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OFID Quarterly

THE OPEC FUND
FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



Zero hunger by 2030: *The not-so-impossible dream*

Ministerial Council holds 37th session

OFID gifts sculpture to Vienna

Child of Play exhibit highlights plight of refugee children

OFID and UNDP launch Arab Development Portal

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Uniting against Poverty

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Hunger: More than a moral outrage

The statistics are shocking, so utterly appalling as to be beyond comprehension: 780 million people deprived of sufficient nourishment; three million under-fives dead from hunger in just one year; and, 66 million primary school children sent to class every day on empty stomachs.

Tragically, this is not the trailer for some post-apocalyptic sci-fi blockbuster, but hard truths about the world we live in.

And the sting in the tail? The unpalatable fact that 1.3bn tonnes, or 30 percent, of the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally every year—enough to feed the 780 million hungry four times over.

Factor in the precious resources that are squandered in the process—water, land, energy, labor and capital—and an even grimmer picture emerges.

Little wonder then that the goal of “zero hunger” sits alongside that of “no poverty” at the top of the 2030 Agenda for Development.

The challenges, however, are immense and deeply complex. It’s not just a question of producing enough food. It’s about efficient distribution networks and value chains; the smart management of limited natural resources; and the effective mobilization of all stakeholders, from governments to civil society and the private sector.

And that's just scraping the surface.

The fact remains, the problem of hunger is so entrenched that it has taken over twenty years to reduce the number of undernourished in developing regions from 991 million to 780 million.

Granted, the figures look better as a percentage of the total population—23.3 percent in 1990–1992 compared with 12.9 percent in 2014–2016. But there is no ignoring the bottom line: far too many people's lives are blighted by the physiological and emotional impact of ill nourishment.

Which begs the question: is the total elimination of hunger possible by 2030 ... or just pie in the sky?

To OFID's mind, the answer is clear. No stone must be left unturned to ensure proper nutrition for each and every inhabitant of our shared planet. It's a challenge—one that will require innovation, financial resources and political will—but it can and must be done.

For OFID, the issue of food security has been a key focus of our operations for four decades. Over the years, we've channeled billions of dollars into rural infrastructure—from irrigation systems and electricity networks to storage facilities and roads—to support the production, processing and distribution of produce.

With the bulk of food being grown by family farming, we've provided technical assistance, capacity building and credit to small producers to help them develop sustainable cultivation methods and improve the quality and quantity of their yields.

And we've worked to integrate the might of the private sector into value chains to give small farmers better access to markets—both domestic and export—and a higher, fairer price for their produce.

When needs must, we've also stepped in to support the work of organizations like the World Food Program, providing funding for school feeding programs or for the distribution of emergency rations to famine-struck regions.

Through hard-won experience, we've come to recognize the importance of an integrated approach to food security, fully embracing the notion that success will depend on all elements being assessed and tackled as an organic whole.

This is why our strategic plan for 2016–2025 has as its pillar the so-called energy–water–food nexus, supported by transportation as an enabling component. Already in 2015, we channeled US\$726m, or more than 60 percent of our total commitments for the year, to those four areas. These efforts will continue and intensify, as we work with our partners toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

However, as well as practical action where it's needed, the international community also has to work at changing mentalities in the industrialized world, where food waste every year equals almost as much as the entire net production of sub-Saharan Africa (222 million vs. 230 million tonnes).

We must banish the idea that aesthetics is a valid reason for throwing away “imperfect” produce. And we must educate consumers as to the hidden value of food: the precious and often dwindling resources used to grow it, process it, package it, and deliver it—sometimes from one side of the world to the other.

For, at the end of the day, hunger in a world of plenty is not just a moral outrage; for millions it is a veritable death sentence. And who would wish that on another innocent human being? ■

Zero hunger by 2030: *The not-so-impossible dream*



Food security is a key component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Achieving it, however, is a challenge so complex that some skeptics see it as a bridge too far. Not necessarily, say the experts who spoke to the *Quarterly*.

BY STEVE HUGHES



Sustainable Development Goal 2 sets out to: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.” But food security is a complex challenge, linked to all manner of other development issues such as health, the environment and economics. With an estimated 800 million hungry people in the world today (meaning that one in nine doesn’t get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life), hunger and malnutrition are the number one risk to health worldwide. So how realistic is it to think we’ll be able to end hunger by 2030?

The statistics are alarming. The aforementioned headline figure of 800 million is relatively small when the quality of food is considered as well as quantity. World Food Program (WFP) Chief Economist Arif Husain says the number of poorly nourished people is more like two billion. Another way of looking at it is that every day, 21,000 people die because of hunger-related problems, and about one-third of this number are children under five years of age.

“As an economist, I have to put a value on this sort of thing,” says Husain. “The cost to the global economy is about 5 percent of global GDP. About US\$3.5tr per year—or US\$500 per person, per year—is lost in productivity and direct healthcare costs. Another way of saying this is that individuals lose more than 10 percent of their lifetime earnings because of food insecurity. In Africa, it’s particularly bad. The incremental socioeconomic cost ranges from 1.9 to 16.9 percent of GDP, depending on the country.”

A predictable map

Predictably, an overwhelming majority of the most vulnerable two billion live in developing countries: “Let me give you the map,” says Kanayo Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). “Our focus is very simple. More than three-quarters of the world’s poor are in developing countries. They live in rural areas and their source of livelihood is smallholder agriculture. If you’re going to eliminate hunger and poverty, go to where the problem is.”

It seems ironic that the people struggling with food security the most are the very people growing the food. But these people, says Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), are the poorest of the poor. They have little access to finance, to infrastructure or to food. “These people have been left out of the Green Revolution and are extremely vulnerable



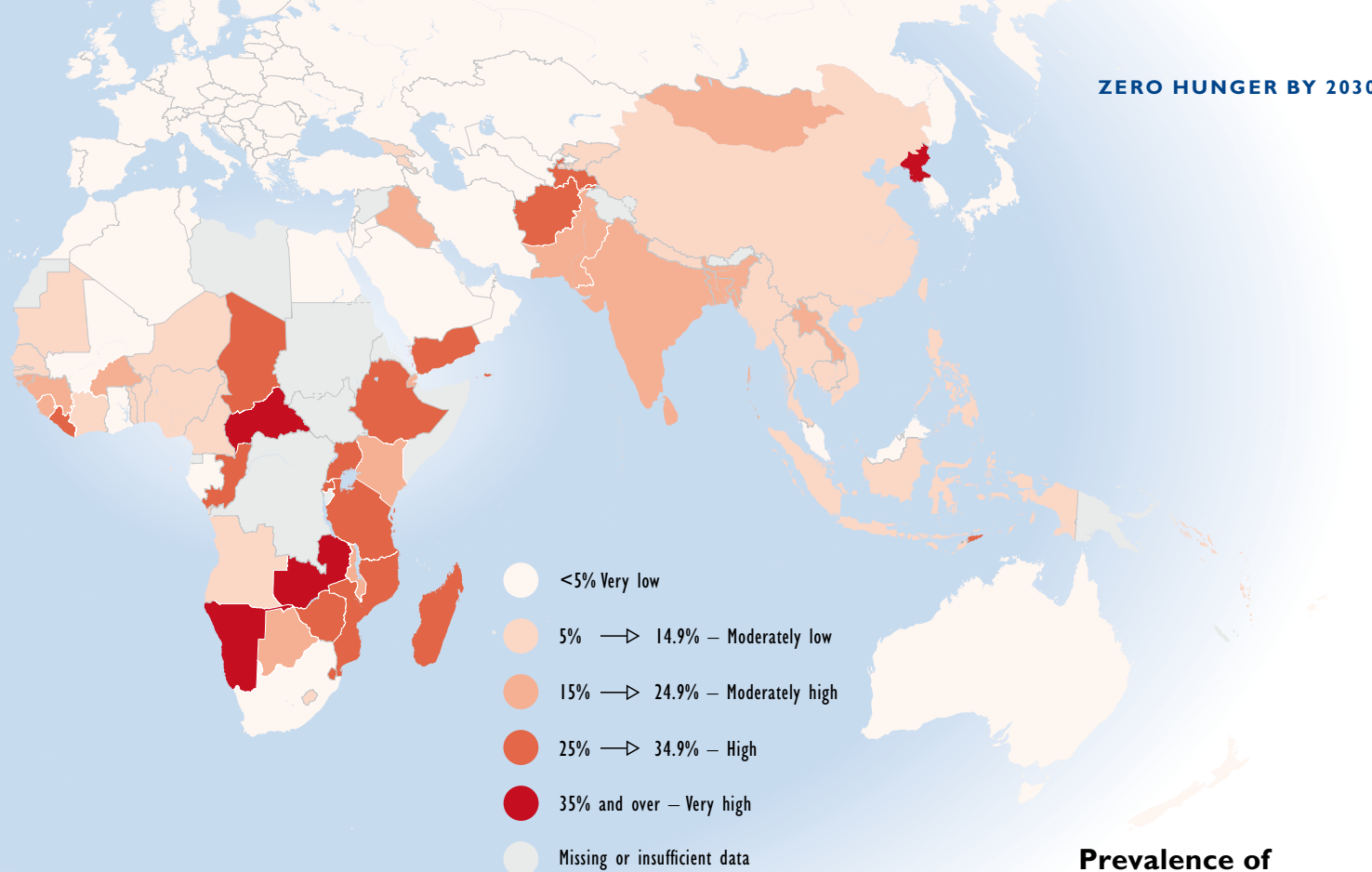
Source: FAO, 2015, FAO Statistics Division, Hunger Map, <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/en/>. Reproduced with permission.

and marginalized. The Millennium Development Goals have failed them. We’ve failed them.”

The WFP’s Husain agrees: “Their biggest constraint is not necessarily yield or productivity, but the ability to ready their produce for, and move it to, market. There is a lack of road and rail links, of processing and storage ability.” These people have no purchasing power, he explains, so there is nothing to generate economic activity in these areas: no employment, no growth and very little money to buy food.

So the target to end hunger and achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030 seems as far away as ever. Not necessarily, says Axel Gruber, Chief Operations Officer of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC): “There is a contribution being made by the big and by the small. The CFC, with relatively small interventions of up to US\$1.5m per project is small, but the interventions reach the farmers who are fighting malnutrition and poverty. We estimate that our projects this year would make a difference for over 100,000 farmers in the most vulnerable areas; we are making a difference.”

The CFC works with farmers and communities to improve agricultural production methods, support the acquisition of new land, increase the productivity of existing land and



Prevalence of undernourishment in the population
(percent) in 2014–2016

more, intervening in technology and along the value chain to improve the delivery of produce to traders and cooperatives. The CFC even helps with marketing to improve potential sale outcomes.

A distinct possibility

The WFP, on the other hand, is the largest humanitarian agency in the world. In any given year, it assists between 80 and 90 million people in 70 to 80 countries. Although totally voluntarily funded, it has revenues of between US\$5bn and US\$6bn per year and deals with everything from emergencies caused by climatic shocks to building resilience to disasters in marginalized areas. It works on an entirely different scale to the CFC, but the WFP's Husain echoes Gruber's cautious optimism: "Zero hunger in less than 15 years? Yes it is possible. But it's not going to be easy."

IFAD's Nwanze shares this optimism too: "For sure, achieving the SDGs by 2030 is quite ambitious. But they represent a rather unprecedented opportunity to practically reduce extreme poverty and hunger, if not eliminate it. We *have* to be ambitious and I believe we already have the answers. The data shows the world is

producing more food than we need to feed our populations. The problem is distribution, access, loss and waste."

Nwanze is referring to the four billion tonnes of food produced globally every year. "This is more than enough to feed everyone on the planet today and in 2030," says the WFP's Husain. But about 30 percent of this is wasted. What is interesting, he argues, is to see how this waste occurs. In poor countries, food is wasted before it reaches the plate; in production and processing. In developed countries, it's wasted on the plate (or in the fridge or supermarket). But it's wasted for the same reason, explains Husain: "Economically, the food is of little value. In developed countries, we spend little of our income on food, so if it goes bad in the fridge, no one worries. In developing countries, since farmers don't have sufficient access to markets and because food is not valued as it should be, they don't process it well enough."

Even more interesting (and concerning) is the opportunity cost of this overproduction. Producing it consumes about 250 cubic km of water; that's about three times the volume of Lake Geneva, says Husain. And not just this, but it also takes up 1.4bn hectares of land; more than a quarter of the world's total arable area. ►

Undernourishment around the world, 1990–92 to 2014–16

Number of undernourished (millions) and prevalence (%) of undernourishment

	1990–92		2000–02		2005–07		2010–12		2014–16*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
WORLD	1,010.6	18.6	929.6	14.9	942.3	14.3	820.7	11.8	794.6	10.9
DEVELOPED REGIONS	20.0	<5.0	21.2	<5.0	15.4	<5.0	15.7	<5.0	14.7	<5.0
DEVELOPING REGIONS	990.7	23.3	908.4	18.2	926.9	17.3	805.0	14.1	779.9	12.9
Africa	181.7	27.6	210.2	25.4	213.0	22.7	218.5	20.7	232.5	20.0
Northern Africa	6.0	<5.0	6.6	<5.0	7.0	<5.0	5.1	<5.0	4.3	<5.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	175.7	33.2	203.6	30.0	206.0	26.5	205.7	24.1	220.0	23.2
Eastern Africa	103.9	47.2	121.6	43.1	122.5	37.8	118.7	33.7	124.2	31.5
Middle Africa	24.2	33.5	42.4	44.2	47.7	43.0	53.0	41.5	58.9	41.3
Southern Africa	3.1	7.2	3.7	7.1	3.5	6.2	3.6	6.1	3.2	5.2
Western Africa	44.6	24.2	35.9	15.0	32.3	11.8	30.4	9.7	33.7	9.6
Asia	741.9	23.6	636.5	17.6	665.5	17.3	546.9	13.5	511.7	12.1
Caucasus and Central Asia	9.6	14.1	10.9	15.3	8.4	11.3	7.1	8.9	5.8	7.0
Eastern Asia	295.4	23.2	221.7	16.0	217.6	15.2	174.7	11.8	145.1	9.6
South-Eastern Asia	137.5	30.6	117.6	22.3	103.2	18.3	72.5	12.1	60.5	9.6
Southern Asia	291.2	23.9	272.3	18.5	319.1	20.1	274.2	16.1	281.4	15.7
Western Asia	8.2	6.4	14.0	8.6	17.2	9.3	18.4	8.8	18.9	8.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	66.1	14.7	60.4	11.4	47.1	8.4	38.3	6.4	34.3	5.5
Caribbean	8.1	27.0	8.2	24.4	8.3	23.5	7.3	19.8	7.5	19.8
Latin America	58.0	13.9	52.1	10.5	38.8	7.3	31.0	5.5	26.8	<5.0
Central America	12.6	10.7	11.8	8.3	11.6	7.6	11.3	6.9	11.4	6.6
South America	45.4	15.1	40.3	11.4	27.2	7.2	ns	<5.0	ns	<5.0
Oceania	1.0	15.7	1.3	16.5	1.3	15.4	1.3	13.5	1.4	14.2

*Data for 2014–16 refers to provisional estimates.

Source pages 8 and 9:
FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2015. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015. Meeting the 2015 international hunger targets: taking stock of uneven progress.* Rome, FAO. Reproduced with permission.

◀ The resulting CO₂ from the overproduction is equivalent to 3.3bn tonnes—the third biggest emission after China and US, he explains. “So this is not about ‘by wasting this food, people cannot eat it’. What we really save if we prevent this overproduction is water, the environment and the potential for future generations.”

ICBA’s Elouafi says that limited natural resources are making the issue of food security more complex. “When we started the whole development agenda in the 1960s, we didn’t really factor in the limited nature of natural resources. The Green Revolution was based on high input—high use of fertilizers, a lot of water—and intense methods.” However, she says, we now know that water is one of highest risk factors in the food security issue. By 2025, two-thirds of the world will be living in regions that are water scarce: “We can’t keep focusing on arable land, or on a few crops that aren’t nutritious. We can’t keep doing it the same way.”

Marginal gains

It’s because of this that ICBA is focusing on marginal environments—environments with biophysical and social constraints that are extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The people who live in these places are ‘socially marginalized’ and contribute to the world’s 800 million hungry. “Agricultural land is not enough,” says Elouafi. “It wouldn’t give us enough food given the increasing population.” ICBA is helping marginalized farmers to diversify their crops to improve nutrition and prevent further land degradation. Elouafi explains that it’s about getting the right crop to the right environment: “We screen hundreds of genotypes and look for crops that do well in marginalized environments. Several of these species are orphan crops that many people don’t know about—they’re not famous crops.”

ICBA works with national programs and helps farmers produce seeds for other local farmers. It focuses on the water ‘problem’ too, but from a novel perspective: “We’re increasingly interested in expanding the water supply: considering different water sources for agricultural purposes to give us more choices,” says Elouafi. “There’s treated waste water, for example, or using drainage water and reusing it from crop to fish to crop. And then there’s seawater—can we find crops that can be grown with high salinity?”

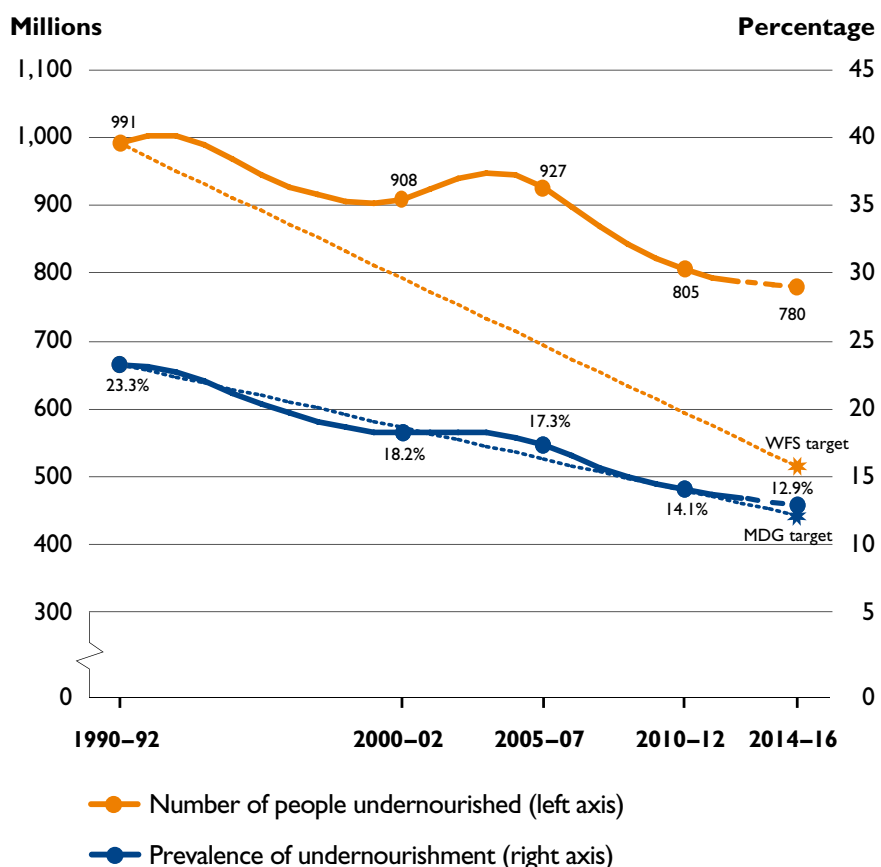
ICBA already has a few species that grow in these harsh conditions—the famous Salicornia, which can be used as a salad, a forage, or as a

biofuel, particularly in the aviation industry. Similarly, ICBA looks to improve soil by using amendment technologies. It may use different composting methodologies, for example, which can involve using waste from local households.

ICBA often works with a country’s national programs to bring its expertise to bear, a way of working that the CFC’s Gruber is all too aware of: “Even though we want to focus on very poorest, it’s often difficult to reach them,” he says. “You need an institutional framework to direct things. We reach the very poor only wherever there is a good entrepreneur or a functioning cooperative that can build up knowledge. Wherever this institutional linkage is not present, we cannot approach the very poor themselves.”

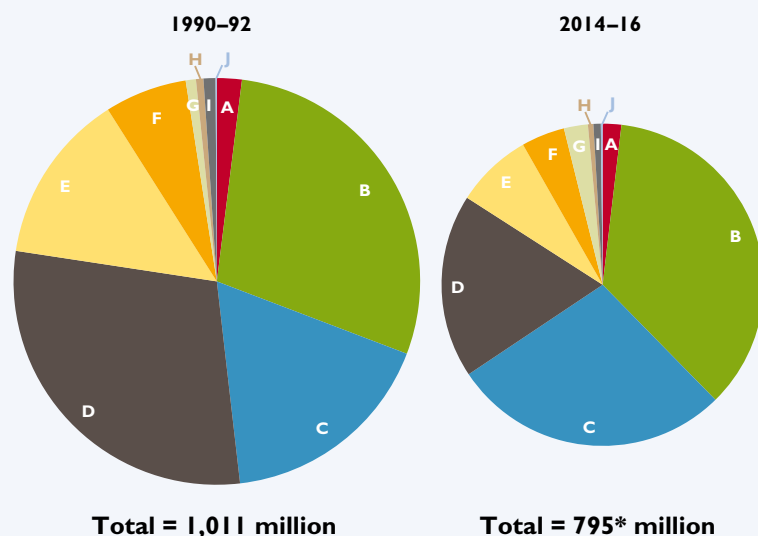
For the WFP’s Husain, food security will only become a reality by 2030 if two interrelated challenges are overcome: there must be more national ownership of the problem—countries and government themselves must be at the center; and investment must be directed directly into grassroots agriculture, rural development and human capital. “Rural infrastructure matters,” he says. “If there’s investment, then a ▶

The trajectory of undernourishment in developing regions: actual and projected progress towards the MDG and World Food Summit targets



Note: Data for 2014–16 refers to provisional estimates.

The changing distribution of hunger in the world: numbers and shares of undernourished people by region, 1990–92 and 2014–16



	Number (millions)		Regional share (%)	
	1990–92	2014–16	1990–92	2014–16
A Developed regions	20	15	2.0	1.8
B Southern Asia	291	281	28.8	35.4
C Sub-Saharan Africa	176	220	17.4	27.7
D Eastern Asia	295	145	29.2	18.3
E South-Eastern Asia	138	61	13.6	7.6
F Latin America and the Caribbean	66	34	6.5	4.3
G Western Asia	8	19	0.8	2.4
H Northern Africa	6	4	0.6	0.5
I Caucasus and Central Asia	10	6	0.9	0.7
J Oceania	1	1	0.1	0.2
Total	1,011	795*	100	100

Notes: The areas of the pie charts are proportional to the total number of undernourished in each period. Data for 2014–16 refers to provisional estimates. All figures are rounded.
*Includes data for Sudan, which is not included in the figure for sub-Saharan Africa, following the partition of the country when South Sudan became an independent state in 2011.

Source: FAO, IFAD and WFP. 2015. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015. Meeting the 2015 international hunger targets: taking stock of uneven progress.* Rome, FAO. Reproduced with permission.

◀ commodity has more economic value and it generates economic activity. And if there is money to spend on food, people will bring the food no matter how marginalized the environment. That is certain.”

Not just a one-off

But Husain urges caution when considering the 2030 target: “The food security problem wasn’t created in a day and won’t be solved in a day. We have to make sure people have enough money to buy food, continuously; to make sure there is sustained purchasing power within the bottom two billion people. It’s not just about getting to zero hunger; it’s about staying at zero hunger. This is only possible if we invest in human capital and give people the opportunity to use this capital by creating jobs.”

But how much will all this cost? A recent UN report prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), IFAD and the WFP estimated eradicating world hunger sustainably by 2030 will require an additional US\$267bn per year, on average, for investments in rural and urban areas, and in social protection. “If we remember that the global cost of hunger is US\$3.5tr per year and the cost of food waste is US\$750bn, then US\$267bn does not seem an extreme amount,” says Husain.

“Look at it this way: when we were in the financial crisis, the US bailout package was around US\$800bn. In the bigger scheme of things, US\$270bn is not such a huge figure.” But speaking of the aforementioned document, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva sums up the mountain still left to climb: “The message of the report is clear: if we adopt a ‘business as usual’ approach, by 2030, we would still have more than 650 million people suffering from hunger.”

The fight for food security requires coordinated and complementary responses from all stakeholders. Major new commitments to hunger reduction have recently been taken at the regional level—such as the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean initiative and Africa’s Renewed Partnership to End Hunger by 2025—but with wars raging and refugee crises stealing attention, it remains to be seen whether the current impetus will be sustained.

Failure, though, is not really an option. As Husain says: “We don’t have a choice but to solve the hunger problem. We live in a globalized world. It is not one country’s problem or one city’s problem. People who have and who don’t have can see each other clearly. In this type of environment, inclusiveness and equality are vital.” ■



Steve Hughes is a journalist and copywriter based in the UK. His background is in economics and financial journalism, but he has also spent

time writing for press offices and internal communications departments. He was an editor and speechwriter with OPEC between 2008 and 2012 and now writes for various businesses and organizations.



Ending hunger: The nexus approach

In the quest to ensure adequate supplies of food for a growing global population, development planners must be sensitive to the sector's intimate links with the equally important and challenging goals of energy and water security.

BY FUAD SIALA

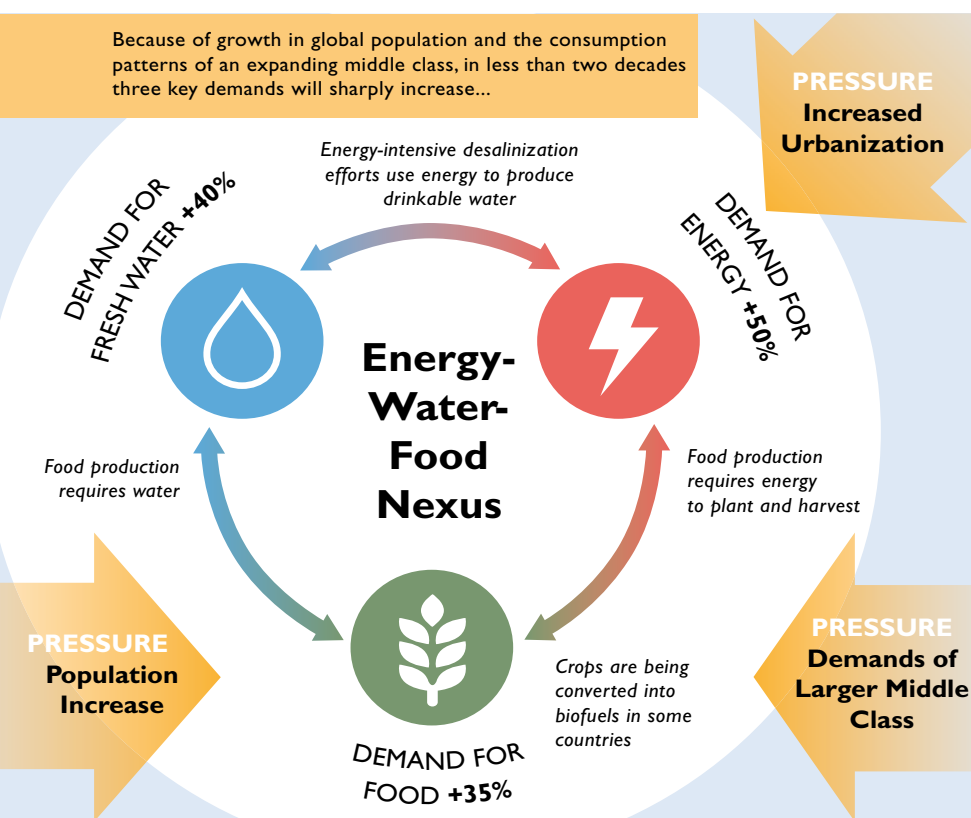
Since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000, the proportion of undernourished people in the developing world has dropped by almost 50 percent. Despite these profound achievements, however, the vast majority of the world's hungry people continue to live in developing countries, where 12.9 percent of the population is not adequately fed. For these countries, with populations growing at a brisk pace, ending hunger remains a fundamental development challenge.

The challenge is compounded by the requirements of huge amounts of water and energy for the production of enough staple foods. Freshwater is under growing stress in many developing countries, not only because of increased use in agriculture but also due to increased demand for competing uses. Furthermore, it is in developing countries specifically

where the problem of energy poverty manifests itself. In these countries, energy is in seriously short supply to pump water for crop irrigation, for running farm machinery, as well as for delivering produce to consumers.

Beware the bigger picture

Food, water, and energy are intimately intertwined, and actions in one sector influence the others. For example, in the pursuit of food security, governments may adopt policies that aim at food self-sufficiency through intensifying domestic agriculture. For this purpose, energy, water and chemical inputs are often heavily subsidized, resulting in unsustainably increased demand on these natural resources, leading in turn to their degradation. While food security may be achieved, this could be at the expense of soil and groundwater depletion and increased vulnerability to energy market volatility. ►



Source: <http://www.waterpolitics.com/2014/06/09/water-risk-and-global-security/>

◀ In another example, drip irrigation is promoted as a demand-side management option for reducing water consumption in agriculture in arid areas. In comparison with sprinkler and flood irrigation systems, this type of technology minimizes non-productive evaporative water losses, leading also to savings in energy that would otherwise be needed for pumping the lost water. Since arid areas have abundant solar energy, drip irrigation in those areas is usually powered by photovoltaic systems, which among other advantages save on the costs of connecting remote farms to a central grid.

However, a scenario of “unintended consequences” may develop, where farmers need to pay back the usually higher costs of the solar photovoltaic-powered drip irrigation systems. Farmers then may have to switch their production from staple crops that are basic and important in people’s everyday food intake to cash crops that are grown for sale at higher prices. In these situations, risks to food security may ensue.

A third example is policies that encourage unchecked expansion of biofuels production in pursuit of energy self-sufficiency and/or exports-driven foreign currency income. The so-called first generation biofuels—those that depend on food crops such as maize, wheat and

barley as feedstock for their production—compete with the production of food for land and water. Consequently, while energy supplies may be secured, food shortages may occur.

These examples serve to demonstrate the dangers of thinking in silos—sector-specific interventions that ignore the underlying interdependence of the food, water and energy sectors. The examples, however, should not be taken in any way as endorsing one set of national policies over another. The point is that circumstances differ from one region to another, and interventions need to be designed holistically for a specific context. Through such an approach (the nexus-thinking), the unintended consequence of shifting a crisis from one sector to another can be avoided. In essence, the nexus-thinking in development interventions is a structured way to address cross-cutting issues related to the three (and other related) sectors in a given context, identifying trade-offs and assessing the impacts of the planned interventions.

Beyond the nexus

In fact, the need for integrated policies and actions is a characteristic of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the MDGs there was no attempt to produce an integrated system, and this failure did not help facilitate policy integration across sectors. In contrast the SDGs represent a set of global goals and targets that address the systemic issues that slow and hinder development. The wider scope of the SDGs reflects an improved understanding of the complexity of the relationships between the different aspects of development. This complex relationship is manifested in the fact that individual SDGs overlap and many targets might contribute to or adversely affect several goals. For example, SDG2 (ending hunger) is closely related to SDG1 (ending poverty); SDG6 (ensuring water availability); SDG7 (ensuring energy access); and SDG12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns). These goals are interdependent and they also both reinforce and impose constraints on one another.

By tackling the SDGs in an integrated way rather than using a silo approach, it will be possible to achieve multiple targets simultaneously. Likewise, an understanding of the inherent interlinkages within the SDGs will help facilitate integrated planning and decision-making. This, in turn, will optimize the allocation of resources between competing needs in order to better support development. ■



Food security: An integrated approach to a multidimensional problem

As chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), **Amira Gornass** is a global thought leader on the eradication of hunger. In the following interview, she emphasizes the need for an approach to food security that is people-centered, mobilizes all stakeholders, and cuts across all related sectors.

INTERVIEW BY AUDREY HAYLINS

OQ: Despite some progress under the MDGs, close to 800 million people globally are still affected by hunger. What feelings does this statistic arouse in you?

AG: I feel very sad to know that so many people go to bed hungry every single day. I feel especially sad for those parents who are unable to feed their children. It is unacceptable for me to see that there are many hungry people while what we produce today is sufficient to feed a global population of 10 billion—and we are just over 7 billion.

Coming from a developing country, Sudan, where certain communities still suffer from hunger and malnutrition, I feel an obligation to get involved and not allow this situation to continue. I hope that through my work I would be able to contribute effectively to the global efforts for the eradication of hunger and malnutrition.

OQ: According to the FAO, one-third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted every year. Why is this happening and what can be done about it?

AG: Food losses and waste are the consequences of the way food systems function; technically, culturally and economically. We have to differentiate between food losses and food waste. The first happens during the production and transformation processes, while the second, or food waste, happens at the consumption stage.

Causes vary and often interrelate. Some are direct, immediate causes (poor harvest scheduling and timing; careless handling; inadequate storage; or poor transport). Others stem from the conditions at retail (temperature, humidity, lighting, etc.). Food waste by consumers is driven by behavioral causes, including habits of food buying, preparation and consumption. Marketing techniques strongly influence those behaviors. ►

“Food losses and waste are the consequences of the way food systems function; technically, culturally and economically.”

45% ROOTS & TUBERS FOOD LOSSES

In North America & Oceania alone, 5,814,000 tonnes of roots and tubers are wasted at the consumption stage alone.

30% CEREALS FOOD LOSSES

In industrialized countries, consumers throw away 286 million tonnes of cereal products.

45% FRUIT & VEGETABLES FOOD LOSSES

Along with roots and tubers, fruit and vegetables have the highest wastage rates of any food products; almost half of all the fruit and vegetables produced are wasted.

Source: FAO, SAVE FOOD: Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction, <http://www.fao.org/save-food/en/>. Reproduced with permission.

◀ The 2014 report from the CFS High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) provides all food security and nutrition stakeholders with evidence-based recommendations on how to reduce food losses, for instance, by improving infrastructure, particularly transport, energy and market facilities. Of course, this requires government action, and in many instances concerted and collective action with local authorities and the private sector.

Capacity development in the form of education, training and extension services for farmers and all actors across the food chain is possibly the most powerful tool for reducing food losses.

Food waste could be reduced by promoting consumer behavior change by raising awareness on the amount of household food waste and its cost; making changes in the food that is sold, like changing packaging or by giving advice on food storage, etc.

OQ: Are there any stakeholders that you would like to see getting more involved in the food supply chain with a view to bolstering food security?

AG: Food security is a complex, multi-dimensional sustainable development issue, linked to health, sanitation and nutrition, but also to sustainable economic development, environment, and trade. Strengthening food security requires all stakeholders—not just governments—to work together and play their part. For this we need to see more involvement of farmers, the private sector, civil society and international organizations in policy discussions to identify challenges and policy gaps to ensure food security and improve malnutrition

at the national and regional levels. This is what CFS does at the global level to agree on evidence-based sustainable and legitimate policy recommendations.

OQ: What about the governments of developing countries affected by food insecurity? Are there specific policy steps that they can take to improve the situation?

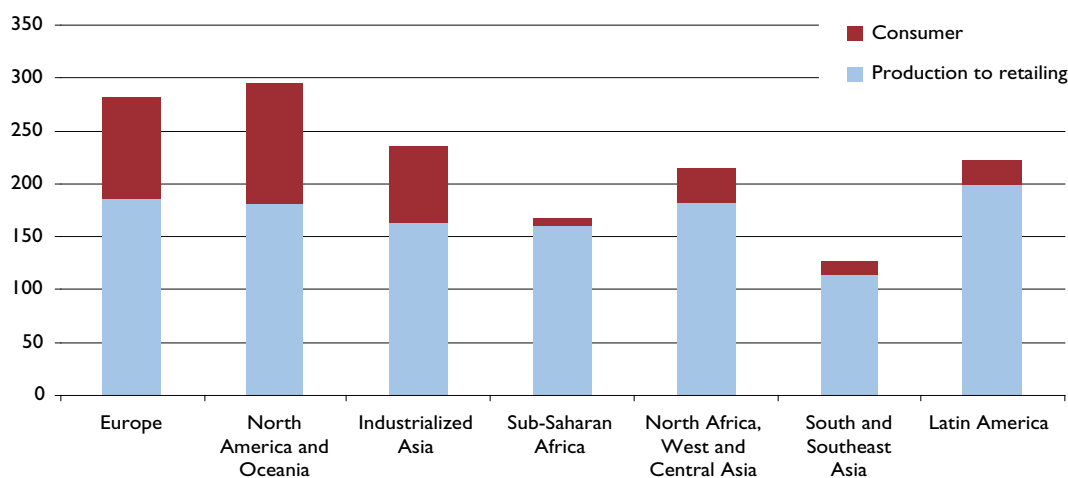
AG: At CFS we believe that any attempt to end hunger and malnutrition needs a truly multi-stakeholder approach that gathers public and private actors, at the global, regional, national and local levels.

So, governments of developing countries need to work together with the civil society organizations, the private sector, UN Agencies, research and financial institutions to ensure food security and nutrition and make a difference in this field.

Then, they need to make use of CFS policy instruments which address basic challenges—such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests; Principles for Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems; and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises—and outline concrete actions that guide governments, but can also be used by all stakeholders, in their different capacities, to improve food security and nutrition situation.

Implementing CFS policy recommendations is a powerful enabler for governments of all countries that seriously want to see progress towards zero hunger.

Per capita food losses and waste, at consumption and pre-consumptions stages, in different regions (in kg per year)



Source: FAO, 2011. Global food losses and food waste – Extent, causes and prevention. Rome. Reproduced with permission.



Amira Gornass speaking at the March 2016 OFID seminar on food security.

OQ: *Where does climate change fit into the equation?*

AG: The poorest among the poor are the most affected and the most seriously threatened by the effects of climate change, and we need to act urgently if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences. Based on the findings of an HLPE report, CFS has endorsed a set of recommendations on food security and climate change. These advise on how to integrate climate change concerns in food security policies and programs and to increase the resilience of vulnerable groups and food systems to climate change. They give particular attention to the development of climate resistant crops and to the needs of farmers and food producers, especially small-scale producers.

OQ: *SDG2 sets out to eliminate hunger by 2030. How realistic do you consider this goal? Are the hunger targets more achievable under the SDG framework than they were under the MDGs, and if so, why?*

AG: Significant progress has been made under MDGs, which is why I think eradicating hunger by 2030 is possible. Hunger targets are more achievable under the new 2030 Agenda as the Sustainable Development Goals are country owned. They have been developed by a trans-

parent and inclusive process. They are universal, relevant to both developing countries and developed ones. They are acceptable to different contexts and demand action from all countries within a precise time frame.

OQ: *Clearly there is no quick fix for such a complex problem, but could you point to two core actions that could lay the foundations for a sustainable solution?*

AG: In my view, initiatives that empower women and are people-centered will have greater impact on food security and nutrition. Women produce food for their households, they work in agriculture and use their earnings to buy food, healthcare, and resources for children and the family.

Second, ending hunger and promoting better nutrition need a people-centered approach, which is more multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral. That would mean, as we look at increasing responsible investment in order to meet the need for more food, reducing food losses and waste, or building resilience to climate change, we would focus on decent jobs, reducing inequality and fostering inclusiveness.

OQ: *Could you explain the role of CFS in working towards ending global hunger?*

AG: CFS is the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

The Committee provides evidence- and knowledge-based policies that accommodate the different views and interests of its stakeholders; it helps in addressing policy gaps that may impede effective eradication of hunger and malnutrition and provides a platform for sharing, learning and identifying challenges and opportunities. This can help in the effective implementation of these policies and consequently win the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

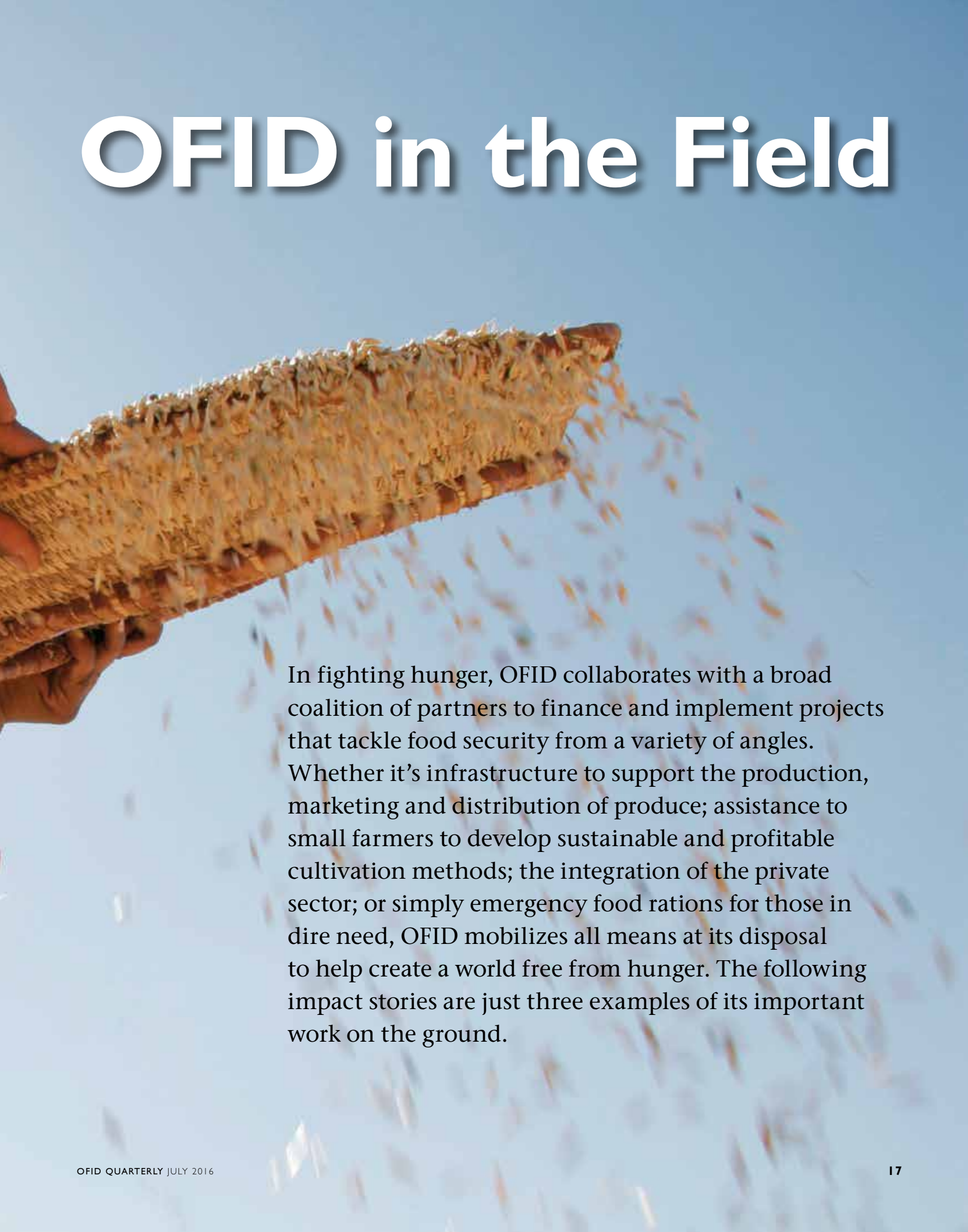
CFS' work to achieving zero hunger is not only to debate, but to reach consensus on policies that address very controversial issues, such as food price volatility, biofuels and climate change, and that have a tremendous impact on food security and nutrition.

With such diverse perspectives involved from multiple stakeholders from all over the world, it is essential that CFS policy debates have a solid evidence base on what policy changes are needed. CFS established a high level panel of experts that, on request, provides evidence-based advice on pressing issues in food security and nutrition. ■

"In my view, initiatives that empower women and are people-centered will have greater impact on food security and nutrition."



OFID in the Field



In fighting hunger, OFID collaborates with a broad coalition of partners to finance and implement projects that tackle food security from a variety of angles. Whether it's infrastructure to support the production, marketing and distribution of produce; assistance to small farmers to develop sustainable and profitable cultivation methods; the integration of the private sector; or simply emergency food rations for those in dire need, OFID mobilizes all means at its disposal to help create a world free from hunger. The following impact stories are just three examples of its important work on the ground.

Palestine: Food security through the dry seasons

An innovative project implemented by American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) and co-funded by OFID has successfully adopted unconventional methods to tackle water scarcity and boost agricultural production in Palestine.

BY ALESANDRA SOLANO

Rain-fed agriculture is a challenge when the country's climate is both dry and hot. This is a reality for Palestinians in the West Bank, where farming has been a part of life for thousands of years. With more than 40 percent of the land under cultivation, agriculture is vital to the economy. Water scarcity, however, is threatening the region's future.

During the long summer months, farmers struggle to irrigate their crops. Those who can afford it have to resort to purchasing additional water, but even this cannot prevent the drop in productivity and the knock-on effect on food security.



PHOTOS: ANERA

Livestock farming, another economic mainstay of the region, is also affected, due to the high cost of fodder. Raising cows, chickens, and sheep has become an expensive business, pushing up the price of meat and dairy products and cutting profit margins on non-food products such as wool.

For some years now, the Palestinian Water Authority has been exploiting non-conventional sources of water, such as treated wastewater and desalination, among others. One example can be found in the Governorate of Jenin, home to 281,000 people and the highest percentage of cultivated land in the Palestinian territory.

Aiding a population of farmers

It is in Jenin that ANERA has been supporting the water authority's strategy through the project "Water Reuse and Food Security in The West Bank." With the help of funding from OFID, ANERA has installed a 30km distribution system to an existing treated wastewater plant.

The system connects the Jenin plant to the neighboring villages of Jalameh, Burqin, and Kafr Dan, whose inhabitants are highly dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Farmers in the area grow olives, citrus and stone fruits, grapes, vegetables, herbs and wheat. But, with limited access to water, yields are low, affecting the profitability of the sector and compromising food security.

To satisfy irrigation needs and ensure a reliable supply of water, the project also constructed 12 reservoirs, each with a capacity of 600 cubic meters. These reservoirs and irrigation systems enable farmers to grow crops all year round for human consumption and to feed their livestock.

Already, more than 1,000 farmers have been able to increase production as a direct result of the project. They are also enjoying higher incomes. An additional 12,000 villagers are benefiting indirectly thanks to improved access to lower-cost, locally grown fodder and other produce.

Ahmad's story



Ahmad Fayyad's land in the northern West Bank was once arid and uncultivated, but now it's coming to life. A thin carpet of luscious green alfalfa has brought a ray of hope to Ahmad and his family of 13, which relies on its 500 sheep for milk and meat.

Ahmad learned animal rearing from his father, but his involvement in farming is relatively recent. His family grows vegetables like spinach, cabbage, cauliflower and cucumbers.

Watering is a huge challenge for them, even with a nearby well. Often they have had to buy expensive tankered water to irrigate their crops. They also had to pay for pricey, imported fodder to feed their sheep.

Now that Ahmed is part of ANERA's program, he doesn't have to worry about buying water or fodder.

"I recently planted around 66 dunums of alfalfa," Ahmed says. "This crop will help us feed our entire herd all year without relying on imported fodder or paying for irrigation water. It is of excellent quality, and I am sure it will have a positive effect on our animal rearing business for years to come."

Courtesy of ANERA

A key component of the project has been a capacity-building program for farmers to ensure the correct use and sustainability of the new system. This will go a long way to safeguarding the longevity of the infrastructure and a more prosperous, hunger-free and healthy future for these Palestinian communities. ■

El Salvador: Promising a square meal for all

Despite its many vulnerabilities, the Central American nation of El Salvador is determined to fight rural poverty and hunger. OFID is standing shoulder to shoulder with the government and its development partners to help make this dream a reality.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

After being absent from El Salvador for more than 25 years, OFID recently joined IFAD and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to co-finance the project ‘Rural Dawn,’ a wide-reaching initiative that seeks to bolster food security and improve living conditions among the rural poor. It aims to achieve its goals by engaging small-scale farmers in the supply chain of key crops such as coffee, pulses, vegetables and fruits.

In recent years, the Salvadoran government has implemented several plans to tackle rural poverty, all with two main lines of action in common: foster food production to guarantee minimum nutritional levels across the country, and prioritize rural development in the most deprived regions.

The latest indicators provided by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimate that 13.5 percent of the population of El Salvador suffers from malnutrition, while over 19 percent of children below the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The most recent national development plan—for the period 2015–2019—was launched under the motto “El Salvador: productive, educated and safe.” It gives special importance to increasing productivity in the agriculture sector, providing support to family farming and strengthening cooperatives.

According to Rómulo Martínez, OFID country officer for El Salvador, OFID’s contribution to “Rural Dawn” has focused on crucial activities that will help guarantee food production in what are relatively adverse climate conditions. “Besides irrigation and agricultural equipment, key investments financed by OFID include the acquisition of soil protection crops and the reforestation of degraded land to improve harvesting,” he told the Quarterly.

An uphill struggle

For years, El Salvador, the smallest and most densely populated country of the American continent, has been in the spotlight for unwell-



PHOTO: IFAD/CARLA FRANCESCUTTI

Groups of young producers, like these tomato farmers, are key targets under El Salvador's Rural Dawn initiative.

come reasons. Its 12 year-long civil war claimed more than 75,000 lives and triggered a massive exodus of Salvadorans to the USA and other neighboring nations.

Even now, with the war behind it, the country continues to face severe social problems, including a high crime rate and a hugely unequal distribution of wealth. Out of a total population of just over six million, the joint fortune of 160 Salvadorian millionaires was estimated at US\$21bn in 2015, which is equivalent to 87 percent of the national GDP.

The same year, remittances sent by some 2.7 million Salvadorans living abroad contributed to 17 percent of GDP, compared to a share of just over 11 percent provided by the agriculture sector.

Nature is not a friend either, with hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic activity, droughts and floods constantly holding back progress. This vulnerability, which is aggravated by environmental degradation, has led the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

to predict a rise in temperature that will reduce the country's yields of main crops by 30 percent in 2050.

According to the same source, the agriculture sector is dominated by large-scale commercial farmers who own almost three-quarters of the arable land. Smallholders, while vastly larger in number, share the remaining, significantly smaller portion, which leaves little scope for a fair and competitive market. With such constraints on productivity, poverty is especially severe among the rural population, which comprises 37 percent of the total.

This is the situation that El Salvador is working to turn around through initiatives like 'Rural Dawn.' By consolidating micro and small businesses in eight of the country's fourteen departments, the project is delivering substantial benefits to rural communities. For the more than 40,000 agricultural families that are benefiting from the project, the hope to have a decent meal on a regular basis is slowly but surely becoming a reality. ■



PHOTO: GALLO IMAGES - NEIL OVERY/GETTY IMAGES

Revitalizing rural communities in Africa

Supported by a consortium of investors including OFID, the innovative African Agriculture Fund offers much-needed investment solutions for agribusinesses in Africa, with a positive impact on food security.

BY FATMA ELSHHATI

Despite hosting over 60 percent of the world's arable land, Africa has struggled to attract significant investment in its agricultural sector, leaving many countries dependent on imported food.

In 2009, several development finance institutions, including OFID, the African Development Bank, Proparco and FMO, recognized the pressing need for finance for Africa's agribusiness sector. Together, they pooled resources to support the African Agriculture Fund (AAF)—one of the first of its kind—to efficiently direct private funding into African agribusiness and infrastructure.

"The Fund plays a vital role by providing the much needed, long-term equity that enables entrepreneurs to embark on the difficult task of building sustainable agribusinesses," explained Adebayo Babalola, from OFID's private sector team. "With specialized local and sector knowledge, AAF has the expertise to invest in, add value to, and monitor the agribusinesses that sustain food production and security."

The boost in investment, especially in rural areas, has supported local vendors to expand and develop their agribusinesses and increase productivity. With backing from AAF, companies have been able to strengthen their management, modernize their operations and improve the skills of their employees.

Expanding business and investing in people

The AAF has supported companies in their vertical integration and in accessing new markets. In Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, AAF has supported Goldenlay, a business specialized in poultry, including the production and distribution of eggs. By promoting stable and fair labor practices for rural workers, the expansion of the business has had a positive multiplier effect on the communities.

Moreover, Goldenlay has reduced its reliance on imports and external suppliers along the value chain. With this, Goldenlay has provided a sense of security for many workers, including rural women and small businesses in informal sectors of the economy.

In DR Congo, the Fund has helped finance the replacement of a 100-year-old palm oil mill

for the agribusiness Feronia, whose plantations deteriorated during the civil war. With support from AAF, Feronia restored its operations to full capacity and helped the country reduce its reliance on palm oil imports.

Feronia, which currently employs over 3,500 people, has invested heavily in its employees. The company has addressed the significant shortage of skills in DR Congo by offering training and qualifications. It has also financed the refurbishing of over 3,000 employee housing units destroyed during the civil war.

Over 85,000 people living around the plantations are directly or indirectly dependent on Feronia. The company has contributed to the construction and maintenance of four hospitals, 15 dispensary clinics and four health centres. Moreover, it has supported 92 schools and contributed to the building of 2,800km of roads.

In 2011, AAF began supporting the expansion of Goldtree, a commercial palm oil extractor and producer in Sierra Leone. Goldtree, which is located in one of the areas worst affected by the war that ended in 2002, has positively impacted the lives of over 50,000 people.

The company has promoted sustainable environmental and social operations, which have improved local production and infrastructure. It sources its raw materials from 6,400 independent out-growers, securing these farmers with a fair price for their product. Moreover, through its technical assistance facility, Goldtree has assisted with the upgrading of roads to provide improved access for the rural communities.

The AAF aims to continue supporting rural livelihoods, and the expansion of agribusinesses into globally competitive entities. As well as harvesting a total 1.3 million tonnes of food, AAF-funded projects have provided over 4,000 families with housing and connected 250,000 people to main towns and infrastructure through the upgrading of 3,500km of roads.

Together, these investments are helping to tackle some of the many problems of poverty in Africa by improving livelihoods, boosting food security and promoting social and economic stability for rural communities. ■



With backing from AAF, companies have been able to strengthen their management, modernize their operations and improve the skills of their employees.

Ministerial Council gathers to mark OFID's 40th Anniversary



MINISTERIAL COUNCIL HOLDS 37TH SESSION

Made up of the finance ministers and other high-level representatives of OFID Member Countries, the Ministerial Council is OFID's supreme governing authority and meets once a year to review performance and set policy for the coming 12 months. This year's meeting was held on June 2 at OFID's headquarters in Vienna, Austria.

BY AUDREY HAYLINS



In addition to its usual order of business, the 37th annual session of the Ministerial Council brought together representatives from Member Countries to celebrate the institution's 40th year of operations.

Before the main agenda got underway, ministers gathered early in the morning with officials from the City of Vienna and other dignitaries for the unveiling of a specially commissioned sculpture, gifted by OFID to its host city as a gesture of gratitude for its four decades of hospitality and cooperation (see story, page 32).

Back at OFID HQ, the Council re-elected to the chair the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, represented by HE Abderrahmane Benkhalfa, Minister of Finance. The Republic of Ecuador was elected as vice-chair.

The highlight of the meeting's public session was the presentation of the OFID Annual Award for Development to Syrian refugee and shipwreck survivor, Doaa Al Zamel (see story, page 34). Ms Al Zamel's selection as winner of

the 2016 Award forms part of OFID's 40th Anniversary dedication to highlighting the plight of refugees.

Addressing the Council, Mr Benkhalfa, opened with a minute's silence for the victims of the recent earthquake in Member Country Ecuador.

Reflecting on OFID's four decades at the service of development, Benkhalfa noted the institution's purposeful evolution and its adherence to the principles of its establishment, including that of South-South solidarity.

The Chairman went on to review the key global events of 2015, which will shape the future of international development. Placing OFID in this context, he highlighted the institution's preparedness for what lies ahead. OFID's strategic plan, he stated, was "both flexible and comprehensive. It is aligned with the newly approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and at the same time takes into consideration the present economic realities."

Ministerial Council representatives gather for a formal photograph outside OFID's main conference room.





Ministerial Council Chairman and Algerian Minister of Finance, Abderrahmane Benkhalfa (center), flanked by Abdul Wahab Al-Bader, Governing Board Chairman (left) and Suleiman J Al-Herbish, OFID Director-General (right).

Operational review

In the Council's working session, Governing Board Chairman, Abdul Wahab Al-Bader of Kuwait reported on the work of the Board since the last meeting of the Council in July 2015. He disclosed that over US\$887m had been approved in fresh lending for 51 projects distributed across the full range of financing mechanisms.

In his own statement to ministers, OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish described OFID's "remarkable journey" since its founding in January 1976. The institution, he said, could look back with pride on four decades of operational success and financial growth. OFID's greatest achievement, however, had been its transformation from an institution that followed the lead of others to one that advocated an agenda for others to follow.

"Today, OFID is deeply involved in shaping the international development agenda and we are proud to be recognized as a leader by our peers," stated Al-Herbish.

"Nowhere is our pioneering role more apparent than in the area of energy poverty eradication," he added, referring to OFID's instrumental role in positioning energy access in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Director-General told the Council that, through the prominence gained by its advocacy efforts, OFID had become a platform for dialogue among the different stakeholders engaged in the fight to eliminate energy poverty.

"Using our links to both the development business and the energy industry, we have

worked to bring both sides together," he said, citing the recently launched Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform as a concrete outcome of these efforts.

"With the launch of the EAP, we are proud to have implemented the call of our heads of state in its entirety," Al-Herbish affirmed, referring to the mandate handed down to OFID at the third OPEC Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in November 2007.

The Director-General went on to report on the implementation of OFID's Corporate Plan for the period 2016–2025 which has adopted as its focus the energy–water–food nexus with transportation as a fourth, enabling sector.

He pointed out: "It is worth noting that OFID's decision to base its Corporate Plan on an integrated, holistic approach to development was envisioned prior to the approval of the SDGs in September 2015—a clear confirmation that we are operating ahead of the curve."

Al-Herbish concluded his statement by thanking the Ministerial Council for its support to OFID's communication strategy, which had seen the institution dramatically increase its visibility, most notably through its social media channels.

Other matters during the session included: consideration and approval of OFID's financial statements and Annual Report for 2015 (see story, page 39); and reports on the 20th Lending Program and grant operations.

The next session of the Ministerial Council will be held in Vienna, Austria, on July 6, 2017.



37th Session of the Ministerial Council

photo gallery

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, represented by Minister of Finance **HE Abderrahmane Benkhalfa**, was elected to the Chair for a second consecutive year.

In addition to celebrating OFID's four decades of accomplishment, the Council's busy schedule included a review of the financial statements for 2015 and approval of the Annual Report for the same year. Ministers also considered reports relating to the 20th Lending Program and other operational matters.



Mr Juan Francisco Viera
Alternate Governor of Ecuador to OFID



Mr Askolani
Governor of Indonesia to OFID



HE Dr Ali Taieb Nia
Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, IR Iran



Mr Muwafaq Taha Ezzulddin
Alternate Governor of Iraq to OFID



Mr Abdul Wahab Al-Bader
Governor of Kuwait to OFID and
Chairman of the Governing Board



Dr Ahmed Menesi
Governor of Libya to OFID



HE Dr Mahmoud Isa-Dutse
Governor of Nigeria to OFID



Mr Bader Ahmed Al Qayed
Governor of Qatar to OFID

37th Session of the
Ministerial Council
photo
gallery



HE Dr Ibrahim Al-Assaf
Minister of Finance, Saudi Arabia



HE Younes Haji AlKhoury
Deputy Minister of Finance, United Arab Emirates



HE Rodolfo Medina del Rio
Minister of People's Power for Economy,
Finance and Public Banking, Venezuela

Für Wien ... a lasting 'thank you'

As part of the institution's 40th anniversary celebrations, OFID has presented a unique gift to the City of Vienna and the Republic of Austria to acknowledge their generous efforts in hosting the institution for the past four decades.

BY REEM ALJARBOU

The gift, a specially commissioned monument, was presented on June 2 on the sidelines of the Ministerial Council, in the presence of Ministerial Council members, OFID Governors and Alternate Governors, ambassadors and representatives from the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

The monument, which is located in a small public park in front of the Vienna International Center on Wagramerstrasse, was unveiled by OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish and Dr Andreas Mailath-Pokorny, Municipal Councillor for Culture, Science and Sports of the City of Vienna.

Speaking at the inauguration, Al-Herbish stated: "Today is a special and glorious day; an opportunity to recognize the hospitality of the City of Vienna in providing a stable, welcoming environment for our institution to carry out its noble mission."

Al-Herbish went on to explain the thinking behind the monument, a 5.2m high bronze sculpture on a granite base. "We tried to connect the monument with OFID's vision and mission by representing the origins and evolution of development and our focus on the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs)," he said.

In his own speech, Dr Mailath-Pokorny spoke about current global affairs and how the monument symbolized the need for continued unity and development efforts. "Vienna thanks OFID for this generous gift; we are proud and happy that the City of Vienna can host both OFID and OPEC. During these times, one recog-


nizes that OFID's work is valuable for global development," he stated.

In designing the monument, OFID commissioned Iraqi artist Suhail Al-Hindawi, a graduate in Fine Arts, Sculpture from Baghdad University, and a lecturer at the Fine Arts Institute in Baghdad. Al-Hindawi was a member of the Iraqi Arts Association as well as a member of the International Union of Arts. He has received numerous awards and recognitions, such as the Iraqi Olympic Organization statue, and has various sculptures and monuments on display worldwide.

Al-Hindawi used the ancient Sumer civilization as the inspiration for the monument. The Sumerian civilization was the first ancient urban civilization in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia, modern-day southern Iraq, during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze ages, and arguably the first civilization in the world. The Sumerian written history reaches back to the 27th century BC and before.

The development link

The monument has a strong symbolic development link with OFID's vision and mission. When the Sumerians lost their separate identity, they bequeathed their culture to their successors, and left the world a number of technological and cultural contributions, including the first wheeled vehicles and potter's wheels; the first system of writing; the first codes of law; and the first city-states. Several original Sumerian scripts and drawings are placed on the Monument to show the original developmental efforts by humankind.



The 5m-high bronze sculpture depicts the origins and evolution of development dating back to the proto-literate period of Sumerian writing around 3300 to 3000 BC.

The Sumerian language is one of the earliest known written languages. The “proto-literate” period of Sumerian writing spans from around 3300 to 3000 BC. In its initial phases, writing was pictographic, with icons and images derived from everyday life, including people and shelter, livestock and agriculture, tools, weaponry and machinery.

The Sumerians were the first to display their ingenuity, using icons and symbols as pictorial representations of words. In what came to be known as Cuneiform script, they illustrated essential objects and meanings with stylus strokes on a clay tablet.

The invention of written language around 3200 BC was a key turning point for all mankind. This was the beginning of modern history,

as with written language the Sumerians were able to document events. The monument uses Cuneiform and various symbolic representations of development in its design, and links these early developmental efforts of humankind to the current SDGs, which are also placed on the Monument.

OFID worked closely with Professor Michael Jursa, head of the Institute for Oriental Studies at the University of Vienna. He is a professor of Assyriology and coordinator of the “Nationalen Forschungsnetzwerks Imperium and Officium.” There are a few hundred individuals globally who specialize in either Sumerian culture, language, archaeology or history. OFID is honored to have worked on this project with Austrian expert Professor Jursa. ■

The monument was unveiled by OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish and Dr Andreas Mailath-Pokorny, Municipal Councillor for Culture, Science and Sports of the City of Vienna.



At the presentation ceremony (from left): 2016 Annual Award winner Doaa Al Zamel; Ministerial Council Chairman, Abderrahmane Benkhalfa; and OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish.

A hero's journey: Annual Award pays tribute to refugee shipwreck survivor

The 2016 OFID Annual Award for development has gone to 20 year-old Syrian refugee Doaa Al Zamel, a survivor of the September 2014 Mediterranean shipwreck tragedy that claimed 500 lives.

BY FATMA ELSHHATI

The Award, which comes with a US\$100,000 prize, was announced on the sidelines of the 37th session of OFID's Ministerial Council. It was presented jointly by Council Chairman, Abderrahmane Benkhalfa, Algerian Minister of Finance; Governing Board Chairman, Abdul Wahab Al-Bader of Kuwait; and Director-General, Suleiman J Al-Herbish.

In a citation, Al-Herbish paid tribute to Doaa: "As we go through this tough period in history, one regains hope on witnessing someone with your youth, aspirations and insistence strive for a better future."

Doaa's selection as winner of the 2016 Award forms part of OFID's 40th Anniversary dedication to highlighting the plight of refugees.

During her four-day ordeal at sea, Doaa managed to stay afloat on a child's water ring. She saw her fiancé perish along with almost 500 others and was entrusted to care for two infant girls by their drowning relatives. She and the babies were on the edge of death when a merchant vessel rescued them. Thanks to Doaa's courage and determination, 18-month-old Masa survived.

The Award, which honors the young Syrian's bravery and her determination to draw greater attention to the refugee crisis by sharing her story, will be directed towards the establishment of a fund on Doaa's behalf to assist similar victims and raise further awareness.

Doaa and her family originally fled the war in Syria in 2012 and found refuge in Egypt. They have since been reunited in Sweden thanks to the resettlement program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). She and her fiancé, like so many other refugees, entrusted their lives to people smugglers to seek a better life in Europe.

Speaking to the *Quarterly*, Doaa stressed the need to promote legal ways of resettlement and reunification so that desperate people no longer had to resort to smugglers or illegal immigration.

Facing few legal alternatives, people seeking international protection are continuing to risk their lives on these "death" journeys. In the first half of 2016 alone, the UNHCR estimated that over 2,510 people lost their lives on the Mediterranean, compared to 1,855 in the same period last year. The agency has also reported an alarming increase in the arrivals of unaccompanied children to Europe.

"It is our responsibility to lend support immediately to those attempting the journey before it's too late," Doaa added.

Thanking OFID for the award, Doaa said that she would never get over the shock and the loss of what happened but that she was happy to have saved a small girl. She added: "I am grateful to Sweden for offering me and my family safety and a new start. The OFID Award will help me and other refugee shipwreck survivors to study and heal. I dedicate it to all the men, women and children who have lost their lives on the Mediterranean Sea."

The OFID Annual Award was instituted in 2006. Past winners of the award include: the Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt, Kenya's Kakenya Center for Excellence; Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan; Dr Mazen Al-Hajri, renowned ENT surgeon and philanthropist, Professor Muhammad Yunus; and, Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Peasant Indigenous Native Women of Bolivia, among other distinguished personalities and institutions. ■



Thanking OFID for the Award, Ms Al Zamel said that it would help her and other refugee shipwreck survivors to study and heal.



PHOTO: MICHAEL JUNG/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

OFID announces 2016 Scholars

The OFID Scholarship Award is presented yearly to outstanding students from the developing world, who are striving to become agents of change in their home countries.

BY LILIAN AL-BAZAZ

This year, almost 12,000 young people applied for the opportunity to pursue graduate studies at an overseas academic institution under the auspices of an OFID Scholarship.

Since the program's inception in 2007, 31 OFID Scholars have successfully completed their Master's in a development-related discipline at some of the leading higher education institutes in the world, including the universities of Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and Cambridge, as well as the London School of Oriental and African

Studies, and the London School of Economics and Political Science, to name a few.

Many, if not all, of these young leaders have since taken their new knowledge back home, where they are already making a contribution to the development of their countries or communities. As OFID Scholars and now ambassadors, they are helping to further OFID's vision of sustainable development centered on human capacity building.

As in previous years, the applicant pool of 2015 was of an extraordinarily high quality,

making the selection process extremely difficult. While evaluating the potential scholars, emphasis was given to the envisaged field of study and the institutions of higher education where they have been accepted. Weight was also given to the social background of the applicants to ensure that the scholarships were awarded to students with fewer opportunities than others.

From this rigorous selection process, five outstanding candidates were chosen, each one

dedicated to making an impact on the development of their country upon finishing their studies.

For the first time this year, and in line with OFID's 40th anniversary dedication to highlighting the plight of refugees, five additional scholarships were awarded in collaboration with an external organization, Jusoor, which is dedicated to improving opportunities for Syrian youth. ■

Meet the Scholars

Noon Altijani Osman Abbakar, aged 23, from Sudan will pursue an MSc in Global Health Sciences at Oxford University in the United Kingdom. She is currently working as a physician at the Ministry of Health in Khartoum where she works with girls and women on reproductive health issues.

Through her work, where she saw women being victimized for their reproductive roles, Noon gained a deeper understanding of the social and personal plight

of women. Simultaneously she saw strength, potential and hope.

Noon believes that a mere clinical approach would not be enough to fight the high rates of maternal mortality prevalent across Sudan. "I am certain that a multidimensional approach that comprises women's education and empowerment and calls for community participation, intersectional



partnerships and global collaborations are vital to improve reproductive health not only in Sudan, but worldwide," she said.

After completing her studies, Noon is looking forward to returning to Sudan, where she wants to revolutionize health-care and build resilient health-care systems and policies by employing research and evidence-based approaches.

Twenty-six year-old **Collins Acheampong** from Ghana will study for an MSc in Geo-information Science and Earth Observation for Water Resources and Environmental Management at the University of Twente in the Netherlands.

Collins aspires to gaining the knowledge and skills needed to design innovative water technologies that are cost effective and responsive to



human and agricultural needs, while taking into consideration climatic and environmental demands.

Currently, Collins is volunteering in three community-based projects that aim to improve people's lives through the provision of sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure. "This work is very dear and important to me, which is why I strive to

pursue this [Master's] program together with people from different parts of the world to learn from their culture and experience," he said.

On completing his studies, Collins' wish is to return to Ghana and continue his research in the form of a PhD. His ultimate aim is to become a university professor and researcher in the field of water resources engineering and management.

Twenty-seven year-old Kenyan, **Beryl Ajwang**, has been accepted at the Yale School of Environment and Forestry in the USA to pursue an MSc in Environmental Management-Energy and Environment. Against her culture's common belief that educating boys over girls should be given priority—and with the unstinting support of her mother—Beryl is proud to be the first female engineer in her rural village in western Kenya.

In her current job, Beryl has been working on energy transformation projects, including a nationwide initiative with the ministry of energy to give rural and remote communities access to modern technologies for cooking, heating and lighting.

Through her graduate studies, Beryl hopes to develop expertise



in energy planning, business modelling, and climate change finance to help developing countries build low-carbon economies. "I believe my time at Yale will equip me with the right skills, provide me with a world-class platform to test ideas in energy access, and catapult me to be a credible voice on energy issues in Africa," she said.

Baker Kasawuli, age 30, from Uganda will pursue a Master of Arts in Sustainable International Development at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management in the USA.

Personally affected by his country's poorly functioning public health sector, which claimed his new-born's and wife's lives, Baker has a strong desire to be part of a



process that attempts to creatively and sustainably address public sector malfunctions.

Baker is confident that his chosen course of study will enhance his understanding of the structural factors that cause development to fail, and the capacity to analyze and design creative solutions.

"I hope to deepen my understanding of the available mechanisms that would

ensure better efficiency and value for money in both the application and utilization of public sector resources," he said.

Baker hopes that by utilizing his background in finance he can engage and exchange ideas during his studies for a richer understanding on the interconnectivities of finance and public policy. Further, he wishes to get a deeper knowledge on how other countries have been able to improve, especially the health sector, for poor and vulnerable communities.

Thirty year-old **Rahbar Ansari** from Nepal will pursue a Master's in Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, where he hopes to create greater awareness about the human condition prevailing in underdeveloped countries.

As the CEO of Gandak Hospital, a 100-bed hospital in the city of Birgunj that he founded six years ago, Rahbar has become acutely aware of the depth of poverty among Nepal's rural population. "I

feel that I am part of a nation where the word challenge lies in every aspect of life, from getting a good education to bringing one's ideas to fruition," he said.

Rahbar strongly believes that the key to progress lies in the soundness of the policies guiding public institutions and that his country needs to build capacity in this area. His goal is to be part of this solu-



tion by organizing the knowledge and practical experience gained since obtaining his undergraduate degree and combining them with the formal education he will receive in Budapest.

Rahbar's long-term aim is to pursue a political career in Nepal as a policy maker and driver of the national system.

In solidarity with Syrian women



Jusoor is an NGO of Syrian expatriates in the USA, Canada and the UK, which aims at supporting Syria's development and helping Syrian youth to have access to better opportunities.

Five of the 2016 OFID Scholars are being sponsored through Jusoor's "100 Syrian Woman, 10,000 Syrian Lives" program which explicitly targets young Syrian women with the proven poten-

tial to serve as global leaders. The program operates under the motto "When you educate a woman, you educate a nation."

Since it began in 2012, the program, has enabled more than 150 young women to continue their studies at colleges and universities outside Syria. Research shows that young Syrian women are approximately three times less likely to access higher education in exile than their male counterparts.

Led by Jusoor, the program is administered as part of the institute for International Education (IIE)-led Syria Consortium

for Higher Education in Crisis. Key partners are Jusoor, IIE, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Education USA, and Monmouth College.

The five scholars awarded in cooperation with Jusoor are highly motivated individuals, who already have shown their commitment to the community.

Zelfa Hamadieh will pursue a Master's in Environmental Engineering at New York University.

Alaa Marrawi is anticipating completing her Master's in Urban Planning and has been accepted at the New York Institute of Technology.

Marianna al Tabbaa is grateful to be able to begin her Master's studies with the Politics Program offered at New York University.

Lama Ranjous has been accepted at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies and is excited to do her Master's in Conflict Studies there.

Hannen Almohammad will pursue a Master's in Architecture at Boston's Northeastern University in the USA.

Annual Report 2015: Gearing up for a new development agenda

OFID's cumulative contribution to global development topped the US\$19bn mark in 2015, a year that saw fresh approvals of US\$1,175m and disbursements of US\$1,057m.

BY AUDREY HAYLINS

These and other figures are published in OFID's 2015 Annual Report, which was released on June 2 following its adoption by the Ministerial Council, the institution's highest governing body. The Report details OFID's performance during 2015, highlighting its activities by sector, geographical region and financial mechanism.

In his Foreword to the Report, Director-General, Suleiman J Al-Herbish cites the inclusion of energy access in the new Sustainable Development Goals as the high point of 2015 for OFID.

"Having lobbied vigorously for many years to draw global attention to the issue of energy poverty, OFID is pleased and proud that these efforts have finally borne fruit," he states.

Referring to the challenges posed by the 2030 development agenda, Al-Herbish notes that OFID is well prepared thanks to its extensive program of capacity-building and systems modernization.

He notes: "By the end of 2015, all of these enhancements were in place, putting us in a position of considerable strength for implementing both the SDGs and our own strategic plan."

Focus areas

The US\$1,175m in new funding approved in 2015 was dominated by support to the strategic energy-water-food nexus, supported by the transportation sector. Together, these four areas attracted more than US\$726m, which is equal to more than 60 percent of the year's aggregate commitments across all financing mechanisms.

On its own, the transportation sector drew the bulk of approvals, securing a total US\$316m—an increase of 50 percent over 2014. The major-

ity of the loans, which were all delivered through the public sector window, went to the roads sub-sector. Africa and Latin America shared the bulk of the financing. On completion, the new infrastructure is expected to open up isolated areas and have a positive knock-on effect on the main nexus areas.

Behind transportation came the financial sector with a substantial US\$273m, divided between support to cross border trade and to the capital expenditure and working capital needs of MSMEs.

Energy projects accounted for US\$213m of 2015 commitments. Benefiting 22 countries, these resources will help finance a wide variety of solutions, from mini-grids to power plants and rural electrification to an oil pipeline. With a maiden operation in Guinea-Bissau, OFID's energy footprint now extends to a total of 86 partner countries.

With an allocation of US\$120m—mostly in the form of trade financing—the agriculture sector attracted a 10 percent share of total approvals for the year, all but a fraction going to Africa.

Water and sanitation initiatives secured some US\$73m in new financing, while other sectors to receive support were multisectoral (US\$70m), education (US\$69m), and health (US\$39m).

Regional operations

In keeping with its mandate to prioritize the low-income nations, 33 African countries benefited from OFID financing in 2015. Collectively, these nations received US\$575m, of which around two-thirds (US\$387m) was delivered in concessional public sector lending. Of special ►

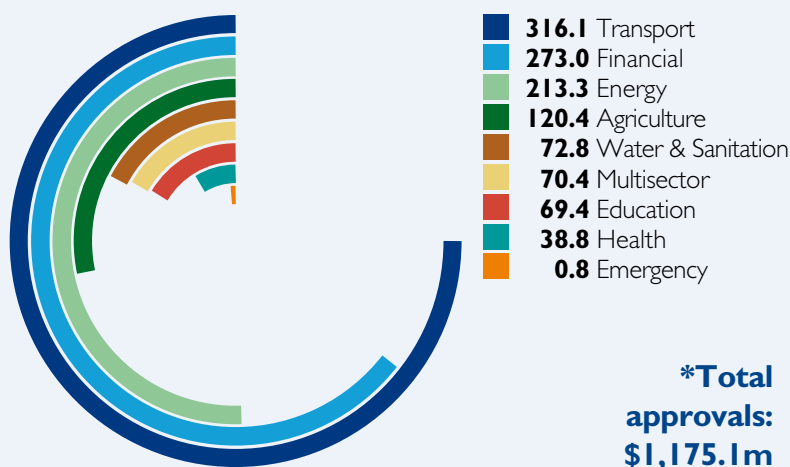


The 2015 Annual Report is available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish and on USB in all four languages, as well as in PDF format for downloading from the OFID website www.ofid.org.

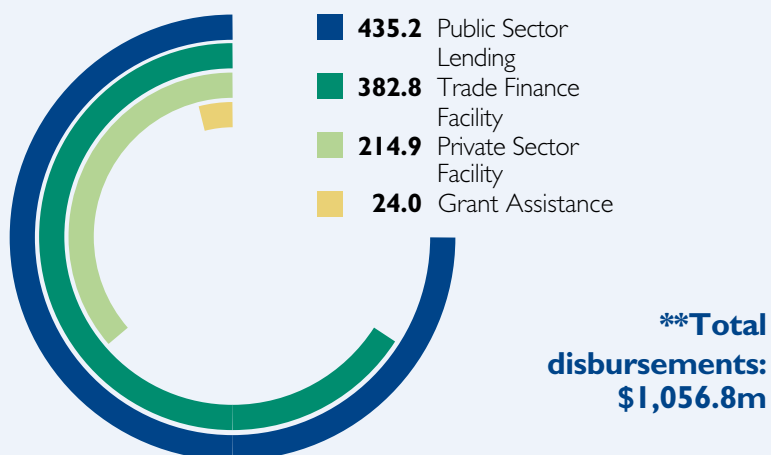
◀ note was the recommencement of cooperation with Liberia after a break of some 34 years.

The largest share of the total in Africa (US\$151m or 26 percent) went to the energy sector for a wide range of initiatives, both large and small, and utilizing traditional as well as renewable technologies. Transport was also high on the agenda, securing some US\$133m or 23 percent of approvals to the continent. Around US\$100m was channeled to the agriculture sector to boost food and nutrition security.

Approvals in 2015 by sector*



Disbursements in 2015 by mechanism**



In Asia, US\$347m was approved for operations in 22 countries, chiefly in support of the financial sector, which received US\$197m. In terms of the financing mechanisms deployed, around one-half of the total (US\$177m) was provided in support of cross-border trade, while US\$92m and US\$70m were approved through the public and private sector windows respectively. Grant funding accounted for just over US\$7m, with Palestine the biggest beneficiary.

Some 19 percent (or US\$229m) of total global commitments for the year was distributed to 14 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region. By far the largest portion (US\$193m or 84 percent) went to public sector operations, chiefly for the construction and upgrading of road infrastructure.

Financial mechanisms

The public sector maintained its position as the primary channel for OFID's operations. Approvals of some US\$671m accounted for 57 percent of total commitments for the year and supported 34 projects in 30 countries.

An aggregate US\$279m was committed through the Trade Finance Facility, the bulk of it (US\$158m) channeled via financial intermediaries to support the import and export funding needs of SMEs, including in Guatemala, a country new to the TFF. The remaining US\$121m comprised five transactions drawn from an existing global trade participation scheme with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, among them a first TFF operation in Cameroon.

Private sector approvals comprised 12 transactions with a combined value of US\$207m in support of operations primarily in the financial (US\$115m) and energy (US\$40m) sectors. An important highlight of the year was the facility's maiden equity participation in funds directly targeting the highly developmental health and education sectors.

Through OFID's various grant programs an aggregate US\$18m was approved in favour of 52 operations in some of the most disadvantaged countries of the world. In keeping with the institution's strategic focus, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of these resources was concentrated on the energy, health and education sectors. Also noteworthy in 2015 was the successful completion of 56 projects financed with US\$19m of previously approved grant funding and benefiting 46 countries. ■



From left: Parvinder Singh, Managing Director, CFC; Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General, ICBA; Li Yong, Director-General, UNIDO; Amira Gornass, Chair of the Committee on World Food Security.

OFID hosts high-level food security seminar

A one-day high-level seminar on food security with a focus on the Middle East and Africa region, organized and hosted by OFID at its headquarters in Vienna, discussed the key role of partnership and cooperation among stakeholders as well of innovative methods to improve the quality and availability of food.

BY ARYA GUNAWAN USIS

Held under the theme “The Long-term Challenges of Food Security” the March 30 seminar brought together more than 40 participants, and was chaired by Li Yong, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Ambassadors from OFID Member Countries, Arab States, and other partner countries, as well as heads of Vienna-based international organizations were among the participants.

The seminar was opened by OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish. In his statement he touched upon the importance, as well as the complex interrelation, of energy, water and food for human wellbeing, poverty reduction and food security.

“Inadequate attention to these interactions often results in policies that create risks, inefficient resource utilization, and

unintended consequences across the sectors,” said Al-Herbish, adding that partnerships and cooperation would be crucial in efforts to address the challenges of food security.

The main speaker was Mahmoud Solh, Director-General of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), who insisted that opportunities existed to create a sustainable food system and tackle hunger, despite the many challenges, including global population growth.

Doing so, he said, would require a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary approach, including—among others—better technologies such as crop improvement, water and land management, and the development of integrated livestock/rangeland/crop production in marginal lands.

Exploring non-conventional ways

Dr Ismahane Elouafi, Director-General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), and one of three discussants, propagated the idea of exploring non-conventional ways of food production, including the need to trial new food.

She gave the example of *quinoa*, a pseudo grain native to the Andes with high protein and high micronutrient content, which could be grown in the MENA region due to its salt-tolerant nature. She also suggested the use of non-traditional sources of water—beyond fresh surface or ground water—such as sea water for irrigation and treated waste water from urban sources to grow vegetables.

The second discussant, Parvinder Singh, Managing Director of the Common Fund for Commodities, stressed the importance of an effective supply chain from field to fork as key to sustainable food security. This would include improved water management as well as efficient use of energy and soil.

He also advocated strongly in favor of private sector investment, which he said was essential for a sustainable agriculture system. Private investors would find the sector more attractive if certain measures were put in place, he argued. These could include policy incentives, the establishment of savings and credit institutions for farmers, and risk management for farmers and traders.

As the third discussant, Amira Gornass, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security, spoke of the value of involving all stakeholders in major policy debates and formulation. Actors should include not only governments, but also the private sector, NGOs and research institutions. She also highlighted the 30–40 percent rate of food losses and waste in the supply chain. This, she stressed, had to be seriously reduced.

The seminar concluded with participants calling for better cooperation and stronger partnership, including with the private sector, to end poverty and hunger as mandated by the 2030 Development Agenda. ■



PHOTO: OFID/MUSAB ALOMAR

OFID's Jaafar Al-Mahdi spoke on behalf of the Coordination Group at the ADP launch in Jordan.

OFID and UNDP launch Arab Development Portal

Featuring an extensive database of development-related information on the Arab region, the Arab Development Portal (ADP) represents an innovative new tool for planners and policy-makers and other stakeholders seeking to make a difference in Arab countries.

BY ARYA GUNAWAN USIS

The ADP—an initiative of OFID, the Arab Coordination Group and the Islamic Development Bank in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)—was launched at a special event in Amman, Jordan, on April 25.

The initiative was driven by the limited access to reliable data, information and knowledge resources on development issues in the Arab World. By addressing this gap, the ADP opens up a new opportunity for people to improve their individual and collective knowledge of the region, thereby enabling them to contribute to sustainable development.

In her opening remarks at the launch ceremony, Sima Bahous, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States, said

the ADP represented a valuable instrument for delivering on the challenges of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“Supporting evidence-based policy-making by improving access to data and building capacities for monitoring and evaluating are pivotal to the success of the new agenda,” she stated.

The launch was attended by about 80 participants representing national statistics offices of Arab countries, development institutions, academics, civil society organizations, and the media.

In a statement delivered on behalf of Arab Coordination Group, OFID's Dr Jaafar Al-Mahdi, shared the history of the ADP since the idea first emerged in early 2006. He described the challenges faced during the inception and development phases, and highlighted the accomplishments so far.

“The ADP is an ongoing initiative that will enhance our understanding of the Arab World. Our overall vision for the ADP is to go beyond providing information that is already in the public domain. It seeks to gather information, identify the knowledge-gaps, and work toward filling them,” said Dr Al-Mahdi, a senior officer in OFID's Public Sector Operations department.

The portal is available in Arabic and English, and offers access to a multi-source database as well as advanced tools for data browsing, extraction and visualization. It covers 11 key development topics, including, among others, demography; education; labor and employment; trade; water and food security—all as they relate to the Arab World.

Altogether, the ADP features more than 4,400 indicators, extracted from national statistical offices, and 400 additional indicators gathered from databases of international organizations. The portal also serves as a resource depository for over 1,000 publications produced by international and local organizations, public institutions and universities.

The launch ceremony was followed by a two-day regional workshop addressing six thematic topics (poverty, labor and employment, education, trade, energy, water and food security) that cross-cut with ADP's thematic pages and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During the workshop, thematic experts explained the functionalities, tools and services provided by the ADP and guided participants on how to use the

portal in their work. Among the valuable feedback was the need to explore partnerships with start-ups companies, universities, and NGOs, and to build linkages with research centers and youth organizations.

In January, OFID and UNDP signed a new three-year partnership agreement that will oversee the ongoing evolution of the portal until 2018.

Speaking at that time, OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish said that the realization of the ADP would have been impossible without the close collaboration of all partners. "The portal is a clear example of how joint initiatives can harness the power of data with low cost information technologies to scale-up development impact," he stated. ■

Visit the portal:

<http://arabdevelopmentportal.com>



OFID Director-General Al-Herbish (center right) with ICTP Director Fernando Quevedo (center left) flanked by the 15 PhD fellows.

PHOTO: ICEP

OFID-ICTP Postgraduate Fellowship Program

OFID and the Abdus Salam International Center for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) have launched a new partnership to support research opportunities for students from developing countries.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

The OFID Postgraduate Fellowship Program was formally announced in a special ceremony at ICTP Headquarters in Trieste, Italy, on June 8. Forming part of ICTP's Sandwich Training Educational Program (STEP), the Fellowship supports 15 students in developing countries, who are carrying out research and training toward their PhDs.

Under the program, the students receive financial support to spend up to six months per year for three years at ICTP or collaborating institutes. Fellows work on their PhD theses with their advisors at their home institutes and co-advisors at the hosting institutes. Their PhD is awarded at their home institutes.

In welcoming remarks, ICTP Director Fernando Quevedo highlighted the wider benefits of STEP, which he said not only supported students' individual education but also the spread of knowledge as they regularly travel back to their home institutions.

"The high-quality training and resources ICTP provides, thanks to the generous financial assistance from OFID, thus helps fuel the development of local scientific research communities, as well as stimulating new technological approaches to local problems," he explained.

In his own remarks, OFID Director-General Suleiman Jasir Al-Herbish expressed OFID's appreciation for ICTP's valuable contribution to the advancement of scientific expertise in the developing world, in particular in the areas of physics and mathematics.

"We are proud to know that ICTP has been able to do that thanks in part to a fruitful partnership with OFID which dates back to 1980," he said, adding that the Fellowship Program supported OFID's vision of sustainable development centred on human capacity building.

The OFID Fellowships have been awarded to postgraduate students from 14 developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. ►

◀ The Program will enable these talented young scientists to access cutting-edge knowledge in their fields of research, which range from Renewable Energy to Biosphere-Atmosphere Interactions and Climate Modelling to Environmental Physics, among others.

It will also provide a unique opportunity for interaction and knowledge sharing among peers from all countries, paving

the way for profitable scientific partnerships. In turn, this may positively impact the rate of emigration of professionals from developing countries and help build scientific communities around the world.

ICTP is a scientific research and development institute established in 1964 to support global efforts to advance scientific expertise in the developing world. A United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Category 1 institute, ICTP has hosted more than 130,000 scientists from 188 developing countries.

Leading universities, academic departments, research centers and ministries of science and technology in these countries have been greatly strengthened by ICTP alumni. ■

Solidarity concert aids Ecuador's earthquake victims

A benefit concert co-hosted by the Embassy of Ecuador and OFID has helped raise a significant sum to support the relief and reconstruction efforts underway in Ecuador in the wake of the April 16 earthquake.

BY NATALIA SALAZAR

The event, which took place at OFID headquarters on May 11, brought together representatives from Vienna-based international organizations, embassies and consulates as well as OFID staff.

The gathering was a powerful statement of solidarity with OFID Member Country Ecuador, which re-joined the institution in June 2014, after a break of some 21 years.

Comprising an eclectic variety of classical and Ecuadorian instrumental music, the concert featured performances from a number of international artists, including Ecuadorian pianist Jonathan Floril and his compatriot, violinist Alvaro Panchi.

The musical program was preceded by a minute's silence in memory of the 661 people who lost their lives in the tragedy.

One of the pieces, "Vasija de Barro" (Mud Vessel) was dedicated to the victims of the earthquake, the worst disaster to hit



the Pacific-coast country in over 70 years.

In addition to the death toll, some 4,500 people sustained injuries and over 30,000 lost their homes.

The program concluded with “Pasodoble Sangre Ecuatoriana,” (Pasodoble Ecuadorian Blood), a musical piece that symbolizes Ecuador’s national history.

Addressing gathered guests, OFID Director-General, Suleiman J Al-Herbish, highlighted the plight of the 120,000 children whose schooling had been rudely interrupted by the earthquake. “The sooner we can get these students back into the classroom, the better,” he said.

Ecuadorian Ambassador Wilson Pastor Morris thanked Mr Al-Herbish and OFID for hosting the solidarity concert and expressed his gratitude to the international community for the support received.

OFID had the previous month—in the immediate aftermath of the 7.8 magnitude quake—provided an emergency grant of US\$400,000 to support the humanitarian activities of the Ecuadorian Red Cross as it worked to deliver urgent relief to survivors.

In a letter to Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa, Mr Al-Herbish stated: “We share, with genuine feeling, the pain afflicting families who have suffered the loss of loved ones and those who have lost their property in these tragic circumstances.”

In the weeks since the earthquake struck, attention has focused on reconstruction needs. President Correa has estimated that about US\$3bn will be needed to rebuild damaged infrastructure. This represents three percent of Ecuador’s GDP.

The earthquake has severely impacted the economy in Ecuador’s Pacific coast region. More than 24,000 jobs were lost and more than 7,000 companies disrupted their operations due to quake damage. The fishing industry and tourism industries, as well as small and medium sized enterprises were among the most affected.

Ecuador’s location on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where approximately 90 percent of the world’s earthquakes occur, makes the country vulnerable to seismic activity. Over 1,600 aftershocks have rattled the country since the April quake. Before that, the last earthquake of significant magnitude was in 1949. It killed 6,000 people and left 100,000 injured. ■

OFID hosts annual meeting of international HR Body

At the beginning of May, OFID hosted the 12th Annual Meeting of the International Finance Institutions (IFIs) Human Resources Directors at its headquarters. This high-level network meets annually to foster collaboration and advance best practices in the area of HR.

BY RANYA NEHMEH

The event brought together representatives from more than 20 IFIs, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, among others.

The meeting was opened by OFID Director-General, Suleiman J Al-Herbish, who highlighted how an effective HR strategy had been key to OFID’s success. “None of OFID’s achievements would have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the high caliber staff we have recruited,” he said.

He continued: “Indeed, we all know that any successful organization is highly dependent on effective human resource management. No organization is sustainable without a loyal and efficient workforce, dedicated to the overall goals and objectives of the institution.”

A similar sentiment was expressed by keynote speaker Abdullah S Jum’ah, former President and CEO of the Saudi Arabian Oil Company and Chairman of the Saudi Arabian Investment Bank.

Jum’ah recalled delivering a speech to Saudi Aramco staff on the company’s 75th Anniversary. “I told them that what makes us special is not our assets, not our hardware, not the resources we have in the ground; rather, what makes a difference is the people we have in Saudi Aramco,” he said.

Speaking on the topic *Planning for the unplannable and managing for the unmanageable*, Jum’ah stressed the role of leadership in times of crisis or change, stating:



Keynote speaker Dr Abdullah S Jum’ah, former President and CEO of Saudi Aramco and Chairman of the Saudi Arabian Investment Bank.

“As a manager you are concerned with processes, but as a leader you are concerned with emotions, interpersonal relations, behaviors, people, human relations and soft skills.”

The central theme of the two-day meeting was the role of HR in a changing environment. Topics included: compensation and benefits; talent development; the importance of HR metrics and an update on the *Emerging Leadership Program*, a 5-day leadership training organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in coordination with the Wharton Business School and offered to IFI employees.

An update was also provided on the IFI database, which is accessible by all members and includes HR-related information of all institutions as well as compensation and benefits policies and comparison of salary database.

Some of the challenges discussed by the group included the need to make HR a proper partner in the business and to align HR to the strategies of the organization. ►



Delegates from more than 20 IFIs exchanged views on the role of HR in a changing environment.

◀ The group also touched upon the challenge of bringing fresh blood to the organization by attracting young talent, a cadre that could enhance productivity and bring passion and innovative ideas to the workplace.

Finally, many institutions discussed the need to have a diversity and inclusion agenda in place, recognizing that the potential for better performance increased when people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives were included in the decision-making process.

They likewise acknowledged the need to monitor gender distribution within institutions, particularly with regard to female staff members to ensure that they continued to be represented in senior positions.

The next IFI HR Directors Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Inter-American Development Bank in 2017. ■

100 children promote OFID's message of equality at Vienna's biggest annual event

On April 9, 10,000 children gathered to take part in the annual Vienna City Marathon kids' run; among them 100 children from two local schools. Bearing OFID's anniversary slogan "Equal Dreams," they ran hand-in-hand to advocate equal rights for children.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

T The 100 children, from *Volksschule Reisnerstrasse* and *Neue Mittelschule Koppstrasse*, were sponsored by OFID to promote the institution's anniversary dedication to the plight of refugees. The youngsters were joined by 65 children of OFID and OPEC staff.

The two Viennese schools, like many others in Austria, have integrated children from refugee and asylum-seeking families into established classes.

"On the occasion of our 40th anniversary," explained OFID's Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish, "we decided to reach out to our host community to promote our vision, and in particular, to applaud Austria's efforts to provide safe refuge to the thousands of people arriving in the country seeking an improved life."

Representing a diversity of nations, races and religions, the OFID-sponsored runners epitomized the core values of OFID's Equal Dreams campaign. They

whole-heartedly embraced their role as ambassadors for unity, equality and children's rights, spontaneously joining hands as they ran to show their solidarity.

The campaign, which runs throughout 2016, promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children; in particular, on the right of every child to an education, to play, and to participate in recreational activities.

Vienna is currently providing shelter to some 22,000 refugees including children, many of whom are unaccompanied. The Austrian government has placed a focus on integration and education to provide the best possible future for all those staying in the country.

Under Austrian law, all children have the right and duty to attend school. Every effort has been made to ensure this right is extended to children of asylum seekers and those whose residence status is unclear. In Vienna, places have been made

available at 700 schools, including *Reisnerstrasse* and *Koppstrasse*.

The Vienna City Marathon was established 33 years ago and, since 1990, has encompassed two concurrent runs, of 2km and 4.2km, for children and teenagers. Like marathon races worldwide, the VCM has become a vehicle to support charities and promote messages of peace and solidarity.

OFID traditionally sponsors the event, and supports OFID and OPEC staff and families who wish to participate in the various runs. The organization hosts a hospitality tent at the finish area, and it has become one of the most popular events in the annual calendar; one which brings staff of the sister organizations together and unites them with their host city and country.

With 2016 being a special year of celebration for OFID's 40th anniversary, the 33rd VCM festivities took on grander dimensions and became a medium to endorse a powerful message. ■



Ahead of their big day, the young runners met for a practice session in Vienna's Stadtpark followed by a motivational talk at OFID HQ.



OFID art auction raises over €50k for Austrian Red Cross refugee program

The funds raised at an OFID-hosted benefit auction will support the social integration of refugees seeking to start new lives in Austria

BY KARIN OSZUSZKY

In May, as part of its 40th anniversary refugee campaign, OFID welcomed some 200 guests from Viennese banking, commercial and law circles to view and bid on a diverse collection of artworks.

The event was organized in close co-operation with the Austrian Red Cross, which OFID selected as the beneficiary of the auction, based on the long-standing partnership between the two organizations.

Numbering 85 pieces, the art was donated by well-known Austrian artists such as Herbert Brandl, Hubert Schmalix, Thomas Reinhold and Christine de Grancy. For one artist, Jenny Feldmann, the occasion held a special meaning, as she hosts refugee families in her home.

Among the celebrities attending the event was Jeannine Schiller, recognized for her charity work, in particular for Children Cancer Aid and for disabled children in Moldova.

Deyaa Alkhateeb, chair of OFID's 40th anniversary committee, said that the response from the artists had been overwhelming. "They showed great enthusiasm when asked to donate. It was amazing to see how generous many of them were and how many wanted to participate."

Hosted in the atrium of OFID's headquarters, the evening started with some words of thanks from the Secretary-General of the Austrian Red Cross, Dr Werner Kerschbaum, who expressed his appreciation for the initiative, the first of its kind for his organization.

To get bidders in the mood, OFID presented a short film about the remarkable work of the Austrian Red Cross, which has played a lead role in the ongoing refugee crisis affecting the country. The agency not only offers shelter to refugees transiting Austria, but has also established programs for those who want to stay.

The auction was conducted by Andrea Jungmann, Managing Director of

Sotheby's Austria, Hungary and Poland, who expertly persuaded the audience to dig deep into their pockets.

The €50,000-plus raised will directly support the provision of learning aid in schools for refugee children as well as German language classes for adults with the aim of facilitating their social integration in Austria.

The Red Cross estimates that some 170 children will benefit from learning aid for six months and some 65 adults will be able to attend 150 hours of German classes.

The agency's wider program also provides guidance and orientation to help refugees adapt to their new environment. For adults, in particular, participation in the classes provides the additional benefit of an opportunity to exchange experiences and form friendships.



Andrea Jungmann, Managing Director of Sotheby's Austria, Hungary and Poland.

Commenting on the success of the evening, Dr Alkhateeb said: "It demonstrates how important people consider the integration of refugees here in Austria and how effective they consider the Red Cross program in providing these desperate people with a good foundation in their new home country."

The partnership between OFID and the global Red Cross/Red Crescent Organization dates back over 30 years. During this time, OFID has provided some 75 grants to various Red Cross entities in support of activities ranging from disaster relief to technical assistance for water and sanitation projects. ■



Dr Werner Kerschbaum, Secretary General of the Austrian Red Cross (far left) and Mr Al-Herbish (center) surrounded by OFID's organizing team and consultants.

APRIL 14

Emergency grant approved

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). US\$300,000. To support ICRC's ongoing humanitarian operations in Yemen; specifically, to cover the immediate needs of more than 2,600 households in distress, as well as many other victims of the conflict.

APRIL 15–17

Public sector loan agreements signed

Nicaragua. US\$10m. Caribbean Coast Rural Electrification. To provide electrical energy services to off-grid households in high-poverty areas. The project is expected to enhance socioeconomic development and considerably raise living standards in the targeted communities.

Bangladesh. US\$6m. Construction of Flyover Bridges in Dhaka. To boost socioeconomic development in the capital Dhaka through the construction of a flyover bridge that will ease traffic congestion and increase access to social services.

Madagascar. US\$10m. Soanierana Ivongo–North Mananara Road Rehabilitation. To upgrade a 75.6km earth road and build bridges and drainage works in the northeast region of Analanjirifo, populated by



2.6 million people. This will help ensure year-round travel to social amenities and jobs, and unlock an area with rich agricultural resources.

Senegal. US\$15m. Ourosogui Hamady Ounare Road. This project will repair 52km of road to improve access to social infrastructure and open up areas with high agricultural potential, benefiting around 600,000 people.

APRIL 18

Emergency grant approved

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). US\$300,000. To support the upgrading of shelters in areas with a high concentration of vulnerable, internally-displaced populations in Syria. OFID's grant will directly benefit over 1,000 people.

APRIL 20

Emergency grant approved

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. US\$400,000. To help procure essential relief supplies and support emergency operations conducted by the Ecuadorian Red Cross in the wake of the devastating earthquake in that country.

APRIL 27

Public sector loan agreement signed

Bosnia and Herzegovina. US\$5.35m. Rural Business Development Project. To help subsistence farmers transition to commercial farming and develop non-farm enterprises. This will increase the income of about 20,000 rural households in 47 municipalities.

Pierre-Emmanuel Quirin, new president of the Crans Montana Forum, visited the Director-General in his office.

Grants approved

Arab Forum on Environment and Development (AFED). US\$40,000. To sponsor the 2016 Annual Report and Conference of AFED. The report, "Towards 2030: Sustainable Development Goals in a Changing Environment," will be presented at the conference to be held in November 2016 at the American University of Beirut.

Arab Water Council (AWC). US\$100,000. To sponsor the AWC's third report on the State of Water in the Arab Region. The report will produce reliable assessments of water resource-related indicators to be used by decision-makers across the region for proper planning and management in the water sector.



Director-General Al-Herbish (second from left) received HE Dr Jawad Naji, Prime Minister's Adviser for Islamic and Arab Fund Affairs of the State of Palestine (third from left). They are seen here with HE Salah Abdel Shafi, Ambassador, Mission of the State of Palestine to Austria and Slovenia (right) and Walid Mehalaine, Head, OFID Grant Unit (left).

International Association for Energy Economics (IAEE). US\$100,000. To sponsor the participation at IAEE conferences in 2017 and 2018 of around 55 students from developing countries studying in the field of energy and economics.

International Humanitarian Relief. US\$100,000. To support primary education for Syrian refugee children in the Beqa'a region of Lebanon through the use of mobile schools. Around 2,000 children are expected to attend the schools during the scholastic year 2016/2017.

Vienna University of Technology, Institute of Atomic and Subatomic Physics Arab-European Summer School on Energy Education. US\$70,000. To promote and improve the teaching of renewable and non-renewable energy in secondary and technical schools across the Arab region.

JUNE 2

Ministerial Council holds 37th Annual Session

See story, page 24

JUNE 3

155th Session of the Governing Board

Public sector projects approved

Burundi. US\$6m. Agriculture Value Chains Development, Phase II. To develop and improve crop and livestock production activities and strengthen community-based initiatives, and in turn enhance food security and incomes for over 200,000 people.

Ethiopia. US\$20m. Hamusit-Estie Road Upgrading. To improve connections along a 77km-long stretch in the South Gondor Zone, a key agricultural production area. This will enhance farmers' access to markets, reduce travel costs and time and enable the 500,000-strong population to reach social services.

Paraguay. US\$32m. Metropolitan Area Electricity Transmission and Distribution System Improvement. To help meet present and future energy needs and expand coverage in the Asuncion metropolitan area, populated by around two million people. In addition to replacing and installing new infrastructure, the project will carry out institutional strengthening.

St Lucia. US\$16.16m. Millennium Highway Upgrade, Phase II. To facilitate the movement of agricultural and industrial goods, reduce transport costs and help boost living conditions of low-income communities in the capital Castries and the northwest. Around 19,000 households are expected to benefit from the project.

Swaziland. US\$14m. National Referral Hospital. To enhance the efficiency and quality of healthcare services by constructing and equipping a 250-bed hospital as well as an out-patient clinic and staff housing. The new facility will serve around 1.3 million people and reduce the need to send patients abroad for treatment.

Vietnam. US\$21.8m. Dam Vac Bridge. To build a bridge over the Dam Vac lake to improve connectivity between the northern urban and southern rural regions of Vinh Yen City. This will help increase income-generating opportunities and access to social services for over 100,000 people.

Zimbabwe. US\$7.6m. Poverty Alleviation. The project will carry out activities in three provinces populated by around 3.8 million people. These include: awareness campaigns to sensitize communities and stakeholders; community support initiatives to identify demand-driven sub-projects and farm demonstration exercises to improve livestock productivity; and support to savings and credit cooperatives.

Grants approved

International Center for Biosaline Agriculture. US\$500,000. To improve small-scale irrigation technologies and introduce on-farm water management practices with a view to increasing agricultural productivity and enhancing food security in



Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Senegal. In all, the project will benefit about 20,000 resource-poor smallholder farmers.

Hilfswerk Austria. US\$400,000. To reduce maternal-child mortality in rural areas of Sofala province, Mozambique, by improving/ installing water and sanitation systems and providing renewable energy systems to health posts, among other activities. The project is expected to directly benefit around 265,000 women and 130,000 infants.

Mr Al-Herbish with Nigerian Ambassador HE Abel A Ayoko, who is to return shortly to his country to take up the position of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs.

United Nations Development Program. US\$800,000. To construct infrastructure and improve waste management facilities in areas of Jordan and Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees. Around 50,000 refugees and over 26,000 local residents are expected to benefit.

Austrian Development Agency. US\$600,000. This grant will support the third phase of the "Southern Africa Solar Training and Demonstration Initiative" in Lesotho, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The initiative will help reduce energy costs and improve living standards for approximately 7,000 people.

Meetings attended by OFID

APRIL 4-8

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA
International Chamber of Commerce Banking Commission Annual Meeting

APRIL 5-6

MANAMA, BAHRAIN
Annual Meeting of the Arab Financial Institutions

APRIL 6

AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
61st Executive Board Meeting of the Common Fund for Commodities

APRIL 6

PARIS, FRANCE
10th Annual Development Finance Institutions Corporate Governance Conference

APRIL 6-11

NASSAU, BAHAMAS
57th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Inter-American Development Bank

APRIL 15-18

WASHINGTON DC, USA
World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings

APRIL 18-19

WASHINGTON DC, USA
World Bank Executive Forum for Policy-Makers and Senior Officials

APRIL 27

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
20th Anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and High-Level Panel Discussion

APRIL 28

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
14th Meeting of the Vienna Energy Club

MAY 2-5

FRANKFURT, GERMANY
49th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank

MAY 9-11

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
77th Heads of Operations Coordination Group Meeting

MAY 11-12

LONDON, UK
25th Annual Meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

MAY 14-19

MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA
46th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank

MAY 15-17

LONDON, UK
12th Getenergy Global Annual Meeting

MAY 15-19

JAKARTA, INDONESIA
41st Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank Group

MAY 21-23

DOHA, QATAR
16th Doha Forum

MAY 23-27

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
51st Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank Group

JUNE 15-16

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
SE4All Advisory Board Meeting

www.ofid.org



*Governing Board Chairman **Abdul Wahab Al-Bader** (second from right) with Director-General **Al-Herbish** (second from left) and other members of OFID Senior Management.*

155th Session of the Governing Board

Meeting in its 155th Session in Vienna on June 3, the Governing Board approved over US\$230m in support of new development operations in 17 partner countries. Of the total amount, US\$118m will co-finance seven public sector projects in a range of sectors, namely agriculture, energy, health and transportation. Through the private sector window, six transactions totaling US\$98m were approved in favor of sustainable energy schemes in Egypt; while, under the trade finance facility, US\$15m was provided in support of SMEs and international trade activities in Armenia. Grant financing accounted for some US\$2.3m of the new approvals and comprised funding for four initiatives in a variety of priority areas. Further details of public sector and grant approvals can be found in the *Diary*.



HE Wilson Pastor Morris
OFID Governor and Ambassador
of Ecuador to Austria

Mr Ibrahim Alturki
Alternate Governor, Saudi Arabia



Mr Majed Ali Omran
Governor, United Arab Emirates

Mr Farid Tiaiba
Governor, Algeria



HE Dr Mohammad Khazaei
Governor, IR Iran

LOAN & GRANT
SIGNATURE

photo gallery

Bosnia and Herzegovina gets US\$5.35m boost to rural business

Vjekoslav Bevanda, Minister of Finance and Treasury, initialled the agreement in favour of a project to help subsistence farmers transition to commercial farming and develop non-farm enterprises, ultimately benefiting 20,000 rural households.



US\$10m to Madagascar for road rehabilitation

Mr Al-Herbish and Malagasy Minister of Finance and Budget, François Maurice Gervais Rakotoarimanana, sign the agreement for a project that will unlock a rich agricultural area and give some 2.6 million people improved access to social amenities and jobs.



US\$20m for road upgrade in Sierra Leone

Jongopie Siaka Stevens, Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Germany, concluded the agreement for a road project that will improve links to neighboring countries and enable the area's 244,000 inhabitants gain easier access to social services.





Senegal receives US\$15m to improve transport

Amadou Ba, Minister of Economy, Finance and Planning, signed the agreement for a road improvement project that will benefit 600,000 people through better access to social infrastructure, markets and agricultural inputs.



US\$6m to Bangladesh to ease urban congestion

Mr Al-Herbish shakes hands with Mohammad Mejbahuddin, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Finance, following conclusion of the agreement for a project to construct a flyover bridge in the capital Dhaka.



Nicaragua secures US\$10m to increase energy provision

Mr Al-Herbish and Iván Acosta Montalván, Minister of Finance and Public Credit, signed the agreement for a project to provide electricity to off-grid households in high-poverty areas, potentially benefiting up to 725,000 people.

The full list of loan and grant signatures can be found on pages 49-51.



(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from the violence.
 (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecution based on the race, religion, or nationality of the person, or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.



From left: Hannes Seebacher, Child of Play Foundation; Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General; and UNHCR High-Commissioner Filippo Grandi.

Equal Dreams: A message of hope to and from refugee children worldwide

OFID kept alive the spirit of its 40th anniversary dedication to refugees with an April–June exhibition promoting the equality of all children’s dreams.

BY NADIA BENAMARA

Showcasing the challenges of the current refugee crisis from a child's perspective, the exhibit featured large-scale photographs created by the international Child of Play foundation in collaboration with hundreds of refugee (or otherwise at risk) children.

Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this initiative engages participants in cultural, educational and recreational activities that are otherwise unavailable to them.

The resulting artwork communicated the indomitable essence of children's aspirations with striking immediacy.

The exhibit was co-hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, (UNRWA).

In welcoming guests to the April 26 opening, OFID Director General Suleiman J Al-Herbish called attention to the present day displacement of some 30 million children and the impact this has had on development as well as host countries.

"The world's refugee children are at risk," said Al Herbish. "We must address the challenges they face by providing realistic solutions to help integrate them into their host communities."

He pointed out that OFID's gradual transformation into a world class development institution had enabled it to expand its longstanding support to refugees through multiple financing facilities.

"The four grant agreements we are going to sign today are good examples of the diversity of our efforts and of our multi-faceted approach toward the needs of internally-displaced persons and refugees, especially those taking refuge in countries already facing their own development challenges."

Congratulating OFID on 40 years of successful humanitarian and development work, UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi said:

"In a year in which we in the UN, and in the humanitarian community, are looking so closely at how to bridge the gap between humanitarian programs and development ones, OFID is leading the way by tackling humanitarian problems with a development eye."

Grandi also paid tribute to the efforts of OFID's host country, Austria.

"This is a country that, especially last year, took in a large number of refugees from Syria and other parts of the world," said Grandi.

"This flow here and in other places has really contributed to the sense that refugees displaced are a global responsibility that we must all share and find solutions for." ▶



Opening the exhibition (from left): Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General; Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High-Commissioner; Hannes Seebacher and Lukas Hüller, Child of Play Foundation; Robert Mardini, Regional Director, Middle East, ICRC; and OFID Director-General Al-Herbish.



Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General, focused his address on the role of education in keeping Palestinian hopes alive.

◀ UNRWA Commissioner General Pierre Krähenbühl focused his address on the essential role of education in keeping hope alive for 5.2 million Palestine refugees awaiting political resolution after more than 65 years.

Citing the accomplishments of individual children at some of UNRWA's 700 schools in the Middle East, he said:

"I have never in my life been as impressed as I am by the energy and commitment of young Palestinian students in those schools."

Krähenbühl wrapped up his remarks with an unforgettable anecdote. Holding a child's notebook in his hand, he explained that it was standard issue in all UNRWA schools but that he and his colleagues had found this particular notebook amid the rubble of a battle-destroyed school in Gaza.

It belonged to a 13-year old Palestinian girl named Rua'kdeih. None of his colleagues knew whether or not she had survived the war. Krähenbühl promptly translated one of the poems she had composed:

"Hope is a friend that never betrays you. It is something that goes away from time to time but will always come back ... Happiness is something you should not look for in the neighbor's garden. It is something you should cultivate in your own garden."

Thankfully, Rua'kdeih did survive the war. According to Krähenbühl, she recited that same poem at her school's re-inauguration several months later.

"When she gave me her notebook because she, and so many other children, cannot leave

the Gaza Strip," said Krähenbühl, "I promised her that her message would travel around the world and be heard on her behalf."

In a follow-up interview with the Quarterly later that evening, he explained why sharing a story like Rua'kdeih's matters:

"It is unacceptable to reduce suffering to anonymity," said Krähenbühl. "Behind every number, there is an individual destiny hoping to come forward, to engage, play a role and contribute in life. This is why I give the names of young Palestinian boys and girls. All of us, humanitarian organizations and media included, need to re-learn how we think and speak about the issues. Only then will we be able to change the way the world functions."

Other distinguished guests included Robert Mardini, Regional Director, Middle East, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Dr Werner Kerschbaum, Secretary-General of the Austrian Red Cross.

Dr Kerschbaum told the Quarterly that the evening had reinforced his belief in the power of hope and the importance of opportunity.

"We have to invest in refugees, who have a right to stay," said Kerschbaum. We have to invest in their schooling, invest in language training and in vocational training. Then, at the end of the day, they will be beneficial to the development of Austria and contribute to the welfare of Austrian society."

Filippo Grandi reiterated his compliments to OFID after viewing the displayed artwork:

"This is a fantastic exhibition on children. This combination of advocacy, humanitarian assistance and a developmental approach makes OFID a very unique and effective partner for organizations that work on the ground."

OFID signed four grant agreements totaling over US\$2m to provide assistance to refugees and internally displaced people through its partner organizations that evening.

They comprise emergency aid for ongoing ICRC humanitarian operations in Yemen; a supplementary grant to UNRWA to improve water and sanitation facilities in the Shu'fat Camp in East Jerusalem; support to a UNHCR initiative to provide shelter for internally displaced persons in Syria; and funding for the Child of Play foundation, which will implement an educational awareness program at Al Arkam school in Amman, Jordan.

Child of Play founder Lukas Hüller said: "It is an honor that through this new cooperation with OFID our initiative will have the opportunity to develop a project with hundreds of Syrian refugee children in Jordan." ■

Ecuador's Galapagos Islands to expand on Wind Farm success

An innovative renewable energy project on the Galapagos Islands has succeeded in meeting 30 percent of local energy needs while slashing greenhouse gas emissions and helping preserve a critically endangered species.

The local utility, ElecGalapagos, is now moving forward with plans to expand toward 100 percent renewable energy.

San Cristobal Island Wind Power Project has to date generated more than 26 million kWh of electricity for inhabitants of the Galapagos's second most populous island.

In its eight years of operation, it has also displaced a total 8.7 million liters of diesel fuel and prevented the emission of 21,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Thanks to an environmental management plan, it has also increased the hatching and reproduction rates of a rare indigenous bird—the Galapagos petrel—which sustained zero wind turbine injuries.

“This project has been a national pioneer in the use of wind resources and has served as a reference for the development of similar projects both in the Galapagos Islands and in mainland Ecuador,” said Ecuadorian Minister of Electricity and Renewable Energy Dr Esteban Albornoz Vintimilla in a recent statement.

Project findings were released in a May 2016 report by the Global Sustainable Electricity Partnership (GSEP), which developed the US\$10mn project in partnership with the Government of Ecuador and the UN Development Program.

GSEP is a not-for-profit association of 11 of the world's leading electricity companies.

San Cristobal Island Wind Power Project was set up partly in response to a

2001 spill from the tanker ship Jessica, which had been delivering diesel fuel to the Galapagos.

The event sparked an international effort to safeguard the islands irreplaceable ecosystem by reducing their dependence on fossil fuels.

According to Peter Terium, CEO of GSEP member RWE AG:

“[The project] has briskly demonstrated that public-private partnerships based on mutual trust and cooperation among all stakeholders are a key factor for

enabling universal access to sustainable energy.”

GSEP's expansion recommendations (included in the May 2016 report) could increase the penetration of renewables on San Cristobal to 70 percent in the near future.

Population growth and thriving tourism on the Galapagos (currently capped at 200,000 visitors a year) are spurring current energy demands.

The local utility, which took ownership of the San Cristobal project on March 31, plans to keep up:

“Our team shall continue working on the implementation of current and future renewable energy projects to convert the Galapagos into a zero fossil fuels territory,” stated ElecGalapagos Executive President Marco Salao Bravo.



PHOTO: PEDROSALA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Qatar highlights importance of Arab civil society

A two-day conference hosted by the Qatar Social Work Foundation (QSWF) has broken new ground by bringing the role of civil society organizations to the forefront of regional discussions on achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Held at the National Convention Center in Doha, the April 20–21 event encouraged more than 200 local and international participants to exchange experiences, monitor progress and issue recommendations on how to best involve Arab civil society organizations in development policies.

In opening remarks reported by the Qatar News Agency, QSWF Chairman Munira bint Nasser Al Missned said: “The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has seen little progress in the region and encountered many delays.”

Adding that ongoing demographic, political and economic challenges would delay development progress in the region as a whole, Al Missned called on participants to “take serious action to identify past failures, create smart solutions, and design a development strategy that is to be executed by society in all its components.”

Addressing a plenary session on prospects for implementing the SDGs, Qatari Minister for Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs Dr Issa Saad al-Jufali al-Nuami, called for a similarly inclusive approach:

“Partnership between the government and civil society organizations is critical to achieving strategic development goals,” said al-Nuami. “Civil society organizations need to be empowered in order to carry out their roles.”

Speaking to the press after the event’s closing session, QSWF CEO Amal Abdulatif Al Mannai said:

“For the first time, many Arab governments have admitted the vital role of civil society organizations in maintaining sustainable development. They have also assigned them greater roles.

“We think our experience in Qatar, though relatively new, is a good example to be followed by others in terms of independence in decision-making and effective cooperation with both government and private sectors.”

The first *Arab Conference on the Role of Civil Society in the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030* was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program, UN Population Fund, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Arab League, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. ■



Source: United Nations

PHOTO: ATTA KENARE/AFP



Iran doubles its number of female parliamentarians

Iranians elected a record-breaking 18 women to represent them in the country's new parliament, which opens session May 28.

Fourteen female candidates won seats in the initial vote, held February 26. Another four were elected in an April 29 run-off for constituencies lacking a decisive first round majority.

This is the highest number of female parliamentarians in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and double that of the outgoing Conservative parliament.

No Conservative female candidates were re-elected to the 290-member body (also known as the *Islamic Consultative Assembly*).

One reformist female candidate, Minu Khaleqi from Isfahan, has since seen her votes annulled by Iran's Guardian Council, a constitutional oversight committee.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani praised the latest election results on Twitter. According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, his official feed stated:

"It is an outstanding record. I hope such a success will promise more effective activity of competent women in all fields."

Algeria/UAE: Bilateral business exchange bears fruit

A newly-established venture between Algeria's public food group AGRODIV and UAE's Elite Agro LLC promises to help Algeria achieve significant agricultural self-sufficiency by 2021.

Inked on the sidelines of the first Algerian-UAE Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi, April 17, the agreement calls for joint development of two large-scale farms in the Algerian provinces of Setif and Guelma.

The 1,000-plus hectare farms already produce between 0.9 and 1.5 tonnes of cereals, fruits, vegetables and animal feed per hectare.

Elite Agro's involvement is expected to result in harvests of between 5 and 7 tonnes per hectare under rain-fed conditions. Additional irrigation could boost yields to as much as 10 tonnes per hectare.

AGRODIV CEO Djamila Ikhneche told the Algeria Press Service the partnership should allow Algeria to meet its needs in cereals, fodder, fruits and vegetables within the next five years.

Food imports (primarily wheat, barley, milk and meat) currently account for some 20 percent of Algeria's annual import costs.

The April 17 business exchange also introduced plans for a steel production and processing plant in Algeria's Relizane province.

Two private companies, Algeria's Bellazoug and the UAE's Bidewi Group, are partnering on the US\$300m investment.

Due to commence operations in 2018, the plant will produce metal structures and derivatives required in public works and construction.

Once fully operational, it is expected to reach an annual capacity of more than one million tonnes and create over 2,000 direct jobs.

The Algerian-UAE Investment Forum was co-chaired by UAE Minister of Economy Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri and Algerian Minister for Industry and Mines Abdesslem Bouchouareb.

Al Mansouri praised UAE-Algerian relations in his opening remarks and noted that trade between the two countries reached US\$980m in 2015.

According to the Emirates News Agency, he also said that the UAE has emerged as a key investor in Algeria with current investments of US\$9bn.

More than 400 companies from various sectors, including renewable energy and tourism, participated in the inaugural event.

Saudi Aramco to play key role in national transformation program

Saudi Aramco has pledged its “unequivocal support” for ‘Saudi Vision 2030,’ Saudi Arabia’s sweeping national transformation program that was announced by the Kingdom’s leaders in April.

COURTESY OF THE OPEC BULLETIN



Khalid A Al-Falih, Chairman of Saudi Aramco

PHOTO: REUTERS/RICHARD CARSON

The reforms, announced by Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and approved by the Kingdom’s Council of Ministers, envisage the national energy company transforming itself from an oil and gas firm into a “global industrial conglomerate.”

It will become involved in many sectors and services, using its vast financial resources to create jobs and help diversify the national economy beyond crude oil.

Khalid A Al-Falih, Saudi Aramco’s Chairman, said of the move: “Saudi Vision 2030 is a pioneering and game-changing plan that will enable sustained economic growth, diversification and job creation to benefit the Kingdom and its citizens for generations to come.”

Quoted in the company’s official magazine, *Arabian Sun*, Al-Falih, who has since been appointed the Kingdom’s new Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, stated that Saudi Aramco would continue its commitment and remain fully engaged as a champion of transformation, ensuring that its significant contributions to the overall social and economic development of Saudi Arabia generated an even greater positive impact in the future.

Fundamental shift

On addressing the urgent need to move the Kingdom from an oil-based economy, which is a major thrust of ‘Saudi Vision 2030’, Al-Falih commented: “There needs to be a fundamental shift in our economic landscape if we are to reduce our unsustainable over-reliance on oil.

“Therefore, accelerating reforms across key economic sectors, privatization of key industries and the creation of a globally competitive small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector are essential to delivering Saudi Vision 2030,” he asserted.

Al-Falih also observed that the Kingdom was opening itself for further investment.

“The message is clear: Saudi Arabia is opening itself for further investment by those already in the Kingdom, as well as openly inviting potential future investors,” he affirmed.

“Investment and export opportunities exist for global companies who want to take advantage of Saudi Arabia’s ready access to infrastructure and abundant supply of energy.”

Al-Falih pointed out that Saudi Arabia provided unrivaled competitive advantages and investment opportunities as a manufacturing and trading base to reach global markets. “The



PHOTO: IGOR SOROKIN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

government will continue to ease regulations to make the Kingdom one of the most attractive locations in the world to do business,” he professed.

Al-Falih made it clear that Saudi Vision 2030 would require a national effort. “The vision is there, the path has been set and the prize is great. Everyone—business and community leaders, partners, suppliers, and most of all Saudi men and women, especially our talented youth—can make a contribution, and everyone must play their part,” he maintained.

Amin Nasser, Saudi Aramco President and Chief Executive Officer, said that Saudi Vision 2030 ushered in an exciting new chapter for the Kingdom.

“As Saudi Arabia embarks on the journey toward the realization of Vision 2030, I am confident in our ability to deliver on our stakeholders’ expectations, to achieve the goals of our own strategic transformation, and to create even more promising opportunities through the work we do and the resources we manage,” he stated.

Initial public offering

Nasser said the company was very excited about the prospect of a potential initial public offering (IPO) for the company which, he said, would give it the opportunity to deepen its engagement and value-creation impact in the economic transformation of Saudi Arabia, and further showcase Saudi Aramco’s excellence locally and globally.

It is understood that under the reform plan, a stake of less than five percent of Saudi Aramco is to be offered to the public. An initial public offering could be held in 2017 or 2018.

“It is important to remember that even in a period of far-reaching change, some things remain constant: the dedication of our people, the commitment and capabilities of our organization and the can-do spirit that has always been present in Saudi Aramco,” commented Nasser.

Going forward, he stated, the company would continue to build on its accelerated transformation and serve as a pillar, role model and champion of transformation in the Kingdom.

“Together, our continued efforts, diligence and focus will help to strengthen the company and its future prospects and, in so doing, help to make the Kingdom’s economy more diversified, sustainable and globally competitive,” he contended.

On maintaining the Kingdom’s position as “the world’s most reliable supplier of energy,” Nasser said: “We remain committed to maintaining the Kingdom’s position as the world’s top oil exporter and most reliable supplier of energy, while continuing to make strategic investments across the hydrocarbons value chain that will elevate the Kingdom as the global hub for energy.”

Speaking on some of the actions needed to attain Saudi Vision 2030, Nasser pointed out that the Kingdom’s transformation vision demanded innovation, technology and research and development to spur a new era of industrial growth.

“Saudi Aramco’s continued leadership and investments in upstream and new investments in downstream expansion will help drive the widespread and rapid in-Kingdom development of a vibrant population of small- and medium-sized enterprises focused on producing high-value finished and semi-finished products in the petrochemicals conversion sector.”

Nasser lauded Saudi Vision 2030 as a major boost for Saudi Aramco’s In-Kingdom Total Value Add (IKTVA) localization programme.

He said: “Saudi Vision 2030 will provide tremendous opportunities to strengthen Saudi Arabia’s local supply chain capabilities across every industry sector.

“Saudi Aramco’s flagship IKTVA programme is essential to attracting inward investments in local engineering; innovation and technology, ►



Amin Nasser, Saudi Aramco President and Chief Executive Officer.

PHOTO: SAUDI ARAMCO

◀ and manufacturing; and to creating thousands of highly skilled and specialized jobs for Saudis, while embedding an entrepreneurship culture and more agile business climate,” he added.

Other Saudi Aramco officials in the Kingdom have also commented on the reforms.

Ahmad A Al Sa’adi, Senior Vice President of Technical Services, said Saudi Vision 2030 called for an accelerated and broad diversification of the economy, driven by entrepreneurship, technological innovation and targeted investment.

“Saudi Aramco’s IKTVA programme is one example of how this vision is being put into practice today by promoting the development of localized energy sector businesses so that the company and the Kingdom benefit from a cost competitive local supply chain and the creation of new high-quality jobs for Saudis.

“This is a model that I believe can be expanded upon and extended nationally across many industrial sectors to create thousands of new, well-paid and highly skilled jobs that will appeal to our youthful workforce,” he said.

Mohammed Y Al Qahtani, Senior Vice President of Upstream, reaffirmed that Saudi Arabia was a nation blessed with hydrocarbons and while the national economy must reduce its over-dependence on oil, “our unrivaled oil and gas assets will help continue to drive the Kingdom’s economic growth, long into the horizon on a sustainable basis.”

He stressed that Saudi Aramco possessed the world’s highest quality of reserves and product grade quality. “We are the world’s lowest cost producer, and our recovery rates are among the highest in the world.”

In addition, he said, the company’s upstream research and development was focused on increasing recovery from existing assets and optimizing reservoir

management and increasing oil and gas exploration and discovery, as well as striving to replace 100 percent of produced oil with new reserves and growing reserves annually.

“All of these factors are embedded in our strategy to contribute even greater value to the Kingdom’s economy.

“As well as supporting our customers through commodities’ export, strengthening our role as the world’s most reliable energy supplier, Saudi Aramco will continue to support the Kingdom’s domestic energy needs: supporting the shift to gas to drive utilities’ expansion and improved national energy efficiency; oil to support transport fuel efficiency; and petrochemical feedstock supply to support rapid economic diversification through the growth of SME manufacturing sectors that are reliant on downstream conversion into high-quality consumer products.”

Al Qahtani said Saudi Vision 2030 would consolidate and augment Saudi Aramco’s role at the heart of the Kingdom. Critically important, he maintained, was the role that highly skilled local talent would play in creating a more vibrant and diverse economy.

“Saudi Aramco will continue to invest in strengthening its world-class engineering capabilities and training and development programs. This focused effort will help to ensure that future generations of young Saudis are well prepared to manage the Kingdom’s energy resources,” he added.

Reduce oil over-dependence

Abdallah I Al Saadan, Senior Vice President of Finance, Strategy and Development, asserted that delivering Saudi Vision 2030 would transform the national economy and reduce the over-dependence on oil.

The listing of Saudi Aramco and other privatizations would increase investor

confidence in the local stock market and boost foreign direct investment, market stability and overall growth.

“This will be good for the country and for Saudi Aramco and its customers, partners, and suppliers,” he said.

Muhammad M Al Saggaf, Senior Vice President of Operations and Business Services, said Saudi Vision 2030 recognized that the Kingdom’s people were the Kingdom’s most precious resource.

Lowering the national rate of unemployment from 11 per cent to seven per cent by 2030 was a challenging but achievable goal.

Enhancing national education levels, embedding skills for the knowledge economy and increasing women’s participation in the workforce were all critical to helping achieve the reforms.

“Saudi Aramco will continue to support initiatives that enrich our workforce with world-class science, technology and engineering skills and training, but also through partnerships that fit with our company and the Kingdom’s strategy,” he stated.

Al Saggaf said that, for example, through Saudi Aramco’s partnership with Tata and GE, the Riyadh Business Process Outsourcing Centre was delivering vital business services efficiently and affordably to customers around the world.

“And it is doing so by employing a skilled and talented female-only workforce in a way that is both customer-centric in terms of excellence of delivery and employee-centric in terms of flexibility,” he maintained.

“I am confident that by 2030 the Saudi Vision blueprint will have enhanced and diversified our entire national labour force for the better across many sectors. This is both what we need and what the nation deserves.” ■

Our vision

To aspire to a world where Sustainable Development, centered on human capacity building, is a reality for all.

Our mission

To foster South-South Partnership with fellow developing countries worldwide with the aim of eradicating poverty.



Uniting against Poverty



Uniting against Poverty

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