floods in Hadramout, food insecurity as a result of triple F global crises; etc. The RC has been coordinating the humanitarian response with support of the UNEPRT led by WFP and OCHA supported SURGE capacity in the RC office. Except for a flash appeal for the flood response in December 2008, the UN agencies mainly relied on CERF funding. While the humanitarian assistance for flood victims has come to an end, UNDP and IOM are assisting in early recovery activities, mainly to create livelihoods.

To take stock of the situation and how to be better prepared to respond to possible crisis scenarios, in 2009 a UNCT workshop was organized facilitated by the OCHA Regional Office. It was decided to prepare a Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) for 2010 and a HCT and eight clusters were set up to facilitate an inclusive and coordinated process, including the international and national NGOs. However, while the YHRP was being prepared, the 6<sup>th</sup> Sadaa war started in August, immediately resulting in over 150,000 IDPs scattered in different Governorates and requiring the UN Humanitarian Agencies to scale up their operations. To meet the needs of the IDPs a flash appeal for USD 23 Million was launched to cover the period till end of December and received nearly 90% funding. In addition, the HCT also successfully prepared the 2010 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (YHRP) for a total of US\$ 177 Million addressing the humanitarian and early recovery needs of nearly 1.4 million people which was launched globally by the USG of Humanitarian Affairs on 30 November 2009 in Geneva. The global launch was also attended by a high level government delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister of Yemen who is also the Chair of the High Level Relief Committee. In conjunction with the global launch, a high level special side event on Yemen was organized with the help of OCHA to brief the Member States on the situation and the needs and the briefing was provided by the GoY delegation, Assistant Commissioner for Refugees and the UNRC. The global launch was followed by a local launch and donor briefings. Despite high level advocacy by the UNCT and from Geneva and New York, the YHRP has not received much attention and so far remains only 20% funded. To support the NGOs for rapid response, consultations were started to also establish an Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for them.

OHCA established its office in Yemen in October and the RC was formally designated as Humanitarian Coordinator in December. The eight Clusters have been meeting regularly and these were globally activated by the USG in January 2010. While the UNEPRT chaired by WFP continued to function for most of 2009, the mechanism was replaced by ICCM for inter-cluster coordination chaired by OCHA. The Yemeni Government was swift in establishing a high-level inter-ministerial mechanism to coordinate relief activities and also created a special senior position to coordinate IDP affairs. Since September, regular weekly coordination meetings have been taking place between the humanitarian community led by the RC/HC and the high level relief committee chaired by its Vice Chair to address policy as well as operational issues with regards to IDP assistance. The UNCT had series of high level meetings to appeal and advocate for humanitarian principles, localized temporary ceasefire and improved security for aid workers. In addition, weekly coordination meetings with the ICRC and monthly HCT meetings have been regularly held. The UNCT benefited from high level mission of USG for Humanitarian Affairs in October to raise international profile of humanitarian crisis in Yemen as well as missions of Assistant Commissioner of Refugees, Director of OCHA, and the WFP and UNICEF Regional Directors. With the announcement of ceasefire in Sadaa on 11<sup>th</sup> February, humanitarian community is preparing to visit Sadaa and initiate a rapid needs assessment for humanitarian as well as development needs.

### **Human Rights:**

Yemen is signatory to all Human Rights conventions except one. However, implementation capacity is very weak and in general public awareness of universal rights in the country is also very low. While there is a Ministry of Human Rights and some NGOs are active, an independent national mechanism to promote and protect human rights is needed, UNCT together with other partners has been advocating for such a mechanism. Some progress was made in 2009 by engaging the Ministry in concerted dialogue. An ambitious exercise to review laws and align with international conventions started with support from UNDP and for the first time a coordination group which includes NGOs, donors and UN agencies was established and preparations for a national strategy for human rights initiated. The mid-term review of UNDAF highlighted that the UN support has been Human Rights Based and Agencies have made efforts in training staff in HRBA. Together with other partners, UN has been actively advocating for an independent Human Rights agency. UNHCR is working closely with the GoY, through NCAR, to help Yemen meet its international obligation under the 1951 convention and 1967 protocol and other related human right instruments, which call for the Government to establish a national asylum system. A mixed migration task force was set up and co-chaired by UNHCR and IOM to enhance protection of new arrivals, refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Yemen. UNICEF is continuing to follow up on media reports of use of children in armed conflict. During the war in Sadaa, UNCT as well as HQ repeatedly advocated for the implementation of the international humanitarian law to provide assistance without discrimination as well as protection of civilians affected by war. Following the SG decisions in the Policy Committee meeting that OHCHR should deploy a Human Rights Advisor to support the UNCTs, a joint UNCT/OHCHR mission undertook a review of gaps in UN support and capacity. The dialogue and consultations to explore deployment of Human Rights Advisor will continue in 2010.

### **Gender and women empowerment:**

While the Government of Yemen has signed the CEDAW without any reservations, there are significant social and cultural barriers that limit the full scope of implementation. Given the serious gender deficits in the Country, one of the four UNDAF outcomes is devoted to gender equality and an UNDAF Outcome Group chaired by UNFPA helps the UNCT in monitoring progress. A UNFPA funded full time GenCap was placed in the RC office and helped in gender mainstreaming also in the humanitarian response plan

as well as the flash appeal. Lobbying for age of marriage for girls and women's quota in the parliament dominated advocacy efforts. Women's organizations and groups undertook sustained lobbying for a 15% quota in the parliament, UNDP with other partners is supporting capacity building to increase the number of women candidates and well-informed women voters. The UNCT helped lobby with the women activists to institute minimum age of marriage for girls and the government brought a bill to this effect in the parliament, this hugely controversial issue divided the public opinion and some Religious leaders even issued fatwa and staged a demonstration in the parliament. However, the issue is still under discussion. The UNCT has been working together on violence against women and prepared a joint proposal but unfortunately it did not receive funding from the UN Trust Fund.

### **UN Joint communications and Operations:**

The UN Communications Group (UNCG), with assistance from UNIC continued supporting the UNCT in conducting advocacy using the UN Days and in producing the UN Monthly Newsletters. As the UN continues to remain "low profile" because of security reasons, a selected number of UN days were celebrated as high profile events in particular in 2009 the focus was on the Human Rights Day, Women's Day, International Poverty Day, Water day and Refugee day. The UNCT supported the National CSOs Alliance in launching the Stand Up Against Poverty Campaign 2009 which included public awareness and attracted over 20,000 people to stand in solidarity against poverty in different governorates and a TV symposium on poverty was organized between the government and Children's parliament. In addition the UNCG played an important role in preparing key messages to advocate for the humanitarian needs and situation.

The OMT was chaired by UNHCR and it continued to support the UNCT in managing the common services, helping in conducting the surveys for staff survey and designation of new duty stations as well as advising on new ideas. In 2009, two new common services were introduced, a fever clinic for HINI was established and UN radio room capacity was expanded to ensure staff safety and security.

### **Staff Safety and Security:**

In 2009, UN continued to be in phase 3 and observing light foot print. The SMT met every week to review the phase, mitigation measures and security situation. In general security in the North, because of the war, and in the south, because of secessionist movement, required constant monitoring. The ASMT in Aden also met every week and established good communication with the government security officials. The DSS head of office post was upgraded to Senior Country Security Advisor and an additional field security officer post for the North and five staff to manage SIOC were approved by New York. All UN Agencies made tremendous progress in implementing mitigation measures as per the action plan for phase 3, consequently all agencies could increase staff foot print in their main office buildings. With the humanitarian crisis, a CERF funding for USD 300,000 was mobilized, the DSS was included in the HCT and, at the same time, DSS started to provide separate monthly security briefing to INGOs. While coordination and dialogue with the government vastly improved, long standing issues such as release of communication equipment remained unresolved. The UNCT/ SMT initiated Programme Criticality analysis using the methodology prepared by the IASMT. All Agencies completed the analysis and are awaiting their HQ endorsement.

The outbreak of HINI in 2009 required SMT/UNCT to be prepared. A task force led by WHO was established to advise the SMT, A HINI fever clinic for the UN staff was set up with adequate Tamiflu stocks and a joint team of WHO, UNAIDS and UN Doctor conducted staff awareness in all Agencies.

## **Priorities for 2010**

The key priorities for UNCT will be to implement the recommendation of the UNDAF mid - term review; support the government in the preparing 4<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan; conduct needs assessment in post conflict Sadaa; start the preparation process for the next cycle of CCA/UNDAF and to seek HQ support for enhanced RC office capacity.