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OFID Quarterly

THE OPEC FUND
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DEVELOPMENT

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: *A positive relationship?*

Equal dreams:
The right of all children, everywhere

OFID and WPC lead launch of “Oil and
Gas Industry Energy Access Platform”

Liberia resumes cooperation
with road project

OFID gains space in the
global conversation

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Uniting against Poverty

COMMENT

Equal dreams, equal opportunities	2
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SPECIAL FEATURE MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Migration and development: <i>A positive relationship?</i>	4
<i>Carpe diem</i> : Time for concerted action and a long-term perspective	10
Hands up for human rights	13
<i>Equal dreams</i> : The right of all children, everywhere	17
OFID in the Field	20
Providing a safe return for Bosnia and Herzegovina's refugees	22
Rwanda: Breaking the stereotype	24
Building hope for Palestinian youth	26

NEWSROUND

Cuban water minister praises OFID's cooperation	28
OFID joins landmark transaction in Sri Lanka	29
Liberia resumes cooperation with OFID	30
A new dam for Lesotho	32
OFID gains space in the global conversation	33
OFID Diary	34
Meetings attended by OFID	35
154th Governing Board photo gallery	36
Loan and grant signature photo gallery	38

SPOTLIGHT

OFID and WPC lead launch of "Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform"	40
---	----

PERSPECTIVES

- Healthcare and youth employment
a priority for Palestine
*Interview with Roberto Valent, Special Representative
of the UNDP Administrator in Palestine* 43

CONFERENCE WATCH

- Financing the 2030 global development agenda
*Annual Coordination Group-DAC Dialogue
on Development* 45

MEMBER STATES FOCUS

- Indonesia Hospital saves lives in Gaza 48
- Iran elects record number of women to parliament 49
- Who needs happiness?
UAE ranks 20 in World Happiness Report 50

OPEC

- Symposium on energy outlooks 51

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17



26



32



40

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PROJECT IMPLEMENTED IN COOPERATION WITH UNHCR AND SAVE THE CHILDREN AT ZAAATARI
CAMP FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN, 2014

Equal dreams, equal opportunities

The migration of people—across land and sea, among countries and regions—is a centuries’ old phenomenon. But it has never polarized opinion more than it does today.

As the wretched trail of refugees continues across its borders, Europe has become dangerously close to disintegrating. Both governments and citizens are divided. On one side, outrage is fuelled by fear. On the other, humanitarian voices plead for benevolence and understanding.

In the midst of all the rhetoric are the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children seeking a better, safer life. Many, if not all, have survived a perilous journey to reach European shores. Torn from their roots, they have fled their homelands, not through choice but through dire necessity.

Those fortunate enough to be granted asylum are being relocated in one or other of the European Union’s 28 member states. There, they face the daunting challenge of integrating into a society and culture very different from their own. In the quest for dignity and independence, they have to find jobs, learn a new language, and almost certainly have to overcome prejudices and misconceptions. Such is the lot of a refugee.

Europe, however, is by no means unique in its crisis. Far from it. Palestinians have been living in exile for more than half a century. Africa and Asia, too, are old stamping grounds, both generating and hosting large numbers of displaced populations. Worldwide, it's not just a handful of countries that are affected, but well over one hundred, according to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR.

So, while the European crisis is the one making the headlines, the issue itself is global, as well as deeply complex. For, intertwined with forced migration is the arguably even more emotive subject of economic migrants—the people who voluntarily leave their homelands in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

As an institution that has dedicated its fortieth anniversary to raising awareness of the plight of refugees, OFID welcomes the placing of migration and all its diverse issues in the international spotlight.

OFID is especially concerned about the needs and rights of the world's thirty million refugee children—the most innocent and voiceless victims of conflict and other emergencies. Their plight is highlighted in OFID's *Equal Dreams* campaign, which launched this March.

For decades, OFID has reached out to the displaced and dispossessed—whether fleeing war, persecution or natural disaster—providing emergency assistance in the form of sustenance and shelter to ease the suffering of millions.

In Palestine, where displacement has prevailed over decades, OFID has a long history of working with agencies on the ground, not just to meet immediate needs but also to build local capacities and improve prospects for a long-term, sustainable future.

And, in post-conflict countries, like Rwanda and Bosnia, OFID continues to support reconstruction and resettlement programs to help governments rebuild and returning refugees to resume a normal life.

As necessary as all these actions are, however, they can only ever be responses to already present situations. Stepping in after the fact does not get to the root of the problem. And to ignore the underlying causes is to allow that problem to fester and perpetuate.

This is why it is so important to look beyond the current crisis and take in the bigger picture. To examine the multiple reasons—including underdevelopment, economic hardship, inequalities and climate change—why so many states are failing and forcing their citizens on the mercy of others.

A global dialogue on the subject is long overdue, not just to protect vulnerable and desperate people from expulsion and exploitation, but to efficiently manage all migration flows—including voluntary migration—for the benefit of all peoples and all societies. And, above all, to safeguard the equality of every child's dreams. ■



Migration and development: *A positive relationship?*



Recent events in Europe have forced the issue of migration into the global spotlight, sparking clamorous debate that continues to raise more questions than answers. Here, the *Quarterly* takes a step back from the more emotive aspects of the argument to examine the pros and cons of migration in the context of international development.

BY STEVE HUGHES

Europe is in the eye of a storm as a refugee crisis polarizes opinion: leaders are rethinking policies and even political allegiances; citizens are angry or confused, or both; and all the while, migrants continue to flee their homes because of conflict, oppression, or simply to find a better life. Even in times of peace and stability, migration is an emotive subject. So what chance do we have of rational discussion today?

One certainty is that migration is as old as the (war torn) hills and is not about to stop. Another is that, framed in the right way, migration can be a vital ingredient to development. The question is: will the current European crisis obscure the potential of migration to support development—that dynamic process implying growth, empowerment and progress? Or will the global community see through the fear and rhetoric in Europe and continue to work hard to provide the framework to support global mobility?

It all depends...

Eugenio Ambrosi, Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, stresses that there is no straightforward relationship between migration and development. While they have a mutual impact on each other, it can be either positive or negative, according to context. “In general, we acknowledge that if migra-

tion occurs as a choice and in conditions favorable to migrants, it can positively impact on both home and host countries,” he says.

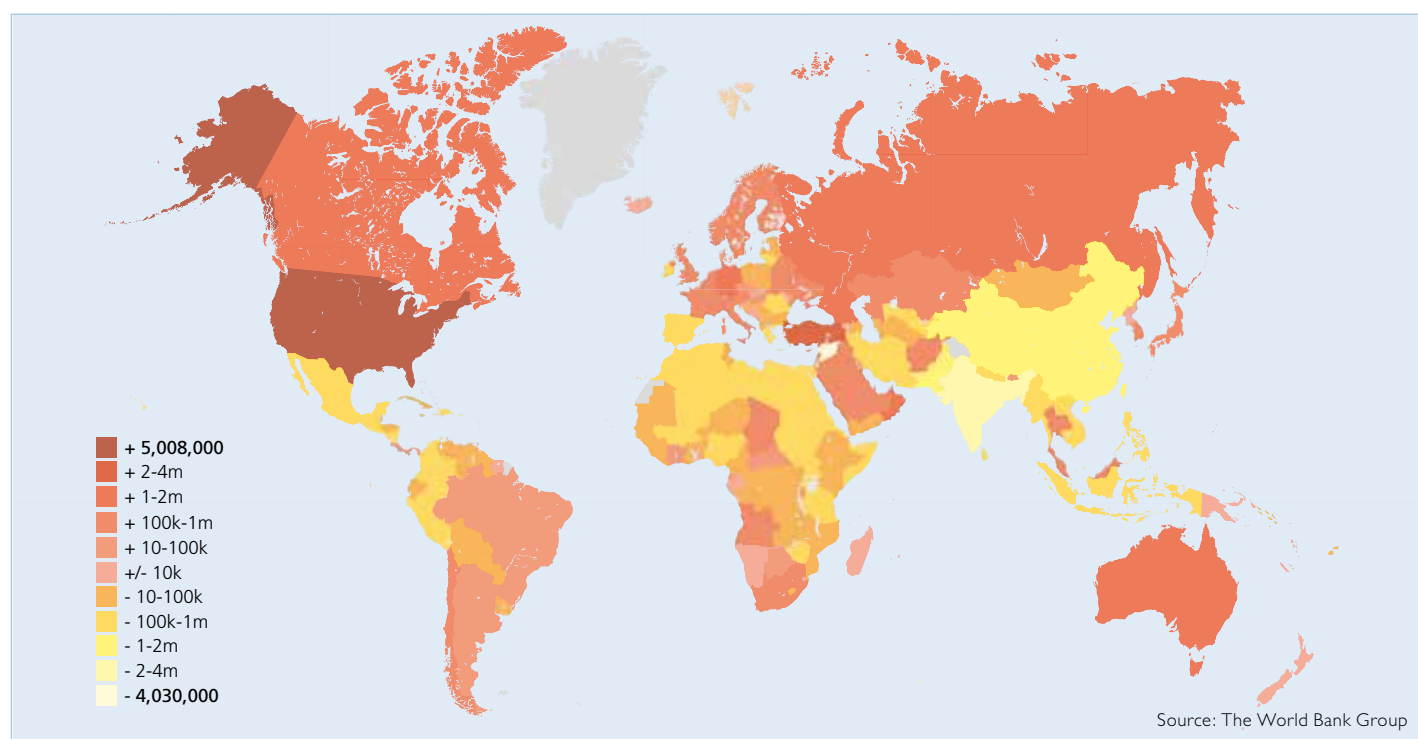
Lukas Gehrke, a director at the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), agrees: “It depends on how migration is framed. It’s a function of development. But you can’t say from the outset whether migration is positive or negative—it depends on what frameworks are in place and how migration plays out between countries, in communities and in the labor market.”

A case in point, of course, is the current situation in Europe. In this very magazine (see page 10), the Director-General of the ICMPD, Michael Spindelegger, urges better migration ‘management.’ Calling for the set-up of a new think-tank, he says: “These issues will remain the topic for politics this year, next year, and the years to come. I think this is really an issue where we have to come along with long-term solutions.”

Well-managed?

When migration is managed correctly, there is consensus that the positives outweigh the negatives. Indeed, maximizing the positive relationship between migration and development has long been the focus of both inter- and non-governmental organizations. Take the IOM’s migration and development programs, for instance, which aim to generate a better understanding of

Global net migration rates (2011-2015)



the links between international migration and development to harness the development potential of migration for the benefit of both societies and migrants. The long-term goal of this and organizations like it is to foster sustainable development and reduce the socioeconomic factors that continue to keep people in poverty. By engaging Diasporas with their countries of origin, the IOM builds partnerships with home country institutions, authorities and businesses to transfer skills and knowledge to meet the developmental needs of the country.

Helena Wray is an associate professor at Middlesex University and is an expert in migration law. She argues that at its most basic, and subject to complex contextual factors, migration is a way of reducing inequality, giving migrants access to better paid jobs and the ability to send remittances. “If we’re to have a globalized world with the free movement of capital and services, I can’t see how we can simply block the free movement of people,” she says.

Gehrke says that remittances, or amounts of money earned by migrants in their country of residence and sent to their country of origin, can be extremely beneficial: “Across the board, remittances are three times higher than official development aid,” he explains. “The usual criticism is that they’re used for consumption. But there are multiplier effects involved: consumption increases demand, production, tax revenue and more.” He says that one current clear-cut policy drive is toward reducing the costs of remittances so that intended recipients get more, rather than banks or money transfer services.

Caution: the name of the game

Ambrosi is more cautious: “We hear very discordant voices about whether remittances have a positive or negative impact on factors such as poverty, inequalities, etc.” Again, it’s all about context, he argues. It depends, among other things, on the policies in place in both the home and destination countries, as well as on the migratory experience of those who actually send money home.

There are more specific risks to consider: “Dependency on remittances can bring about risks at the macro level when, for instance, they come from single sources,” he continues. This was seen when the ruble was devalued, bringing about serious problems in countries neighboring Russia that depended on ruble-denominated remittances.

It’s a similar story when it comes to the developmental ramifications of migrants returning

to their country of origin. It’s easy to imagine this as a largely positive process, as returnees bring home capital, skills and experiences. But Gehrke urges caution. “Imagine a fragile country, such as post-war Syria, with massive numbers of returnees,” he says. “You can see how it would negatively impact a reconciliation or peace process, for example. Economies could be overwhelmed.”

Again, context is the name of the game. The World Bank’s World Development Report of 2013 notes that returning migrants bring with them entrepreneurial and technical abilities that can increase their home country’s productivity: “Beyond the individual benefits are societal benefits that may extend to the proliferation of a whole industry and the creation of new jobs in an entire locality. Bangalore and Hyderabad in India illustrate this point: returning migrants set up information technology and communication companies to take advantage of their previous experience and links with international companies.”

According to the India Brand Equity Foundation, India is now the world’s largest sourcing destination for the IT industry, accounting for approximately 67 percent of the US\$124–130bn market. The industry employs about ten million people, it states, and has led India’s economic transformation and altered the perception of the country in the global economy.

Non-revolutionary

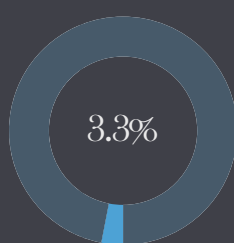
But not every group of returning migrants will revolutionize an industry, of course. While return is seen as a very important aspect of the link between migration and development, nothing can be taken for granted. The success of return “depends on preparedness and willingness,” says Ambrosi. “Part of the success of return is linked to the conditions under which migrants find themselves in their host country: integration policies, access to rights, work conditions, and more.” Migrants forced to return or who experience interrupted or unsuccessful migration cycles are less likely to have the capacity to successfully reintegrate than migrants who had the opportunity to carefully prepare their return, for instance.

Integration policies are particularly important. It stands to reason that the more integrated a migrant is in her destination country’s labor market, the more she is able to participate in everyday life and engage in more complex interactions; not simply sending money home, but establishing trade relations and perhaps even setting up a business. But again, suitable ►

“If we’re to have a globalized world with the free movement of capital and services, I can’t see how we can simply block the free movement of people.”

HELENA WRAY

244 million
Estimated number of international migrants worldwide



Percentage of the world's population who are migrants

In other words, one out of every 33 persons in the world today is a migrant.

The percentage of migrants has remained relatively stable as a share of the total population, increasing by only 0.2 percent, over the last decade.

However, the percentage of migrants varies greatly from country to country. Countries with a high percentage of migrants include Qatar (87 percent), United Arab Emirates (70 percent), Jordan (46 percent), Singapore (41 percent), and Saudi Arabia (28 percent).

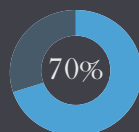
Countries with a low percentage of migrants include South Africa (3.7 percent), Slovakia (2.4 percent), Turkey (1.9 percent), Japan (1.7 percent), Nigeria (0.7 percent), Romania (0.6 percent), India (0.4 percent) and Indonesia (0.1 percent)

5th Migrants would constitute the fifth most populous country in the world

Migration is now more widely distributed across more countries. Today the top 10 countries of destination receive a smaller share of all migrants than in 2000



Percentage of migrants worldwide who are women



US\$ 440 billion

Estimated remittances sent by migrants to developing countries in 2015

Estimated remittances sent by migrants in 2015

The actual amount, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be significantly larger.

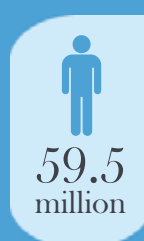
Rich countries are the main source of remittances. The United States is by far the largest, with US\$48.3bn in recorded outward flows in 2009. Saudi Arabia ranks as the second largest, followed by Switzerland and Russia.

US\$ 586 billion



Number of refugees in the world in 2014

Globally, one in every 122 humans is now either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum. If this were the population of a country, it would be the world's 24th biggest.



Internally displaced persons in the world in 2014

higher than it has been at any time since World War II.

Data compiled by International Organization for Migration (IOM) from a variety of sources.



◀ frameworks must be in place to prevent the much maligned potential of migrant workers to undercut and displace a destination country's workforce.

Wray, like most people, recognizes that migration is here to stay. "Immigration controls are relatively new things; people forget this," she says. "People think we ought to be able to make the controls work. My view is that we're never going to be able to make them work within democratic states in the way that they are currently conceived, as a tap to be turned on and off. We should be looking at ways of making migration more manageable, less dangerous and accepting it as part of our lives."

If there's any doubt that we need to do this, consider the following. The IOM notes that each year, 40 million newcomers enter the workforce, worldwide. Most of this labor force growth, it says, occurs in developing countries, where economies are not able to generate a sufficient number of jobs to absorb this growth. The scarcity of decent jobs in those countries is an important migration push factor. At the same time, most advanced economies see a continuous decline in their working age population, resulting in labor shortages. Eurostat population projections forecast a loss of more than 19 million in labor supply in the EU between 2023 and 2060. "Developing policies and programs that serve to organize labor migration to respond to the labor market will become increasingly important to the EU as demographic changes unfold," says Ambrosi.

Hard to find consensus

The problem is, consensus on just what those programs and policies look like is hard to find. What does appear clear is that we'll not find a proper way of dealing with the situation on a national level. The building of fences and the reintroduction of border controls will not work. "If you seal yourself off and create gated communities on a country level, it will impact trade and the economy, and all the other aspects central to European integration," says Gehrke. "Europe and other regions will realise that co-operation is essential."

For Gehrke, the main thing to focus on is "how to make migration a better experience: for migrants, their home countries and their receiving countries." To answer this, it's important to look at sectoral policies in health, education, environment, labor and other areas and analyze how each policy actually affects and is affected by migration. Only then can countries respond through policies that aim to effectively integrate

migration. This is the approach of 'mainstreaming migration,' something that's valid in home as well as in host countries.

One problem, among many, many others with the current situation in Europe is that it's moved the migration debate backwards, not forwards. "Everything was set to go deeper into understanding migration as a factor in global development," says Gehrke. "There were pilot programs set up to invest in training foreign workers, but the situation has now completely changed. It will take a long time until we can discuss Europe as a destination in support of development processes expressed through migration. This will set us back let's say ten years or so until we have overcome the present situation and the people who have arrived have the possibilities to participate in and contribute productively to society."

But despite what happens in Europe, the world keeps turning. Many regions of Africa, for example, continue their efforts to create larger spaces of mobility with the right framework to support regional mobility. And this trend will continue, as will the number of international migrants, as the world becomes more mobile. In turn, the challenges will increase. Global mobility is not easily facilitated.

One of the most important focuses, going forward, is a common approach. "One million migrants are a drop of water in a Europe of more than 500 million people," says Ambrosi. "Moreover, these migrants bring with them skills and a wide range of opportunities. It's a matter of accepting migration as a part of reality—not as a fatality but, rather, as a dynamic to take into account when formulating policies."

What is sure is that migration will not stop, and, contrary to public perception, it's not a problem to be eradicated, but simply a reality that countries and governments need to turn into an opportunity. As Wray says: "I'd like to see a turnaround in the negative way it's talked about; more of an acceptance that it's going to happen: like King Canute who accepted the futility of any attempts to turn back the tide. We're now a globalized world, after all." ■



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.



Carpe diem: Time for concerted action and a long-term perspective



For some observers, the current migration crisis is seen as an opportunity to address the issue in all its forms and develop long-term, global responses.

Michael Spindelegger, former Austrian foreign minister and newly-appointed director-general of the Vienna-based International Center for Migration Policy Development, is a prominent proponent of this view. He explains why in this exclusive interview with the *Quarterly*.

INTERVIEW BY AUDREY HAYLINS

OQ: Given the controversy currently surrounding the issue of migration, you have assumed your new role at a difficult time. Do you find this challenge daunting or exciting?

MS: For me, of course, it is very exciting. As you know, I started January 1 this year as the new director-general of ICMPD, and it is clear to me that what is needed is a holistic concept for all aspects of migration. It's about legal migration, and it's also about dealing with asylum-seekers as well as irregular migrants. I think, if you have a concept—a real holistic concept—where you also focus on the root causes, starting in the countries that people leave, we can advance towards a better solution to the current crisis—and to managing migration effectively in the long run.

OQ: You have been involved in migration dialogue and policy-making for many years before coming to this position; what are the issues that most concern you?

MS: At the moment, of course it is Syria. But it is not only this issue, which on its own we could probably handle. There are many states in crisis, and their numbers are increasing. This is of great concern to me. We must think beyond just welcoming the refugees fleeing the conflict; we

must also think about legal migration, while we develop suitable responses that take into account the specifics of every situation. The international community, as well as the member-states of the European Union and its neighbors should also be involved in this.

OQ: *The current refugee crisis has polarized opinion around Europe. Do you think the situation has been handled as well as it might have been? What lessons have we learned from this?*

MS: It has not been managed very well. It is obvious, as we see the divergent positions among member countries of the EU and the poor cooperation within the community. We have to learn how to manage these migration flows better. There is a clear need for innovative responses—responses that are more future-oriented. Think-tanks can develop such fresh ideas. These issues will remain a major topic for politics this year, next year, and in the years to come. For me it is clear that migration requires a long-term perspective.

OQ: *Do you think policies can really help when you are faced with emergency situations where huge numbers of refugees are on the move at the same time?*

MS: The problem last year was that emergency situations triggered ad-hoc reactions, as nobody was sufficiently prepared. This is why we need to persuade governments and organizations to convene and consider the details of all aspects. For example, as long as you are not addressing the root causes in the countries of origin, you will not be able to handle the situation. I find a certain situation to be especially risky: when potential destination countries give the impression that they don't have control over the situation, then they send a dangerous signal. For that reason, Europe needs to come forth with coherent solutions.

OQ: *How would you describe Austria's reaction to this emergency?*

MS: Undoubtedly, Austria is among those European countries affected the most. There are refugees transiting through Austria to Germany, and many refugees also choose to remain in Austria. Last year, there was no need to convince the Austrian public of the need for protection and support for the refugees fleeing out of Syria. Austrians understand their right for a safe haven. But if you take a closer look at the numbers, many people coming to Austria increasingly originate from Pakistan, Southern Mediterranean or African countries. There is a need to

distinguish between refugees fleeing war and those people who look for work and a better future. And I think this is one of the issues we must handle better in the future.

OQ: *Would you agree that the Austrian people have reacted well to offering help and assistance to the refugees coming through Austria?*

MS: We have seen different signals. Many Austrians were at the railway stations to welcome the refugees, especially from Syria; but some have become increasingly critical toward continued inflows of refugees and asylum seekers. Austria has had similar experiences in the recent past: we welcomed migrants fleeing the crises in Hungary, the Czech Republic, the former Yugoslavia, and I think that this should be continued. But, of course, the numbers are different today, and for that reason it is necessary to have a more holistic approach to the current situation.

OQ: *Do you share the opinion of some politicians that the refugee crisis can be turned into a positive force—both for the refugees themselves and the countries they settle in?*

MS: Countries like Austria and Germany have aging societies, so they can only benefit from having more young people settling here and joining the workforce. Our social security systems, for example, are unsustainable with a predominantly elderly demographic. But it seems that at the moment Europeans can't differentiate very well between what is needed and what is overwhelming them. There is a clear need for a more legal migration path to Austria, to Germany, to all of Central Europe, but we need to explain to the citizens of these countries that immigration is the right way to go. This would probably require a campaign of sorts to raise awareness and understanding among the population of what is needed for their societies to be fit for the future.

OQ: *What would you see as the better solution for refugees: temporary resettlement with a view to eventual repatriation, or permanent integration in their new host countries?*

MS: In general, I think, almost everybody who is fleeing their country because of war considers return. In Germany, for example, research shows that 80 percent of Syrian refugees are willing to go back when the war ends. Therefore, first and foremost, we need to do everything possible to bring peace to Syria. Then, we could start to repatriate the refugees and support them through resettlement programs which would ►

"It is clear to me that what is needed is a holistic concept for all aspects of migration."

MICHAEL SPINDELEGGER



“There is a clear need for a more legal migration path to Austria, to Germany, to all of Central Europe, but we need to explain to the citizens of these countries that immigration is the right way to go.”

◀ also help them build solid foundations for their future. Those who are willing to return home should be helped to do so. Of course, some percentage will also stay in Europe, and we have to do everything in our power to give them the possibilities to integrate successfully. Integration programs are also very much needed, and my organization is doing a lot in this regard.

OOQ: *Migration—both voluntary and involuntary—has become a fixture of modern society. How is the international community addressing the issue to ensure that the risks—for example, exploitation, human trafficking, etc.—are minimized?*

MS: The international community could do more. Currently we see desperate people paying large amounts of money to smugglers—sometimes only to arrive in their destination country and not find what they were expecting. The better way is to have more possibilities for legal migration. This is something that Europe has to improve and we as an organization, as ICMPD, could provide a forum for discussion, listening to everyone’s concerns and proposing innovative as well as realistic solutions.

OOQ: *So, essentially, it’s all about creating an international legal framework?*

MS: Absolutely, because this is an international concern. For this reason, everybody has to be involved, including the United Nations and organizations like OFID, which work to improve the situation in the countries people are fleeing from. Everything has its place, and we have to bring that together in one holistic concept—a new migration architecture if you like.

OOQ: *How satisfied are you with the way migration has been addressed in the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?*

MS: If you compare the old development goals and the sustainable development goals, there has been a lot of progress. The new agenda is much more comprehensive and better designed to address today’s complex challenges. Migration, unfortunately, is not an independent goal, though it is addressed in different parts; it is integrated. This is always an ongoing process. Maybe with the release of the next goals in fifteen years, sound migration management will be one of the primary goals. ■



Hands up for human rights

The movement of persons is an international term. It affects every region of the world, presupposing a triangular relationship between countries of origin, transit and destination. Beyond this relationship lies a deeper construction, shaped by the more complex interaction between the nation state, its nationals and the international migrant. The cumulative effect of these relationships has moved migrants from the sidelines into the mainstream of human rights law.

Though intertwined with controversy, the rights of migrants have a long history in the legal structure governing the world's nations. From the Roman law of nations, through to Christian natural law, Islamic Siyar, or contemporary international law, all reflect intellectual efforts to create common international humanitarian standards.

However, the fact that the direct or indirect rights of immigrants have been included in various legal systems, does not offer protection from recurrent or unexpected problems and the need for improved solutions. A nation's legal system, and with it its individual notion of human rights, depends on that country's political structure and

In this essay on migration and human rights, OFID legal counsel, **Nastaran Sharif**, examines the evolving understanding of the rights of migrants and refugees, focusing on recurring or unexpected problems and the subsequent international response.

economic status, as well as the cultural orientation of the government and people.

This "world-view" often determines the relation between domestic interests and the positions countries take when implementing international human rights. Efforts to merge the historic law of migrants into contemporary human rights law have been ongoing. International human rights law, deriving from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, forms the basis of a new principle. It calls for "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms." However, although there is clear global political will to act, the formation and implementation of the law is a never-ending process. ►



PHOTO: VERVERIDIS/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

In 2015, over one million migrants and asylum seekers set out on an odyssey to reach Europe's shores by crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

The European Union: A case study

◀ In 2015, over one million migrants and asylum seekers set out on an odyssey to reach Europe's shores by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Many lost their lives before reaching the mainland. For those that reached it, the EU applied the long negotiated system of what is known as the "Common European Asylum System" (CEAS).

The system is intended to ensure that refugee rights are upheld in the Union's Member States. It outlines minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as the procedures for making decisions on asylum claims. Although the CEAS requires all 28 EU Member States to "harmonize" the various aspects of their asylum policy, its implementation has produced uneven results.

Under the CEAS, the country that first provides access to the EU is responsible for processing an asylum claim. As most migrants arrived from the South in 2015, countries such as Greece

had to carry the responsibility of providing access to migrants and managing asylum claims. Debt-stricken Greece was unable to cope with the influx. What followed was the breakdown of the CEAS.

Overwhelmed by the sheer number of refugees, countries such as Greece, Hungary and Italy failed to uphold their obligation under the CEAS and international and European human rights standards. Judicial decisions imposing stricter transit rules were considered the only alternative. Asylum seekers, unlike EU citizens and tourists, do not have the right to move freely within the common borders of Europe's so called "Schengen area."

The unexpected problems resulting from the CEAS, translated into the temporarily exit of countries such as Germany and Austria from Schengen. Border controls were reintroduced and fences, such as those seen in Bulgaria or Hungary, were erected—a move legal academics describe as a threat to the Schengen system

and the international principles of human rights. Carried by the fear of failing to preserve their own national interests, several EU member states have been reluctant to receive refugees.

The EU's external borders have increasingly been the scenes of human tragedies. Recognizing this, the EU set out to establish more effective management tools for its Member States. After heavy negotiations, the Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration in May 2015. The Agenda provides some medium- and long-term solutions. Its acceptance signified a change in the "world-view" of reluctant governments. Efforts to provide improved solutions to recurring and unforeseen problems have been key to this achievement.

Migrants are now to be granted legal access to countries with more capacity for relocation. In the next two years, some 160,000 people will be relocated in the EU by way of transit through countries such as Hungary, Greece and Italy. To ensure the necessary provision of human rights in the management of migrants, the EU intends to further aid host and transit countries like

Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Granting €1bn to world food programs aims to further reduce the refugee inflow into Europe by improving the conditions of migrants outside the EU.

Frontex, the EU border agency, is to receive increased funding. This is to safeguard the legal resettlement of people into the EU by way of a better identification and registration program. To counter criminal networks, the role of Europol is being strengthened. A common security defense policy will counter the smuggling and exploitation of migrants in the Mediterranean. Regional protection and development programs are being established and emergency systems, as provided for under the EU's founding Treaties, are being activated.

In the end, by including non-EU transit and host countries, the improved EU solution goes beyond the internal management of migrants and asylum seekers. This in turn, not only strengthens the human rights element in the management of migrants and refugees, but also seeks to assuage fears of those member governments concerned with the protection of their own national interests. ►

Main European migration routes

Detections of illegal border crossings
January–December 2015

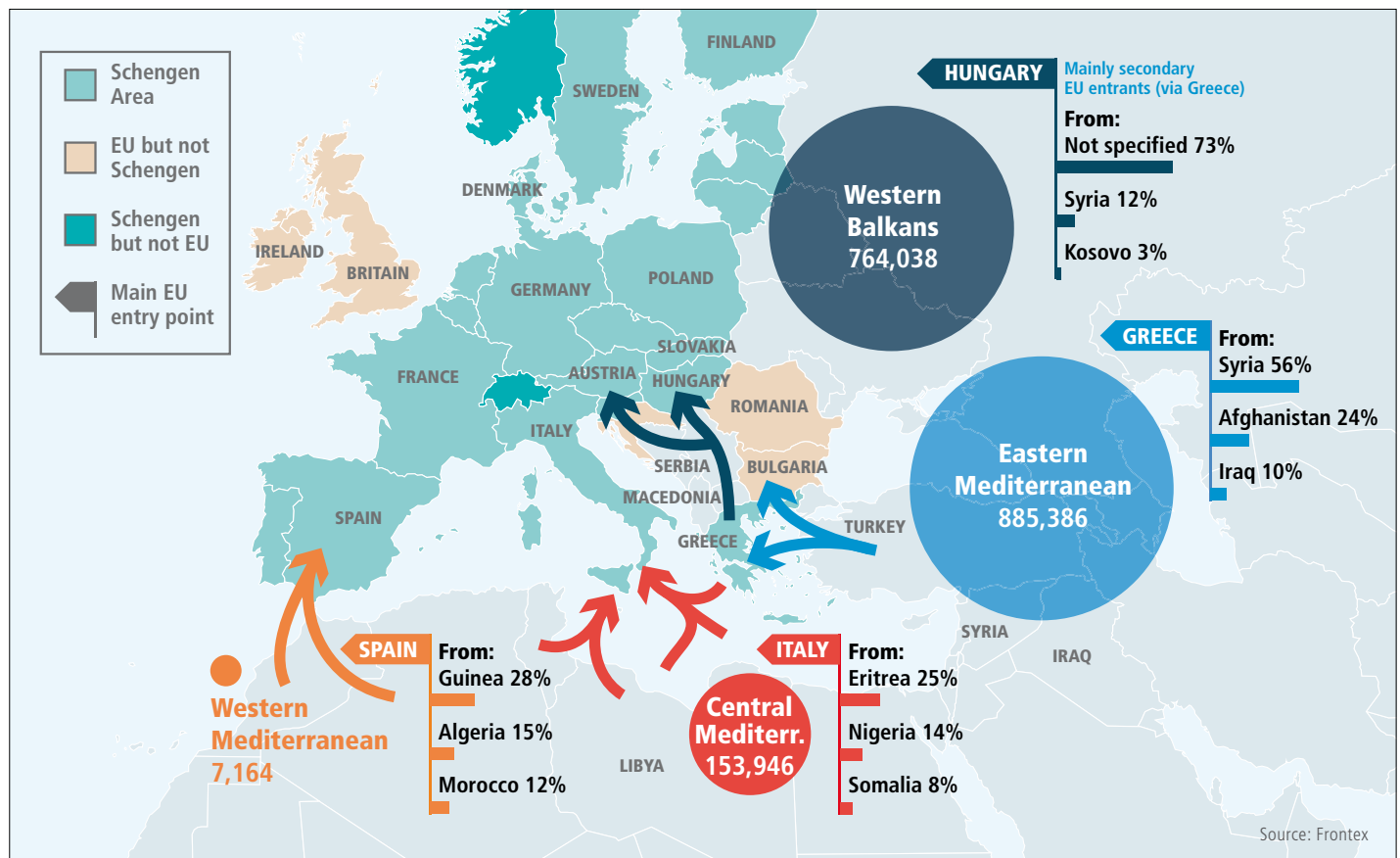




PHOTO: GIUSEPPE CICCIA/DEHOTIX/CORBIS

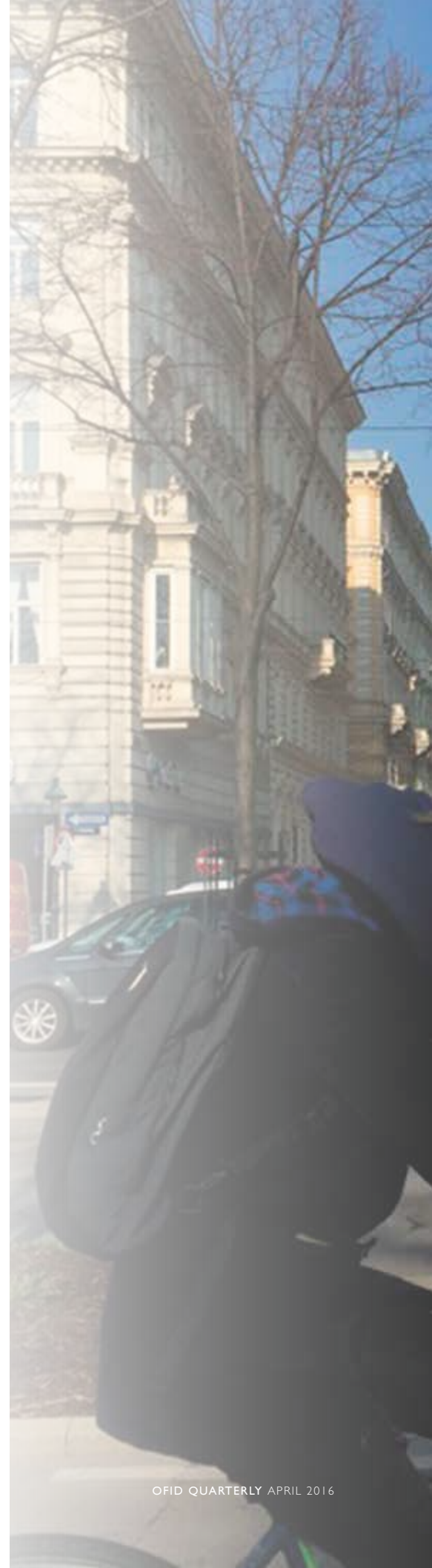
National action plans increasingly address the long-term goals of effective relocation. This includes access to the host society by way of language training, civil studies and practical information on public services.

Benefit beyond borders

◀ Nonetheless, as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, insists, “The protection of migrants is an urgent and growing human rights challenge.” The human rights of migrants are a universal necessity and provide more benefits than harm. As commonly seen throughout world history, migrants can greatly contribute to economic growth and human development. In 2015, there were an estimated 244 million international migrants around the globe. If carried out effectively, relocation could not only strengthen the workforce in host countries, but also the economies of the countries of origin. Migration enriches cultural diversity and fosters understanding and respect. The specific inclusion of the migrant in relevant national action plans can serve both national interest and beyond.

National action plans increasingly address the long-term goals of effective relocation. This includes access to the host society by way of language training, civil studies and practical information on public services. While such measures are a step in the right direction, for relocation to truly function, both the citizens and migrants must understand one another. This may often mean overcoming deeply rooted prejudices and misconceptions.

The reluctance to accept a migrant into one’s society—or a migrant’s reluctance to fully integrate into the host society—stems from the well-documented fear of the “other” or the unknown. One way of transforming such fears is through access to adequate information; a straightforward task in today’s hi-tech society. Simply asking questions, however, may not be enough; even more important is hearing the answers. Perhaps then, historic humanity can be brought back into contemporary human rights. ■



Equal dreams: The right of all children, everywhere

Child refugees are the most innocent and voiceless victims of conflict and other crises. As part of its 40th anniversary commitment to highlighting the plight of refugees, OFID's *Equal Dreams* campaign places the needs and rights of the child firmly in the spotlight.

BY REEM ALJARBOU AND NADIA BENAMARA

All children have dreams. Today, more than half of all refugees are children, which means that over thirty million children worldwide can only dream of securing a stable home and future. Displaced by war and other ongoing emergencies, these children are losing access to essential rights, including their right to receive an education and to play.

OFID's *Equal Dreams* campaign aims to shed light on the obstacles children face when their lives have been so disrupted. The campaign title refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which explicitly recognizes the right of every child to engage in cultural, artistic and recreational activities. By addressing the current refugee crisis from a child's perspective, OFID hopes to promote the incontrovertible equality of all children's dreams. ►





Renowned humanitarian aid worker, Kilian Kleinschmidt, addresses OFID staff against the dramatic backdrop of the *Tree of Hope*.

“Unless we reach these children now with assistance to protect them from violence, abuse, and exploitation, education to foster their minds and their resilience, and support to heal the hidden wounds of a merciless war and strengthen social cohesion, the hopes of an entire generation could be lost forever.”

No Lost Generation Campaign,
UNHCR

◀ Mid-March, OFID rolled out an associated media campaign in its host city, Vienna, Austria, which has become a key transit point for the roughly 1.1 million refugees who have arrived on European shores since 2015. One-third of them are children.

Embedded alongside coupled portraits of children from contrasting backgrounds is a simple message of solidarity. Its overriding objective is to counter prejudice and highlight the universality of human aspiration.

English and German language versions of the campaign are currently being channeled online as well as through print magazines, video screens at Vienna’s international airport, street-car exteriors and advertising pillars around the city’s central *Ringstrasse*, and on the facade of OFID’s HQ building.

Equal Dreams was conceived in partnership with the international *Child of Play* initiative founded by Austrian artists Lukas Hüller and Hannes Seebacher. Refugee children were photographed onsite at the Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Austrian children participated courtesy of the *Öffentliches Gymnasium der Franziskaner* in Hall, Tyrol.

Tree of Hope

The campaign officially kicked off at OFID headquarters in Vienna, January 19. Addressing OFID staff and a small number of special guests, OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish focused his opening remarks on the *Tree of Hope* exhibited in OFID’s atrium.



Artists Hannes Seebacher (left) and Lukas Hüller, are the masterminds behind the *Child of Play* initiative, which promotes the right of every child to engage in free play.

An enormous scale photograph of the Zaatari camp, the *Tree of Hope* is a stunning picture precisely because it is a staged picture; a utopian vision created together with some 350 refugee children, who were given a chance to actually be children.

“We display this beautiful work here to signify and emphasize our commitment to the tragedy unfolding around us,” said Al-Herbish.

Gazing at the picture every day anew had led him to a simple conclusion: “It is a wake-up call, but we have been living with the plight of Palestinian refugees for more than 65 years, so I don’t know how many more wake-up calls we need.”

Tree of Hope is the outcome of a multi-week creative workshop developed and implemented by the *Child of Play* initiative.

Child of Play encourages every child's right to play whilst instilling universal values of tolerance and understanding amongst marginalized children and youth in particular. *Child of Play* thus aspires to help build better integrated, more sustainable communities.

Founder, Lukas Hüller, detailed one of the challenges they encountered at Zaatari camp, which is host to some 60,000 refugee children.

The artists had been working with a select group in a fenced-in area when children outside the perimeter started pelting them with stones.

Unsure how to handle the situation, the artists spontaneously decided to open the gates.

"All the kids outside dropped the stones and ran into the zone, screaming, because they just wanted to play," said Hüller.

Renowned humanitarian aid worker, Kilian Kleinschmidt, who managed Zaatari camp as

part of his 25 year tenure with the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, drove this point home.

"The children of Zaatari taught us that one of the most shocking consequences of displacement and poverty is that children lose their childhood. Children lose the capacity to actually act as children."

Children currently constitute the largest group of displaced people in the world. According to Kleinschmidt, our world will break unless we can provide these lost generations with hope, humanity and perspectives for their future.

"My appeal here is to get away from charity and move towards a sharing economy," said Kleinschmidt. "[We must] share the know-how of technologies; share what we have learned. Somewhere in the world, there is a solution to all our problems."

Congratulating OFID on four decades of progress, he concluded: "Your organization has achieved a lot. Your organization *will* achieve a lot. But we can only do that all together, as the world community."



"It is through the eyes of children that we will see the suffering of the people."

KILIAN KLEINSCHMIDT



www.childofplay.com







OFID in the Field

For decades, OFID has reached out to the displaced and dispossessed, not just to meet immediate needs through the provision of shelter and sustenance, but also to tackle the longer-term challenges of eventual resettlement and reintegration. Where refugees face continued displacement, as in the case of Palestinians, OFID helps to build solutions for a more sustainable future. The impact stories in the following pages highlight different aspects of OFID's work with refugee populations.



Providing a safe return for Bosnia and Herzegovina's refugees

In 2004, more than a decade after the Balkan war of the early 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina still faced enormous challenges in resettling its refugees. By supporting a housing reconstruction program, OFID has not only put roofs over people's heads, but also contributed to the sustainable economic and social development of the country.

BY AUDREY HAYLINS AND ALESANDRA SOLANO

When the Dayton Peace Accord was signed in October 1995, it brought an end to one of the bloodiest conflicts in Balkan history. While the accord signaled a new beginning for the fledgling state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was also the start of a long and difficult road to reconstruction.

One of the greatest challenges the newly independent country faced was that of displacement. By the time hostilities ceased, more than half the pre-war population had fled their homes. Around 1.2 million left their homeland to seek refuge in more than 100 countries worldwide. A further one million people were internally displaced.

As part of its general framework for peace, the Dayton agreement specifically addressed the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, who were encouraged to return to their homes of origin. To support this, the accord allowed for the creation of a mechanism to ensure the enforcement of the property rights of the displaced.

But even with such a mechanism in place, progress was hampered by the fact that the war

PHOTO: MINISTRY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES OF BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA.



OFID has helped to build around 700 new homes to replace some of the 500,000 damaged or destroyed during the Balkan conflict.



had either partially or completely destroyed nearly 500,000 homes—almost half of the total housing units in the country.

Despite the obstacles, by 2004, around 200,000 property claims had been processed and around one million people had returned home. Of the remaining refugees and displaced persons, large numbers were willing to return to their pre-war communities but were unable to do so because reconstruction assistance was limited. And, while great strides had been made in rehabilitating basic infrastructure, healthcare and education services were inadequate and jobs few and far between.

Progress was further aggravated by the drop-off in international donor assistance at the very time that it was most needed to help resettle vulnerable and needy populations. As the country started emerging from the recovery and reconstruction phase, shrinking external resources were being channeled toward economic development, institution strengthening and fiscal reform rather than the resettlement and reintegration of the people.

It was at this point that Bosnia and Herzegovina joined with neighbors Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to launch the “Joint Regional Program on Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons.” The program was—and continues to be—supported by international donors and, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, set out to provide durable and sustainable housing solutions for some 14,000 individuals.

Encouraging returns

When OFID stepped in with an offer of assistance, it had already been cooperating with the young country for seven years through support to the rehabilitation of the education system and the revival of small-scale commercial livestock production.

The new US\$7m loan approved in December 2004 was dedicated to aiding the efforts of the housing reconstruction program. Specifically, the project aimed to rebuild 700 houses and provide decent accommodation for about 3,000 people living in substandard and unstable conditions. A key objective was to reduce the number of displaced people living in collective centers and provide for future spontaneous return cases.

The rebuilding of the houses was done either through contracted works or, when appropriate, by the beneficiaries themselves, using materials provided under the project. In such cases, a self-help allowance was provided. Most of the units tackled by the project fell into the highest damage category.

A spin-off benefit of the project has been the employment opportunities generated through the procurement of local services and building materials. This has helped greatly in supporting the reintegration of the returnees and the creation of safe and stable communities. As homes have been rebuilt, so have countless lives, enabling thousands of people to live once again in safety and dignity. ■

Rwanda: Breaking the stereotype

Rwanda has shattered countless stereotypes, rising like a phoenix from the ashes of a devastating civil war to create a new identity that pulsates with promise. OFID has been a key partner in the country's reconstruction, including the resettlement of refugees.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

The “umuganda,” which translates as “all united by a common purpose for the same result,” occurs on the last Saturday of each month. It is an old rural tradition, adjusted for modern times, which requires every Rwandan aged between 18 and 65 to participate in the cleaning up of neighborhood streets and sidewalks. That day, traffic is prohibited and stores do not open until noon. By working as a community, individuals strengthen the sense of reconciliation and unity.

Ilham Al-Gadhamsi, OFID country officer for Rwanda, recalls her visit there last year: “I did not see a single person, man or woman, sitting idle. If they weren't carrying products or sweeping the streets, they were weeding the immaculate lawns with their bare hands. In fact, the streets of Kigali were so clean, the green areas so well kept, that I immediately understood why Rwanda is also known as the ‘Switzerland of Africa.’”

But cleanliness is not the only indication of the transformation wrought in a country infamous for a 100-day genocide that claimed up to one million lives, left millions more displaced and destroyed the entire social and economic fabric of a nation. Today, 21 years after that horrific blot on its history, Rwanda is a model of stability and posted an economic growth rate of 4.7 percent in 2015.

This stability is underpinned by the government's close alignment with the Rwanda Development Board, which aims to transform the country into a dynamic global hub for business, investment, and innovation. It has been so successful that the World Bank recently ranked Rwanda 62nd out of 189 countries for regulatory quality and efficiency. In sub-Saharan Africa, only Mauritius—at 32—is ranked higher. The average ranking across the sub-region is 143.

OFID support offered to ease the life of refugees

With foreign aid representing approximately 40 percent of its annual budget, Rwanda is a highly aid-dependent country. While external support has been used with a remarkable degree of effectiveness, the government is committed to reducing this dependency over the medium term.

OFID's cooperation with Rwanda dates back to 1977 and has included assistance to the country's socioeconomic development, as well as efforts to repair the immense damage caused by the conflict. In 1999, OFID joined forces with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to co-finance the Umutara Community Resource and Infrastructure Development Project. OFID later participated in the second phase of the same project.

The province of Umutara, a former wild game reserve, was created specifically for the resettlement and reintegration of refugees and victims of the war. Originally conceived as a livestock and rangeland development project, a pre-appraisal of the area highlighted the critical need for potable water and transport infrastructure. Both factors were considered of high priority for the sustainability of the project, which was designed to improve the productive capacity of agricultural communities.

Anajulia Taylhardat, OFID regional director for Latin American, the Caribbean and Europe, was the officer in charge of the project at the time. “OFID's contribution was channeled

in support of the infrastructure component, which comprised rural water supply and roads. As part of the program, we also contributed to community development and capacity building,” she explained.

The water supply component involved the drilling of some 800 boreholes to serve approximately 40,000 households, and the construction of 600 hand pumps and 100 roof catchment systems. During the second phase of the project, 30 valley dams were rehabilitated, 14 new ones were constructed, and 69 new boreholes for 88,000 head of cattle were established.

The transport component comprised the construction and upgrading of over 450km of farm-to-market feeder roads to provide every farming household with access to an all-weather road within 5km. These roads made possible the flow of inputs such as seeds and fertilizers to farms and the subsequent output of produce to market, generating huge economic benefits for the returning refugees and other settlers.

The wider project, which took a participatory, community-based approach, helped to promote technology generation and transfer and set up microfinance institutions, all as a means of supporting small and medium-size enterpris-

es for income diversification and employment generation. Special emphasis was placed on the participation of women. The total number of beneficiaries was estimated at 500,000 people.

Anajulia Taylhardat describes Rwanda—the most densely populated country in Africa—as a “gem” in terms of engaging in the development effectiveness arena and taken strong country ownership of development support, “which is benefiting the entire Rwandan population.” Although poverty levels remain high, the Umutara project was the first step toward achieving the position that the country holds today.

Deservedly, OFID shares the “Umuganda” feeling. The organization’s commitment is embodied in the support it has provided throughout the years to almost 50 projects in areas as diverse as transport, energy, water, agriculture, health and education, as well as the development of small and medium-size enterprises.

Through its close association with the country, OFID has witnessed the rebirth of a nation. Rwanda is also a good example of how aid put to good use can achieve its intended purpose: sustainable development and poverty reduction. ■

With its wealth of peaceful landscapes, modern Rwanda is light years away from the war-torn country of the 1990s.

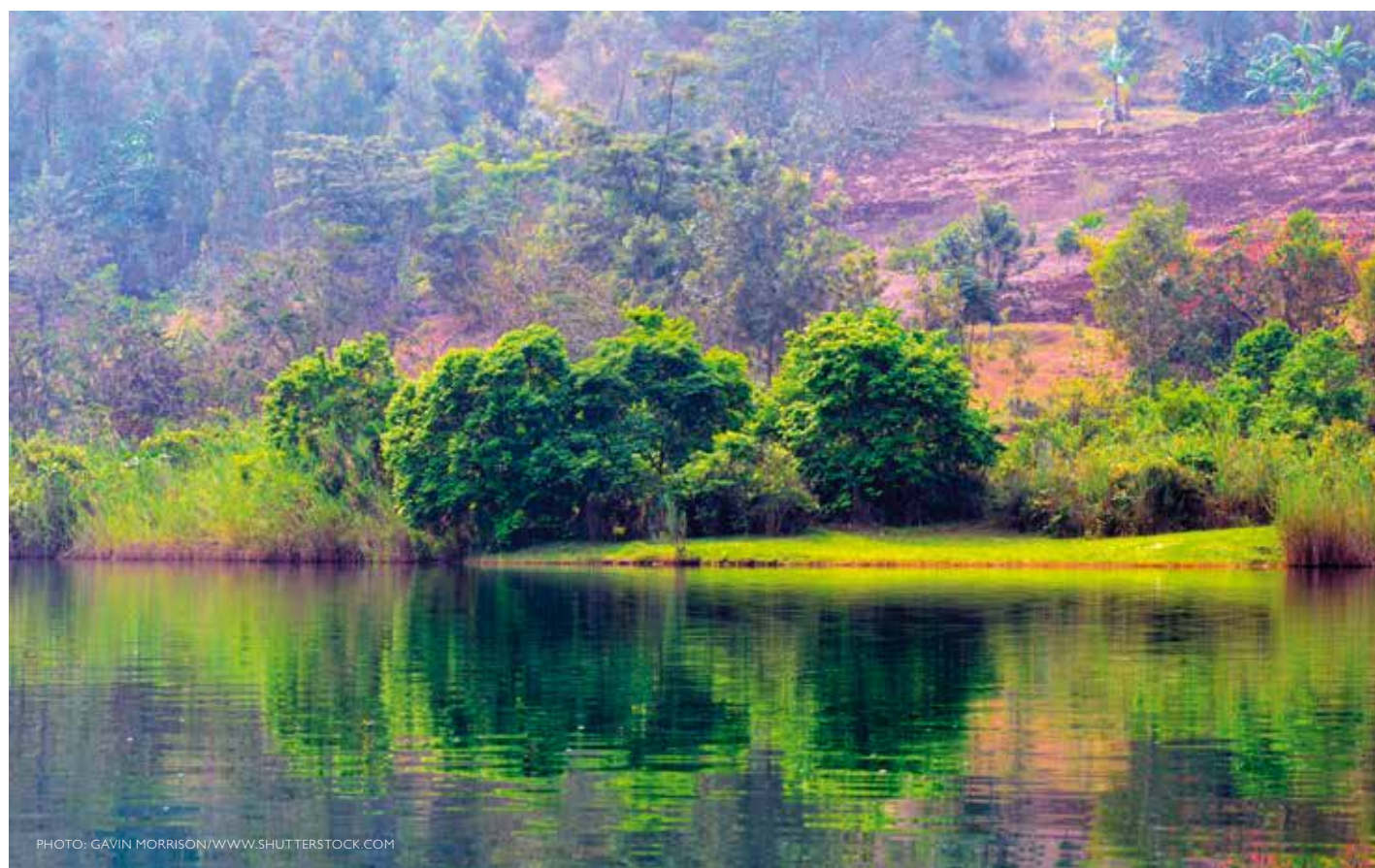


PHOTO: GAVIN MORRISON/WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



In the face of displacement, a university education offers Palestinian youth the opportunity to escape the cycle of poverty.

Building hope for Palestinian youth

Since 2009, through its special scholarship fund for talented Palestinians, OFID has supported over 130 outstanding students to complete their university studies.

BY FATMA ELZAHRA ELSHHATI

Providing refugees with a quality education has lasting effects, allowing youth to become effective and successful adults who can participate in their communities. In the face of displacement, education remains a pillar of hope for this future generation of leaders.

Palestinian society places important value on university level education, viewing it as a way of rebuilding a sustainable society. Numerous hurdles stand in the way, however, including tuition fees, travel and other expenses. Without the financial means, many willing and aspiring Palestinian youth are unable to follow their dream.

In 2009, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) launched the Scholarship Fund for Talented Palestinians. OFID played a major role in developing this initiative and was its very first sponsor, providing a US\$1.2m grant to help support the academic aspirations of out-



Mohammad Yaser



Jihad Ashanty



Asma Samaan

standing Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as from refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The Fund has since galvanized donor efforts to streamline financial aid to aspiring students.

To date, the OFID Scholarship Fund for Talented Palestinians has supported 137 promising Palestinians to gain a degree.

Redressing the balance

University studies provide economic opportunities to lift displaced persons out of poverty and help them pursue their dreams. Without a degree, many promising students are limited to low-skilled labour. This has created fierce competition for low paying occupations and an imbalanced society where not all strata of economic, social and intellectual groups are represented.

After completing her high school diploma with excellence, Jihad Ashanty from the West Bank enrolled on the Physics program at An-Najah National University in Palestine. One of her main goals was to learn how to utilize electronics for the treatment of people with disabilities. However, with high university and transportation costs, her family found it increasingly difficult to support her studies, especially after her father passed away.

Jihad found hope after receiving the OFID scholarship. With the financial support granted to her, she was able to focus on her passion. "The OFID scholarship saved my future," she said. Jihad went on to establish a student association for physics and astronomy and volunteered as a student teaching assistant at her university.

Employment opportunities remain limited for women living in Palestine, with around one-third of women unemployed in 2012, according to the Palestinian central statistical bureau. For women without a university education, unemployment levels are estimated even higher at 44.6 percent. Over 70 percent of the OFID scholarship fund has gone to females in a range of disciplines, including engineering, business, and medical and applied sciences.

Twenty-two-year-old Asma Samaan from Gaza was also able to complete her engineering degree with the aid of the OFID funding. "It was a long sigh of relief for both my family and me," she said. During her studies, Asma worked on a unique project involving the manufacturing of cement from sewage sludge as a sustainable environmental solution. With her degree, she is determined to make a change by creating lasting solutions to environmental challenges in Gaza.

For Palestinians living in the neighboring countries, gaining a tertiary education can contribute to greater social cohesion and integration in their host countries. For Mohammad Yaser, the OFID scholarship allowed him to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Hashemite University in Jordan. After completing his degree, Mohammad was offered a job as a site engineer.

Stable financial support has provided promising students like Jihad, Asma and Mohammad with the skills and knowledge needed to escape the cycle of poverty in their communities. Thanks to the Scholarship Fund for Talented Palestinians, they and dozens of other aspiring young leaders are now serving as agents of change in their communities. ■

Palestinian society places important value on university level education, viewing it as a way of rebuilding a sustainable society.

Cuban water minister praises OFID's cooperation

In a recent visit to OFID to review ongoing cooperation in the water and sanitation sector, the president of Cuba's National Institute of Hydraulic Resources (INRH) highlighted the positive impact of OFID's interventions.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

Inés María Chapman, INRH President and Cuba's most senior official in the water sector, said that her country was "very grateful" for the significant support provided by OFID.

Since 2009, OFID has delivered over US\$108m to help modernize Cuba's antiquated water and sanitation infrastructure. It is the largest amount extended to any country in the Latin America and Caribbean region for such purpose and almost two-thirds of OFID's total support to Cuba.

Chapman said that OFID's assistance had helped provide the concerned popu-

lation with a stable water supply and access to efficient sewerage services "despite the 2015 drought caused by El Niño."

She added: "In the event of hurricanes, the investments made in the sector contribute to adequate water supply, thus reducing the risks of waterborne diseases."

The rehabilitation of Cuba's water supply and sanitation systems is an imperative, since much of the distribution network has been in operation for over 75 years and has deteriorated through lack of maintenance. In addition, the only natural source of water is rain, which leaves the

population vulnerable during periods of prolonged drought.

Apart from an electricity project approved in 2010, OFID's cooperation with Cuba over the past seven years has focused exclusively on water and sanitation, as prioritized by the government in line with its national water policy.

"Our plan for the sector acknowledges that the reliable supply of a scarce resource such as water and improved sanitation services are vital for achieving development objectives," said Chapman, referring to the Millennium Development Goals and their successor the Sustainable Development Goals.

The national plan aims to improve services in twelve cities scattered across the island. Five of these—Bayamo, Trinidad, Las Tunas, Palma Soriano and Guantanamo—are the focus of the OFID-sponsored projects. The others are Havana, Holguín, Camaguey, Baracoa, the Isle of Juventud, Pinar del Río and Santiago de Cuba.

"We estimate that these works benefit more than one million people," said Chapman, who disclosed that, in about five years, investments in the sector could reach over US\$100m—in addition to those committed by OFID. Other financing partners are the Kuwait Fund and governments, including Spain.

All funds are channeled through INRH, which is the entity responsible for project implementation.

"As the highest water authority in the country, INRH is in charge of the rational and productive use of available water, efficient use of infrastructure, and managing risks associated with water quality as well as those associated with extreme weather events," Chapman explained.

Another priority, she stressed, was the effective management of the country's water resources in order to reduce losses "and save more than 1,500m cubic meters of water per year."

Pointing out the link between an efficient water sector and economic performance, Chapman emphasized: "For INRH, it is essential to enforce the national water policy, while channeling the investments required to create the basis for an efficient supply and sanitation system that contributes to the development of the country." ■



INRH President, Inés María Chapman, is convinced that investments in the water and sanitation sector are crucial for the achievement of Cuba's development objectives.



PHOTO: LOLC GROUP

Syndicate representatives join members of CLC and LOLC management to capture the historic moment.

OFID joins landmark transaction in Sri Lanka

With its participation in the largest ever syndicated loan to a non-bank financial institution in Sri Lanka, OFID has laid down a new milestone in its long standing cooperation with the South Asian country.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

The landmark transaction of US\$153m was sealed with Commercial Leasing and Finance (CLC)—one of Sri Lanka's leading financial service providers—on February 24 in the capital Colombo. OFID participated to the tune of US\$20 million in the syndication, which is led by Dutch Development Bank FMO. Other partners include Finnfund, Proparco, DEG and the Austrian Development Bank, amongst others.

The loan provides CLC, which is part of the Lanka Orix Leasing Company Limited (LOLC) Group, with financing to support on-lending activities to local micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

MSMEs contribute to over 50 percent of Sri Lanka's GDP and represent the backbone of the country's economy. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Traditional Industries and Small Enterprise Development estimates that MSMEs account for 80–90 percent of the total number of enterprises and cover 70 percent of employment in the Sri Lankan business sector.

With nearly 55,000 active borrowers, CLC has a strong focus on the MSME sector. Over 60 percent of its loans and lease

assets are microcredits. These loans enable individuals, in particular women, to turn their skills into flourishing businesses, thereby strengthening household and community economies.

One of the biggest challenges CLC faces is that of stable funding. Medium-term

financing in Sri Lanka is scarce and local banks operate limits that affect institutions such as CLC, who struggle to find lenders offering longer maturities to support the growth of their MSME portfolios.

The funding from the new syndicated loan to CLC will give fresh impetus to ►



PHOTO: SVEN TORENN/PANOS

MSMEs are the backbone of the Sri Lankan economy, accounting for 80–90 percent of all enterprises and 70 percent of employment in the business sector.

◀ the island's economy, which has seen unprecedented expansion during recent years. Linda Broekhuizen, Chief Investment Officer of FMO, stated: "It is encouraging to see so much commitment to job creation and economic growth, both among the other lenders and CLC."

LOLC—Sri Lanka's largest non-banking financial service group—is a committed contributing partner to nation progress. Ishara Nanayakkara, Deputy Chairman of the group, explains that LOLC is a conglomerate "with a mission to uplift the wellbeing of the Sri Lankan citizens from all walks of life."

Aligned with the national economic agenda, the conglomerate's various activities act as a driver in strategic sectors, supporting business expansion and uncovering entrepreneurial talent.

"What's unique about this company," says Group Managing Director Kapila Jayawardena, "is the enrichment that it provides to the rural economy. I have seen many customers, many families, grow in their business reach, and grow in stature."

The official signing ceremony was attended by Minister of Finance Ravi Karunanayake and Central Bank Governor Arjuna Mahendran. They were joined by other dignitaries, LOLC and CLC executives, and the CEOs of local banks, as well as representatives of the participating funding agencies.

Speaking on the occasion, CLC's Chief Executive Officer Krishan Thilakaratne said: "We are pleased to be the recipient of this landmark syndication in partnership with 12 lenders ... This is a true testimonial to the strong ties fostered with these lenders, many of whom have a long-standing relationship with the LOLC Group."

Although this is the first transaction with CLC directly, OFID previously supported the LOLC Group in 2003 and 2005 with two loans totaling US\$10 million. In 2012 OFID directed a further US\$10 million to LOLC Micro Credit Limited (LOMC) to increase their services in two areas: micro-leasing of agricultural equipment and group loans targeting women entrepreneurs and small farmers. PRASAC Microfinance Institution Limited, an affiliated LOLC company, also received a US\$10 million loan from OFID in 2013 to help the bank expand its services in extending microfinance loans to individuals and

MSMEs in Cambodia, particularly those in poor, rural areas.

Speaking at the signing ceremony on behalf of the LOLC Group, Managing Director Jayawardena shared his thanks: "Our foreign partners have offered us invaluable assistance ranging from capacity building to exposure to global standards over the years, which has enabled us to achieve operational excellence offering the competitive edge. With such a strong platform as the long-lasting relationships we have created with the funders, I hope to see our Group harness our strengths and further promote our vision, especially in

the micro and SME sector; inclusive, sustainable growth and flourishing prosperity for all Sri Lankans."

Finance Minister Karunanayake echoed this optimism, saying: "This is a proud occasion not just for the LOLC Group but for the country as a whole. These loans will greatly assist the macro-economic environment, thereby restoring the confidence, stability and growth required as Sri Lanka is entering a new chapter in its economic development and we are optimistic that more investor interest of this magnitude will further fuel the nation's progress." ■

Liberia resumes cooperation with OFID

A strategic road project marks Liberia's resumed cooperation with OFID after an extensive break. The road will boost the West African country's transformation efforts after more than two decades of civil strife.

BY ARYA GUNAWAN USIS

The US\$20m OFID loan will help finance upgrading of the strategically important Gbarnga—Salayea road, an 81km link that runs through the main agriculture belt in the country's northwest. The US\$95m project, which will reach completion in 2020, will transform the current earth road into a paved highway. It is being co-financed by a group of OFID sister institutions and the government of Liberia.

The new road will offer a major boon to Liberia's important agriculture sector. With easier access to inputs and markets, productivity is expected to increase, leading to improved job opportunities, especially among women who represent the bulk of the farming workforce.

The road will also improve access to social service facilities such as health centers and schools, which will in turn help improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.



An estimated 142,000 people will benefit from the new infrastructure.

The loan agreement was signed at OFID headquarters on February 22, by OFID Director-General, Suleiman J Al-Herbish and Liberia's Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Amara M Konneh.

At the signing ceremony, Al-Herbish welcomed the renewed cooperation with the country. "We consider this project crucial for Liberia's development and its efforts in poverty alleviation," he stated.

In his remarks, Konneh said that the road would open up a major agricultural corridor. "One of the direct beneficiaries is our farmers, who will have better access to our internal markets and also to our neighboring country Guinea. This will further strengthen economic integration in our region," he said.

Re-emerging from a difficult period

In an interview with the *Quarterly*, Konneh further explained the importance of the project within the context of Liberia as a post-conflict country. He admitted that his country had gone through a difficult period. "We were going through crises that were unprecedented in the lives of so many people," he said, referring to the civil war that lasted almost two decades and led to the collapse of his country's economy and social fabric.



Liberian Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Amara M Konneh.

"With this project, Liberia is well on its way to opening up one of the important but forgotten economic corridors that is expected to be a game changer in our quest to transform Liberia through development."

AMARA M KONNEH

On assuming office in 2006, two years after the end of the conflict, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf launched a reconstruction program. A main focus of Africa's first female president was an aggressive policy to construct roads and connect major cities and capitals. She has also been proactive in her efforts to re-establish her country's relationships with its development partners.

"The new agreement that we have just signed with OFID is a fruit of the approach by our president to earn trust from our partners in development," Konneh stated. "With this project, Liberia is well on its way to opening up one of the important but forgotten economic corridors that is expected to be a game changer in our quest to transform Liberia through development," he added.

Konneh went on to emphasize the significant role of the new road in enhanc-

ing Liberia's economy, which is driven by agriculture. "Because of bad roads, it is difficult for farmers to access markets. With this highway, farmers will have better opportunities to move their crops, in particular coffee and cocoa, from the northern part of the country to the center and then to the capital Monrovia where the port is. They can quickly move their crops to markets and generate income to support their families and therefore get out of poverty," he explained.

The new highway will also bring Liberia closer to Guinea and Sierra Leone, its northern neighbors, thus enabling more inter-country trade. Added Konneh: "We expect that this road will also promote security in the region, because through economic empowerment there is less chance of civil war."

Konneh expressed hope that his country's relationship with OFID would pick up where it had left off over three decades ago, noting how OFID had been there for Liberia during normal times, partly financing the country's highway to the border with Sierra Leone.

"This signing has opened a new chapter in our relationship with OFID, and we look forward to aggressively delivering on this project and exploring future opportunities, for example in the area of energy access," he said. ■



PHOTO: JBODANE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



PHOTO: THE METOLONG WATER AUTHORITY

A new dam for Lesotho

With the inauguration of the Metolong Dam by His Majesty King Letsie III, a long period of difficulty for more than two-thirds of Lesotho's population has come to an end.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

The new dam and related infrastructure deliver water to the capital Maseru and the surrounding towns of Roma, Mazenod, Morija and Teyateyaneng. Another seventy villages around Metolong are benefiting from sanitation projects, rural water supply and electrification.

Located about 35km from Maseru, the dam represents a welcome economic boon to small businesses and industries, markets and trading centres. Lesotho's largest university is located in Roma and the biggest public hospital and airport are in Mazenod.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony on November 20, King Letsie said: "The completion of the Metolong Dam and Water Supply Program marks a major milestone in the economic and social development of Lesotho because over 500,000 people are reaping benefits from this program."

Lesotho has ample water resources but, until now, has lacked the modern infrastructure to make socioeconomic development viable. The situation has become ever more urgent due to the pressures caused by changing weather patterns.

Referring to this urgency in his own address, Prime Minister Dr Pakalitha Mosisili stated: "Lesotho is experiencing hydrological drought, natural springs are disappearing and rivers remain dry. Metolong dam will play a very major role by providing those five towns with water."



Accompanied by his wife Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, His Majesty King Letsie III reveals the inaugural plaque showing the co-financiers of the Metolong Dam.

The project formed part of a broader program which aims to bring water to all communities living within the lowland regions of Lesotho, where water shortages are most severe.

The importance of the dam was underscored by the attendance of government ministers, diplomats and international development partners, who gathered for the official opening, along with hundreds of community members.

The project had five components including advanced infrastructure, the dam itself, water treatment works, downstream conveyance systems, and an environmental and social management program.

Syahrul Luddin, OFID's country officer for Lesotho, explained that OFID had provided two loans amounting to US\$9m toward the project. OFID's financing supplemented resources from the Abu Dhabi Fund, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Kuwait Fund and Saudi Fund, to co-finance the construction of the dam and dam pumping station.

"Due to the importance of the project to the economic livelihood of Lesotho, additional financing was secured and the project was successfully complete late last year," Luddin said.

Other co-financiers were the governments of Lesotho and South Africa, the European Investment Bank, the World Bank, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States of America. ■

OFID gains space in the global conversation

In 2016, OFID's voice echoed around the globe, reaching over six million people via its social media channels.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

By delivering interesting and shareable information through the most popular social media platforms, OFID is achieving its objective of enhancing visibility and increasing its recognition as an accomplished international development institution.

OFID spreads its messages through different social media channels to a wide audience, ranging from the international development community, sister institutions and co-financiers to academia, local communities, NGOs and youth. OFID participates in the social media landscape on a daily basis, with some content embedded in specific campaigns.

OFID's engagement is particularly relevant in a world dominated by innovation in communication technologies and the digitization of all content that we handle every day. These developments have led to a paradigm shift where millions of people are connected—around the clock, all year long.

Today, through mobile phone technology, we can communicate in real time with people who are thousands of kilometres away. In this globally endless stream of data, social media plays a vital role. It is remarkable how, from its inception, social media very quickly increased its scope from being a fun pastime to providing users with an essential means of communication and research.

Social media platforms provide a two-way communication channel for OFID to engage target audiences and build and amplify a multi-network presence, gaining space digitally in the global conversation. The power of these platforms can be measured in many ways. One of them is in terms of users, reflected in the figures provided in March 2016, by eBizMBA Inc. (a specialized portal that measures e-businesses). According to eBizMBA, the most popular social networking site by far is Facebook, with an estimated 1.1 billion monthly visitors. Next in line are Twitter (310 million), LinkedIn (255 million) and Pinterest (250 million).



But measuring the effectiveness of social media influence goes beyond counting the number of followers. What is more important is how much the content is re-tweeted or shared among a wider, global audience. It is this “echo” effect that saw OFID reach over 6.3 million people in 2015 across all its social media platforms.

In today's highly competitive digital world, OFID has succeeded in building up a significant digital audience. It is a challenging task that takes time and effort, but one that the institution is committed to working on. Join us in the global conversation about development! We have something to say.

What is OFID doing on YouTube?

BY NADIA BENAMARA

OFID is increasingly producing and distributing videos online because the medium itself has the potential to transmit large amounts of information in an inherently engaging, simple-to-digest format.

As an added bonus, online video-sharing platforms such as YouTube provide extensive viewer data that can grant deep insight into audience demographics and behavior.

Original content is key. OFID creates documentaries, animated infographics, and straightforward interviews to help boost institutional awareness and advocate stakeholder issues. Emotionally-resonant videos in the one to three minute range generally perform best.

In 2015, OFID more than tripled the performance of its YouTube channel, garnering almost 300k views (versus 88k in 2014). Views are only counted after at least 30 seconds of video have been played.

This audience was predominantly male (70 percent), between 25 and 34 years old (40 percent), with an interest in global economic news and social issues. Other social media platforms such as Facebook and Pinterest typically attract female majorities.

The top five countries were: Turkey, Vietnam, Iraq, Algeria and Indonesia. Indonesians, who watched an average 60 percent of content, also turned out to be OFID's most committed audience.

Despite its almost seven minute duration, a video of the OFID scholarship program (with 28k views) proved the most widely shared of the year and resulted in the most click-throughs to OFID's website.

YouTube data also revealed a fundamental shift in how people are consuming content online. In 2014, only 5.3 percent of OFID audiences watched videos via a mobile device. Today, that number is up to 28 percent.

JANUARY 17

Agreement signed

OFID and UNDP signed a new three-year partnership agreement to reinforce their collaborative effort in producing the Arab Development Portal. Initiated by the Arab Coordination Group, the portal is a comprehensive, one-stop knowledge resource that aims to improve the scope, depth, reliability, availability and use of high quality development information to support development progress in the Arab World

JANUARY 28

OFID's 40th Anniversary celebration

Staff members celebrated the occasion of OFID's 40th Anniversary. The anniversary year has been dedicated to highlighting the plight of refugees worldwide.

FEBRUARY 15

Public sector loan agreements signed

Cuba. US\$25m.

Trinidad Water Supply and Sanitation System Modernization. To improve access to safe drinking water and provide basic sanitation services for over 30,000 people in Trinidad City and neighboring townships.

China. US\$15m.

Sichuan Healthcare. To strengthen the capacity and improve the quality of healthcare delivery by constructing a 13-story inpatient building for a hospital in Ziyang city.

Research Grants approved

Gulf Educational Organization. US\$200,000.

To support the project *Establishing Educational Parks for Schools in the Gaza Strip*. Ten educational parks at selected schools in Gaza will provide facilities to enable the teaching of basic farming techniques to children.

Arab Urban Development Institute. US\$50,000.

To support the conference *Small Projects and Productive Families as Development Enablers: The Role of Municipalities, the Public and Private Sectors and Civil Society*, which will be held in Amman, Jordan in October 2016. OFID's support will enable the participation of researchers and practitioners from Arab developing countries.

The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS). US\$150,000.

To support two TWAS programs: *South-South Fellowships* and *Human Resources Mobility*. These programs provide scientists from developing countries with opportunities to visit centers of excellence, located globally, to build knowledge, expertise and cooperation, for the advancement of science in developing countries.

FEBRUARY 22

Loan agreements signed

Belize. US\$11.7m.

Airport Link Road. To build a carriageway, bridge and roundabouts, as well as upgrade airport access roads, to decrease traffic congestion in Belize City and improve connectivity, thus providing an easier, cheaper and safer means of transport.



Mr Al-Herbish and violinist Aisha Syed Castro at the launch of the Equal Dreams campaign.

Côte d'Ivoire. US\$11.5m
Expanding Girls' Access to Secondary Education. To raise enrolment and retention rates through the constructing and equipping of six secondary schools, including hostels, to accommodate around 9,000 girls.

Kenya. US\$5m.

Rongai Hospital. To construct and equip a new hospital and residential staff building in Rongai city. On completion, the project will improve the quality and accessibility of affordable healthcare services for some 150,000 people.

Liberia. US\$20m.

Upgrading of Gbarnga–Salayea Road. To pave an 81km earth stretch that runs through a major agricultural area. At least 142,000 people will benefit from year-round access to social services and marketplaces, which will in turn help improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

Uzbekistan. US\$11m. Improving Drinking Water Supply in Rural Areas of Koshrabad District of Samarkand Region. To construct and upgrade water supply infrastructure and bring drinking water to the regional

center of Koshrabad and 77 surrounding settlements, thus improving health indicators and living conditions of approximately 68,000 people.

Grant agreement signed

ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE).

US\$860,000. Promoting Access to Modern Energy Services through Mini-Grid Projects in Africa. To co-finance selected projects in Benin, Cape Verde, Senegal and Sierra Leone. In addition to 123 commercial clients and small enterprises, and 57 public buildings and services, more than 4,250 people (850 households) will directly benefit from the project.

FEBRUARY 23

OFID hosts charity auction to support refugees

OFID's Social Committee in collaboration with Raiffeisen-bank held a charity auction "Art for Refugees." Proceeds from the auction went to refugee projects run by the Austrian NGO Life2Live.

MARCH 15

OFID/VCM children's running event

As part of the 40th anniversary activities, OFID sponsored a running event for approximately 60 local schoolchildren, including from refugee families, in preparation for the Vienna City Marathon (VCM).

MARCH 17

154th Session of the Governing Board**Public sector loans approved**

Benin. US\$12m. Horticulture Development Support. To construct and rehabilitate infrastructure, such as produce collection centers, small processing plants, storage facilities and access roads, among others, to help small-scale vegetable farmers. Around 120,000 people are expected to benefit from the project.

Pakistan. US\$50m. Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program. To support the recovery and infrastructural needs of families in the FATA region, populated by around 4.6 million people.

Sierra Leone. US\$20m. Rehabilitation of Bo-Bandajuma Road. To upgrade a 46km road that forms part of the Trans-African Highway and provides key links to neighboring countries, enabling the project area's 244,000 inhabitants to gain access to social services and income-generation opportunities.

Grants approved

International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas. US\$500,000. This grant will help fund the program *Enhancing Food Security in Arab Countries, Phase II*,



Dr Majid Abdullah Ibrahim Al-Moneef, Advisor, the Royal Court of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, visited OFID HQ to interview Mr Al-Herbish for a book he is writing about the oil industry in the 21st century. (Right) Merlin Alejandrina Barrera, Vice-Minister of Trade and Industry of El Salvador, met with Mr Al-Herbish to discuss current and future cooperation with OFID, particularly in the private sector.



aimed at improving farmers' livelihood and incomes and enhance food security through the dissemination of improved wheat farming practices and technologies.

Alliance to Fight Avoidable Blindness. US\$250,000. To improve access to, and quality of, eye care services in Niger by building and equipping an ophthalmic unit in Lamorde Hospital in the Niamey district. An estimated 30,000 people will have their sight restored through the provision of free cataract surgeries.

United Nations Development Program. US\$400,000. To harness Somalia's solar energy potential by demonstrating solar photo-voltaic and solar thermal solutions at health facilities and other public buildings. Direct beneficiaries include around 30,000 hospital patients/year, and the thousands of people accessing or working at the public buildings.

Assistance to Social and Development Projects in Palestine.

The Welfare Association. US\$250,000. To improve healthcare services for some 2,000 disabled and special-needs Palestinian children from marginalized communities.

Premiere Urgence Internationale. US\$150,000.

To provide funding and training and carry out awareness-raising activities to enhance incomes and boost living standards for 100 women farmers and their families.

ITF Enhancing Human Security. US\$100,000. To provide rehabilitation services to those injured during the ongoing conflict and give specialized training to rehabilitation professionals.

MARCH 30

High-level seminar on long-term challenges of food security

OFID hosted a high-level panel discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals and food security, chaired by Mr LI Yong, Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (*report to follow in July issue of the Quarterly*).

Meetings attended by OFID**JANUARY 8–10**

MANAMA, BAHRAIN
Arab Energy Club Meeting

JANUARY 17

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
15th Meeting of the Heads of Institutions of the Coordination Group

JANUARY 18

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
2016 Arab–DAC Dialogue on Development: Achieving the 2030 Agenda

FEBRUARY 16–18

ROME, ITALY
39th Session of IFAD's Governing Council

FEBRUARY 17

MILAN, ITALY
IFC Global Trade Partners Meeting

FEBRUARY 29–MARCH 1

LILONGWE, MALAWI
9th GPEDC Steering Committee Meeting

www.ofid.org



Governing Board Chairman Abdulwahab A Al-Bader (center) flanked by Director-General Al-Herbish (left) and Saeid Niazi, Assistant Director-General, Financial Operations (right).

154th Session of the Governing Board

Meeting in its 154th Session in Vienna on March 17, the Governing Board approved US\$154m in financing for new development operations, the first tranche under OFID's Corporate Plan 2016–2015. Of this amount, US\$82m was provided in public sector lending for operations in Benin (agriculture), Pakistan (multisector), and Sierra Leone (transportation). Five transactions totaling over US\$55m were approved through the private sector window, including a subordinated debt-financing—a new product for OFID—to a bank in Nicaragua. In the area of trade, one US\$15m facility was approved for a maiden outreach in Costa Rica to support the international trade activities of enterprises there. Fresh grant funding of US\$1.65m will help finance energy, food security and health initiatives, as well as a number of small projects in Palestine. Further details of public sector and grant approvals can be found in the *Diary*.



Dr Fadhil Nabee Othman
Governor, Iraq

Dr Ahmed Menesi
Governor, Libya



Jamal Hosseini
Alternate Governor, Iran

Dr Eudomar Rafael Tovar
Alternate Governor, Venezuela



Majed Ali Omran
Governor, UAE

LOAN & GRANT
SIGNATURE
photo
gallery

Côte d'Ivoire receives US\$11.5m to improve secondary education

Ivorian Ambassador, Largaton Gilbert Ouattara, signed the agreement for a project that will construct six secondary schools for girls, including hostels to accommodate a total of 9,000 students.



US\$11m for road project in Belize

Ambassador Joel Nagel of Belize and OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish, initial the agreement for the construction of an airport link road that will help improve connectivity and ease congestion in Belize City.



US\$5m to Kenya for hospital construction

Mr Al-Herbish and Michael Oyugi, Ambassador of Kenya to Austria, conclude the agreement in support of a new 220-bed hospital in the city of Rongai, which will provide healthcare services for some 150,000 people.





US\$860,000 grant to ECREEE for mini-grid projects in Africa

Mahama Kpiah, Director-General of the ECOWAS Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, signed the agreement in support of mini-grid schemes in Benin, Cape Verde, Senegal and Sierra Leone.



US\$15m to China to boost healthcare

Shaolin Yang, Director-General, Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation, Chinese Ministry of Finance, signs the agreement for the construction of a 13-story inpatient building at a Ziyang hospital.

Cuba gets US\$25m to improve water supply and sanitation

Cuban Ambassador, Juan Antonio Fernández Palacios, with Mr Al-Herbish following signature of the agreement for a project to modernize water and sanitation infrastructure in the city of Trinidad and surrounding townships.



Uzbekistan obtains US\$11m for rural water supply

Mubin Mirzaev, Deputy Minister of Finance, initialled the agreement in favour of a project to improve water supply networks in the Koshrabad district of Samarkand region for the benefit of some 70,000 residents.



The full list of loan and grant signatures can be found on pages 34-35.



From left: OFID's Faris Hasan, Director, Corporate Planning and Economic Services; Dr Kandeh Yumkella; OFID Director-General Al-Herbish; Dr Jozsef Toth, President, WPC; Erik Kjaer, Chief of Country Action, SE4All.

OFID and WPC lead launch of “Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform”

Executives from major oil and gas companies and strategic partners have joined together with OFID and the World Petroleum Council (WPC) to launch a special framework that will see the industry collaborate with other stakeholders to support universal access to sustainable energy by 2030.

BY NAMAT ABU AL-SOOF AND FARIS HASAN

The “Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform (EAP)” was launched by OFID and the WPC at OFID headquarters in Vienna on March 21. Aligned with the UN multi-stakeholder Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative, the EAP will directly support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG7 on universal energy access.

Lead partners OFID and WPC were joined by representatives from TOTAL S.A., Shell International B.V., the Global LPG Partnership, the International Gas Union and the Shell Foundation, among several others. The EAP will provide an opportunity for oil and gas companies to collaborate with other stakeholders on specific actions focused on energy access. Other industry players are expected to join the initiative in due course.

OFID first expressed its willingness to devise such a platform at the World Petroleum Congress in Doha in 2011. Since then, OFID has worked to mobilize the support of the petroleum industry in addressing the needs of the billions of people in developing countries who lack access to modern energy services. March 21 marked the success of this effort, which OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish described as “a defining moment for both OFID and for the members of the oil and gas industry who join us, as we propel the effort to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern energy for all, regardless of the situation in the oil market.”

Al-Herbish expressed his conviction that the EAP would harness the petroleum industry’s vast pool of resources, expertise, know-how, technologies, and access to capital. “The industry is in a unique position to take a leading role in facilitating energy access,” he stated, pointing to the collaborative nature of the platform which “puts this goal on the fast track and complements existing industry efforts, such as the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative.”

Al-Herbish pointed out that the EAP offered a two-fold benefit, giving members the chance to both help the poor and steer the industry in a positive direction. “The results of these efforts will demonstrate to the world what can be achieved when perseverance and cooperation are joined,” he said, adding that the EAP would serve as “a catalyst for meaningful action for other oil and gas companies, development financial institutions, and the private sector to follow.”

Dr József Toth, President of WPC, echoed Al-Herbish’s sentiments, confirming that the initiative would provide a framework for the oil and gas sector “to help facilitate access to safe,

affordable and reliable energy wherever it is needed.” He highlighted what the oil and gas industry could bring to the platform: “By sharing best practical knowledge, projects and solutions with each other, we can leverage the expertise and capabilities of our industry as a key part of the energy sector to enhance the lives of the billions of people without access to modern energy options,” he stated.

In a keynote address, Dr Kandeh Yumkella, former UN Under-Secretary General and Special Representative, SE4ALL, stressed that a platform like the Oil and Gas Industry EAP could help in proper planning, building ecosystems and skills development. He implored industry actors to join the platform by illustrating the benefits to be gained by the industry: “When you enhance their productivity by making sure poor families have three hours of power at night, by making sure they can pump water because they are using solar power, guess what? Their incomes go up,” said Yumkella. “You can always sell oil and gas, but if we give these communities existing, simple, cheap technologies to raise their income levels, it’s win-win.”

Stakeholders pledge support

The meeting listened to several presentations and statements from the endorsing partners, including some inspiring stories about successful initiatives on energy access undertaken by individual companies and their associations. The speakers demonstrated their support to the EAP. They also emphasized the industry’s desire and commitment to make a difference to people’s lives.

Expressing his support to the platform, Erik Kjaer, Chief of Country Action, SE4All, acknowledged that “access to energy is one of the biggest challenges facing SE4All and initiatives like the EAP are in very high demand and it is welcomed.”

Jean-Marc Fontaine, Vice-President, Social Business and Societal, TOTAL S.A., reiterated his company’s willingness to join the platform, noting that energy access was one of Total’s five main targets to combat climate change. “The target is to provide access to 25 million people by 2025; this can only be achieved by working with others,” he revealed.

Fontaine went on to share TOTAL’s four part-vision for the platform: “*Operational* to make sure we remain grounded in our core business; *strategic* to measure our impact and be transparent about what we are going to achieve; *partnership* to work with as many companies ▶

“By sharing best practical knowledge, projects and solutions with each other, we can leverage the expertise and capabilities of our industry.”

JÓZSEF TOTH



PHOTO: ULRIKE VON LÖNSKI/WORLD PETROLEUM COUNCIL

Members of the EAP Executive Committee gather for their first meeting.

◀ as possible; and, we must always remain rooted in *innovation*.”

Joanna Cochrane, Vice-President Social Performance, Shell International B.V., expressed Shell’s privilege at being invited to join the platform. While noting that energy access could make the difference between poverty and prosperity, she cautioned that meeting the demand challenge, the stress of the environment and transforming the supply of the future was “in and of itself an unprecedented energy challenge ... producing the stuff does not guarantee universal access to energy.”

In the quest to make energy more inclusive for everybody, Cochrane pointed out that business as usual was not enough. “We need to leverage core business skills, support innovation by helping third parties develop possible solutions, and collaborate through platforms like the EAP.”

Offering his full endorsement of the platform, Sam Parker, Director, Shell Foundation, welcomed all efforts from all sectors to achieve the 2030 goal on energy access. Noting that there was adequate technology, interest, finance and goodwill to achieve the objectives of SDG7,

he emphasized, however, that “we need to behave differently, to collaborate in a new way, and this platform is one example where we can have different collaboration on energy access.”

Parker’s remarks were reinforced by Kimball C Chen, Chairman, Global LPG Partnership, who said: “Sometimes it is necessary to have well constituted platforms to achieve results and the EAP is the right vehicle to provide cooperation on energy access, which we endorse.”

In closing remarks, Al-Herbish expressed his appreciation to all participants for their outstanding effort and reiterated OFID’s commitment to work with the petroleum industry and actively support energy access.

OFID will serve as the EAP Secretariat. The first meeting of the platform’s executive committee held the same day as the launch ceremony. The committee will be in charge of establishing the vision and direction of the EAP; outlining an implementation plan; enlisting partners; convening initiatives and encouraging new ones; and, could annually report progress to the SE4ALL global facilitating team. ■



The full text of the EAP launch statement can be found on the OFID website.

Healthcare and youth employment a priority for Palestine



Roberto Valent, Special Representative of the UNDP Administrator in Palestine.

OFID's relationship with the Palestinian people is almost as old as the institution itself. Here OFID's **Arya Gunawan Usis** talks to **Roberto Valent**, Special Representative of the UNDP Administrator in Palestine, about the significance of OFID's latest

interventions in the West Bank and Gaza and the challenges facing residents there.

OQ: You signed two new agreements with OFID today. What makes the concerned projects so important?

RV: The agreements relate to priority issues in Gaza and the West Bank—youth employment and healthcare. The youth project will have a positive impact, a transformational impact on young people in Gaza, giving them access to income opportunities from a dignified point of view. It will help youth to engage collectively and creatively in the community and support not only themselves but also their loved ones. The second initiative involves the Augusta Victoria hospital, which provides cancer treatment. This new agreement will help improve the condition and services of the hospital.

OQ: Could you further elaborate on the Gaza youth employment project?

RV: Youth unemployment in Gaza currently stands at more than 62 percent, one of the highest in the world. Through this initiative, we are going to support young people, not only with job opportunities but also with enhancing their skills. We will target youth in urban centers as well as in rural areas. We will assess not only what they would like to do, but also what the market requires to match demand and supply. We will also support them in the design of their business; it can be a creative business, or a business in sectors such as agriculture and construction, or in the services sector. Our aim is to tackle the problem in such a way as to make the solu-

tions sustainable. This is our commitment together with OFID.

OQ: What about credit? Surely these young women and men will need seed money to start-up their businesses.

RV: Absolutely. We have parallel operations that could be complementary to this new initiative. Some of them were actually financed or co-financed by OFID, like the *Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Program*, which provides micro-grants and micro-credits.

OQ: With regard to the second project, the Augusta Victoria hospital, what is the current situation there for the provision of cancer treatment? ►



◀ **RV:** The existing facilities are limited. There is always a crowded environment when it comes to the chemotherapy sessions. The hospital has been providing chemotherapy to around 12,000 patients per year, including many from Gaza who are referred there. But its capacity—according to normal standards—is for no more than 2,500 people. The US\$600,000 grant from OFID will help renovate and expand the chemotherapy department and furnish it with new equipment. With the number of beds increasing from just twenty to between forty and fifty, the rehabilitated facilities will be able to handle more than 13,000 patients every year.

◀ **OQ:** *OFID has previously supported eight other UNDP projects in Palestine. Are there one or two that stand out for you in terms of their contribution to better living conditions and opportunities for Palestinians?*

RV: All of these projects were critical in bringing positive impacts to the lives and wellbeing of Palestinians. One example that I would like to bring forward is the rebuilding of housing infrastructure that was damaged during the 2014 clashes in Gaza. This project was very important as we rehabilitated houses to make sure that children were able to study, to eat, and have activities in a dignified environment. The affected families have been able to recover their space, where the children in particular will not feel bad or humiliated inviting their friends to visit their homes. These children can say with pride, “For the first time in my life, I feel comfortable to invite

my friends to my house. Why? Because I have a decent toilet; I have a decent kitchen; I have a ventilation system that allows people to breathe.”

I would also like to mention the St Joseph’s hospital in East Jerusalem, where we installed a solar-based energy generation system to address electricity shortages and reduce operating costs. The system generates power for normal electricity like lights, as well as for the high-tech equipment operated by the hospital. We considered it a very important energy-efficiency initiative.

Other exemplary projects were the renovation and expansion of maternity wards in two of the four hospitals located in the Gaza Strip, namely Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City and Al-Nasser Complex in Khan Younis.

◀ **OQ:** *What do you consider to be major challenges that your organization faces in implementing Palestine-related programs?*

RV: The biggest challenge faced by UNDP with regards to its programs in Palestine is a shared challenge with all other organizations that are committed to supporting Palestinians: that is to help bring about better and dignified living conditions for the Palestinian people. This is difficult given the occupation that the Palestinians are under. It is hard for them to make progress in terms of economic and social development and in terms of advancing their aspirations.

The challenges are enormous. We are living in a global geopolitical context where multiple crises—in Syria, Yemen,

Libya, and so on—impose a major problem. We are also facing an environmental crisis. Dealing with all these situations on a global level means that clearly there is a context where resources for Palestinians have been diminishing.

But there are also positive things, in particular the recognition by the UN General Assembly in 2012 of Palestine as a state. Also, in the recent [December 2015] COP21 conference, Palestine participated as a state and committed itself to dealing with climate change mitigation and adaptation. So, they are engaging productively in international forums.

We see that there are challenges there, but there are also opportunities. UNDP itself is proud of what it has been able to achieve so far, including what we consider the main achievement—the support that we have provided to the Palestinian people at the level of the Palestinian Government. Many national institutions have been established, with increasingly improved capacities.

◀ **OQ:** *Has Palestinian civil society also been touched and empowered by UNDP’s programs?*

RV: We are very proud to be working with Palestinian civil society, on issues related to justice, electoral reform and public policies. In this respect, we have been able to support livelihoods recovery and the whole social protection system. We have directly touched more than 40,000 Palestinians who have been left behind and exposed to the duress of the occupation.

◀ **OQ:** *How do you see the partnership between our two organizations going forward?*

RV: First of all, I see that our partnership is very solid, grounded on common principles, particularly the objectives of leaving no one behind, of eliminating poverty and elevating living standards. I consider it of great importance that we can also work together within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the new global development agenda. We should work together to ensure that Palestinians are not left behind when it comes to the SDGs, not only for Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory but also Palestinians that are being hosted generously as refugees in other countries. ■

CONFERENCE WATCH

Event:	Annual Arab Coordination Group–Development Assistance Committee Dialogue on Development
Theme:	Achieving the 2030 Agenda
Hosted by:	OFID
Venue:	OFID HQ, Vienna, Austria
Date:	January 18, 2016

by Arya Gunawan Usis

Financing the 2030 global development agenda

Going forward with resources beyond ODA

The enormous challenges posed by the Sustainable Development Goals demand strong cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders, together with the provision of adequate financing, including from the private sector.



From left: OFID Director-General Al-Herbish; Abdlatif Y Al-Hamad, CG Chair and Director-General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; Erik Solheim, Chair of the OECD/DAC.

This was the primary conclusion of the 2016 dialogue undertaken by heads of the Arab Coordination Group (CG)—a body of ten bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, including OFID—and members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC).

The meeting was co-chaired by Abdlatif Y Al-Hamad, CG Chair and Director-General of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and Erik Solheim, Chair of the OECD/DAC.

In his opening remarks, OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish said the world was facing tough challenges to achieve the objectives covered in the 2030 Global Development Agenda, which was officially launched by the United Nations in September 2015.

“As two major players in development financing, OECD/DAC and the CG have a special opportunity and a responsibility to lead and help chart the landscape of the post-2015 development universe,” Al-Herbish said. ►

Coordination Group issues declaration on Agenda 2030



Meeting one day before the CG–DAC dialogue, the Coordination Group laid out its commitment to the SDGs and Agenda 2030 in an 11-page declaration, in which the Group:

- Commits to an active role in global and local partnerships and to joining ongoing initiatives in support of the SDGs, such as the infrastructure forum agreed by the third Financing for Development Conference.
- Encourages broad dialogue among Partner Countries and calls on the institutions of the Group to facilitate such a dialogue and promote South-South cooperation.
- Urges the institutions of the Group to engage the authorities and the development stakeholders of Partner Countries and develop partnerships supportive of national SDGs.
- Encourages the institutions of the Group to commit to a broad regime of support to building the technical and institutional capacity of Partner Countries through dedicated technical assistance programs and/or through the enhanced allocation of loan resources for development projects.
- Encourages the institutions of the Group to report regularly their efforts in support of the SDGs and commits to publish from time to time the Group-consolidated activities in support of the SDGs and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Commits to a comprehensive study of the CG financial instruments to explore possibilities of new innovative mechanisms to help finance the implementation of the SDGs.

Beyond ODA

Participants agreed that financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which form the core of Agenda 2030, could no longer be dependent on official development assistance (ODA). “Public investment alone, including ODA, will not be enough to finance the SDGs,” said Michael Gerber of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. “We therefore need to identify smart ways to increase the resources available.”

One suggestion—raised by Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group, and Al-Ali Mohammed from the Ministry of International Cooperation and Development, United Arab Emirates—was to explore the role of cultural and/or faith-based financing like *zakat* and *waqaf*. Both of these are religious charitable giving widely practiced in countries with a Muslim majority.

Another proposal elaborated by Scott Kleinberg from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) was the sourcing of funds from the private sector. According to Kleinberg, USAID has involved the private sector since 1961, shaping it into a core part of the agency’s approach to development over the past decade. Today, he pointed out, private sector contributions represented 91 percent of financing flows from the USA to developing countries, whereas ODA accounted for only nine percent.

Kleinberg further disclosed that USAID had about 250 partnerships with the private sector, which are working across the globe to reach development objectives. Through its Power Africa Program, for example, USAID had allocated US\$7bn to develop energy in Africa. This had generated an additional US\$20bn in pipeline private sector commitments.

Although the opportunity to involve the private sector is wide open, seizing it brings challenges of its own. This point was pushed home by Abdulwahab Al-Bader, Director-General of the Kuwait Fund, who stressed the necessity of a sound investment climate in order to engage the private sector in business activity in developing countries. He added: “And to leverage government funds with private resources, it is necessary to ensure that investments reflect promising market opportunities for profitable business activities.” Essential measure would include reducing barriers and providing security to investors, especially in long-time infrastructure projects that require years to earn profits.



Conflict-affected environment

Participants also discussed the importance of considering the needs of those nations who find themselves in difficult circumstances. “There will be no comprehensive achievement of the SDGs if we are not able to address development challenges in conflict affected and fragile countries,” said Sari Lehtiranta, from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She pointed out that conflict and violence were the biggest impediment when it came to sustainable development. “Development gained over the years can easily be reversed and undone overnight. And it will take more time to rebuild, and to regain the trust and the peace,” Lehtiranta stressed.

While recognizing that it was often difficult for conflict-affected countries to attract financing, Reem Badran, CEO of a Jordan-based consulting company, argued that such conditions could represent opportunities for the private sector. She disclosed that Jordan, with a population of seven million, had taken in around 1.4 million Syrian refugees. The heavy burden was being felt in almost every sector, from education, to housing, health and water and sanitation. “This is indeed a challenge, but at the same time it also provides an opportunity for the private sector to provide these services,” said Badran.

This view was seconded by Carlos Conde from OECD, who argued that reconstruction processes presented opportunities for domestic and foreign investment. While the security aspect of such situations might be a major impediment, he said, “This is where we need risk-mitigation for investors, among others by performing adequate policy reforms such as investment legislation, rules enforcement and transparent public procurement mechanisms. All of these can contribute in attracting investments.”

Task force on energy access

The meeting also heard a report from the CG–OECD/DAC task force on energy access, which was established in April 2015 to explore opportunities to promote greater access to energy in two pilot countries, Malawi and Uganda. The two countries have the potential to improve their current low access to energy thanks to their own energy resources and the political will to achieve policy reform.

Delivering the report, Karen Jorgensen from the OECD said that the work of the task force had exemplified how two communities—the CG and the OECD–DAC—could partner to enhance energy access for the poor in Africa. “By coming together, we can create a better sustainable outcome than what could be achieved through different parts independently,” she stated.

All participants positively welcomed the task force’s report and agreed to perfect the model in Uganda and Malawi and build on the momentum already achieved.

Reacting to the Report on behalf of the CG, Fuad Albassam, OFID Assistant Director-General for Public Sector Operations, said: “The demonstrated capacity of OECD/DAC members to work together may well be one of the best achievements of the task force.” He added that the CG would fully support the idea to renew the mandate of the task force and expand its activities to other sub-Saharan African countries.

The next meeting of the CG–DAC dialogue will take place next year in Paris, where the OECD is headquartered. ■

“Public investment alone will not be enough to finance the SDGs ... We need to identify smart ways to increase the resources available.”

Michael Gerber, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

BY NADIA BENAMARA

Indonesia Hospital saves lives in Gaza

A US\$9m hospital funded by Indonesia's Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (MER-C) is the first new medical center to open in Gaza in ten years.

Built just outside the territory's largest refugee camp in Jabalya, Indonesia Hospital serves some 300,000 Palestinians hard hit by recent conflict.

Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla inaugurated the new hospital, January 9. It has since been treating more than 250 patients a day.

In his address, Kalla described Indonesia Hospital as a "symbol of cooperation" that would strengthen the relationship between his nation and Palestine.

Kalla also said he hoped it could serve as an example for the type of action external states should take to help Palestinians gain independence.

A 110-bed facility, Indonesia Hospital offers outpatient clinics, general and orthopaedic surgery, a specialized department for abdominal diseases and one of the only modern CT scanners in the region.

Speaking to Reuters on behalf of the Palestinian Health Ministry, Aschraf al-Qidra said the hospital "represents a great contribution to the health situation in Gaza."

The World Bank estimates that Gaza only has an average 1.3 hospital beds for every 1,000 people. That ratio is 5.4 in the European Union.

Shortages of medicine, equipment and staff have also proved chronic.

According to al-Qidra, seriously ill patients must travel to neighboring countries and beyond for specialist treatment. Because Gaza's border crossings are largely closed "hundreds of lives are at risk," he said

During 2014, hostilities injured some 11,000 people in Gaza, including 1,000 children with now permanent disabilities, according to the United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees, UNRWA.

Construction on Indonesia Hospital began in 2011 on land donated by Gaza's government.

MER-C Operations Manager, Rima Manzanaris, told Turkey's state-run press agency, Anadolu, that the blockade on Gaza presented significant difficulties, but that the donor-funded project advanced apace "even in times of war."

According to Manzanaris, MER-C is continuing to collect donations for the hospital from ordinary Indonesians.



PHOTO: REUTERS/MOHAMMED SALEH



PHOTO: REUTERS/RAHEB HOMAYANDI/TIMA ATTENTION

“We are looking for donations by—among other ways—presenting the hospital’s development process from school to school. Many students have contributed, even if with only a few thousand rupiah.”

Indonesia Hospital is staffed by some 400 Palestinians, paid by Gaza’s health ministry, as well as a few Indonesian volunteers. Its rooms are named after donors and some of Indonesia’s 17,000 islands.

MER-C was established by a group of medical students at the University of Indonesia. According to its website, it aims to deliver medical assistance to victims of war, natural disasters, and other extraordinary events, regardless of religion, nationality or class.

To date, MER-C has launched missions at home in Indonesia as well as abroad in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Kashmir, Palestine, the Philippines, Sudan and Thailand. Members are unpaid volunteers. ■

Iran elects record number of women to parliament

At least 14 women won parliamentary seats in Iran’s nationwide elections held February 26. Eight additional women will be competing in a second round of voting on April 29.

The election results represent the largest number of women voted into parliament in the history of the Islamic Republic.

Eight of the newly-elected women ran on a reformist-backed slate (dubbed the ‘list of hope’) for the Tehran constituency.

Among them is Seyedeh Fatemeh Hosseini, a 30 year old PhD candidate in finance at the University of Tehran.

The youngest member of Iran’s new parliament, she plans to address women’s rights by focusing on employment opportunities for her generation.

“Today 45 percent of young women between the ages of 20 and 24 are unemployed,” said Hosseini in a campaign speech reported by Al-Monitor. “This shows the inequality of opportunity that exists for young women, and this must be changed.” ▶

◀ Iranian women's rights activists launched a formidable effort to get more women elected to the male-dominated legislature many months prior to elections.

Waged largely via social media channels, the campaign helped inspire a three-fold increase in the number of women registering as candidates compared to Iran's last parliamentary elections in 2012.

Tayyebeth Siavoshi, another victorious candidate from Tehran, told *Al-Monitor*: "I wasn't even considering a run until these campaigns started. When I saw women's rights activists encouraging women to register, I decided to do my part and registered like thousands of others."

According to official reports, 1,234 women registered in all. Campaigners nonetheless fell far short of attaining the 30 percent benchmark they had set for female membership in the 290 seat parliament.

Hundreds of registrations were rejected by Iran's Guardian Council, a clerical body that vets all candidates, and none of the 16 women who applied to run for the Assembly of Experts (charged with electing Iran's Supreme Leader) were approved.

Speaking to the Iranian Student's News Agency, ISNA, prior to the election, the Interior Ministry's Adviser on Women's Affairs, Fahimeh Farahmandpour said: "The widespread disqualification of women in the elections is very worrisome and will have social consequences, especially in smaller cities and provinces. If women presume that there's a high probability their candidacy will be rejected, they won't even bother going through with it."

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has vocalized support for women in government on numerous occasions but he has also been criticized for not nominating any women to cabinet posts.

Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, Shahindokht Mowlaverdi (one of three women deputies Rouhani has appointed thus far) told ISNA:

"The women who have entered the Islamic Consultative Assembly [parliament] should make the greatest effort towards realizing women's rights. That's why people entrusted them with their vote."

The April round of voting will determine parliamentary outcomes for 71 districts where no candidate received 25 percent or more of votes cast.

Iran's new parliament opens session this coming May. ■



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Who needs happiness?

The World Happiness Report 2016 Update, which ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, was released on UN World Happiness Day, March 20.

Editors of the report's three prior editions (2012, 2013 and 2015) argued that happiness provides a better indicator of human welfare than income, poverty, education, health and good government measured separately.

Now they contend that inequality of wellbeing provides a broader measure of inequality, and that happiness inequality has increased significantly for the population of the world as a whole.

Singled out for its stated commitment to happiness in the 2015 report, the United Arab Emirates (rank 20) followed through on that promise by appointing its first Minister of Happiness, February 15. ■

One of eight female ministers in the 29-member cabinet, Ohood Al Roumi (pictured above) said she would work with all ministries, government institutions and the private sector to ensure they had the tools needed to improve the lives of their employees.

"Happy people live 7.5 years more and take one third fewer sick days," said Al Roumi in remarks reported by the UAE's English language newspaper, the National.

"Unhappy people cost companies 100 days of productivity, so it's in everyone's interest to work with the ministry."

So far, four national governments—including OFID Members Ecuador, UAE, and Venezuela—have appointed ministers of happiness responsible for coordinating their national efforts.

According to the World Happiness Report 2016 Update, Algeria (rank 38) has the happiest population in Africa.

Six key factors were measured to establish the global rankings: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption. ■

Symposium on energy outlooks

Held at the headquarters of the International Energy Forum (IEF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the annual IEA-IEF-OPEC Symposium on Energy Outlooks brought together experts from the respective organizations, as well as a host of other industry players and governments from around the world. The 6th edition, with the backdrop of the present challenging energy market environment, provided a platform for participants to compare outlooks and offer up their positions and perspectives on a variety of industry issues.

COURTESY OF THE OPEC BULLETIN

Since the 5th Symposium on Energy Outlooks was held in March 2015, energy markets, particularly from the perspective of oil, have undergone much upheaval. In the last 12 months the industry has continued to readjust to the drop in prices that began in June 2014, and the fact that supply has continued to be greater than demand.

The past year or so has seen many investments deferred, and some canceled, significant amounts of manpower laid off, and stocks have risen above their five-year

average. The impacts of these developments on energy outlooks, in the short-, medium- and long-terms, and in terms of supply and demand, stability and growth, were much discussed. It was noted that long-term projections should not be unduly impacted by the current cycle the industry is going through, but given that the market is still searching for balance, the short- and medium-term outlooks presented a somewhat shifting global oil and energy market landscape.

Setting the scene

With over 100 experts from a broad range of stakeholders and Member Countries present, the heads of delegation from the IEF, OPEC and the International Energy Agency (IEA) began by setting the scene for the day's proceedings.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr Aldo Flores-Quiroga, Secretary-General of the IEF, started by talking about the comparative analysis of the energy outlooks of OPEC and the IEA, one of the main reasons the Symposium was initially put together. He highlighted the significant improvements and achievements that have been witnessed in the joint works of the IEF, the IEA and OPEC over the past years.

In later comments, he cited a number of major accomplishments from the organizations at this event since it began in 2011, but underscored that there remained areas that needed to be further analyzed and addressed.

In a similar vein, Abdalla Salem El-Badri, Secretary-General of OPEC, acknowledged the value of the Symposium to furthering cooperation and dialogue. In particular, he said, what recent developments have shown is that “we are seeing changes to numbers, and shifts in sentiment, on a regular basis.” And this “underscores the importance of continually analyzing our energy outlooks, to better understand the data, the key trends, ►



From left: Abdallah Salem El-Badri; OPEC Secretary-General; Aldo Flores-Quiroga, IEF Secretary-General; and Paul E. Simons, Deputy Executive-Director, IEA.

PHOTO: OPEC



PHOTO: OPEC

Dr Hojatollah Ghanimi Fard, Head, OPEC Petroleum Studies Department.

◀ and areas where we might see some divergent opinions.”

In terms of the current market environment, he said that the industry would come through this cycle, and stressed that past cycles “have helped make the industry increasingly resilient and more efficient.”

He noted, however, that there remains a significant stock overhang in the market, and highlighted that there had been additional non-OPEC supply of more than six million barrels/day between 2008 and 2014, while OPEC supply had remained fairly stable. In 2015, he said, “non-OPEC grew by 1.3m b/d, and OPEC by around 1.1m b/d.” Given this, he stated that “the overhang should be viewed as something OPEC and non-OPEC tackle together.” He further added that “the market needs to see inventories come down to levels that allow prices to recover and investments to return.”

El-Badri said he remained “optimistic for the future” and pointed to OPEC’s *World Oil Outlook*, where oil demand is seen increasing by around 17m b/d between now and 2040, with estimates of oil-related investment requirements around \$10tr over this period. However, he imparted, “we believe the current environment is putting this future at risk. At current price levels, it is clear that not all of the necessary future investment is viable.”

Paul E Simons, Deputy Executive Director of the IEA, shared similar positive views on the importance of the trilateral program, particularly at a time when markets continue to witness oversupply and given the potential implications of the current environment on investments.

Simons also made reference to the outcome of the COP21 climate change meeting in Paris last December, including compliance with the intended nationally determined contributions and their overall degree of sufficiency to meet set targets. He underlined how these would have a bearing on many of the future fundamental assumptions in various long-term scenario analyses.

Comparing outlooks

The first session saw both OPEC and the IEA present their most recent outlooks. OPEC’s presentations were made by Dr Hojatollah Ghanimi Fard, Head of the Petroleum Studies Department and Oswaldo Tapia, Head of the Energy Studies Department. For the IEA, presentations were made by Simons and Nathan Frisbee, Senior Analyst, Global Energy Economics.

The presentations were again complemented by a report—‘A Comparison of Recent IEA and OPEC Outlooks’—prepared by the IEF and the Duke University Energy Initiative, in consultation with the IEA and OPEC. Professor Richard G Newell, Director of the Duke University Energy Initiative, served as the principal researcher on the project.

The report concluded that the purpose of the comparison was “to enhance understanding of views and methodologies from two widely acknowledged information providers—the IEA and OPEC—by comparing the outlooks over corresponding time horizons.” It added that the objective of the comparison was “not to harmonize all assumptions or to eliminate differences in perspectives,” stressing that “the goal is to pursue higher-quality data and control for differences in convention, in order to better inform stakeholders worldwide.”

It was noted that progress has been made on a number of issues, but underlined a number of topics that warrant further discussion, including: bridging some historical data differences; understanding factors that underscore differences in medium- and long-term oil price assumptions; advancing efforts to standardize liquids fuel supply categories; adopting consistent approaches in classifying fuels at the regional and sectoral versus global levels; and standardizing unit conversion processes.

Some of these issues were discussed by experts from the IEA, the IEF and OPEC at a technical meeting the day after the Symposium.

Further perspectives

The second and third sessions provided an opportunity for other industry stakeholders to provide some additional perspectives. The second session centered on industry views on the short-, medium- and long-term energy outlooks. This was moderated by Adam Siemenski, Administrator at the US Energy Information Administration, and saw presentations from Chris Midgeley, Shell’s Chief Economist and Head of Oil Market Analysis; Joel Couse, Vice President, Market Analysis, Trading and Shipping, at Total SA; Alexey Gromov, Director of the Energy Department at the Institute for Energy and Finance in Russia; and Patrick Allman-Ward, Director and CEO of Dana Gas.

The third session then looked at the impacts of a low oil price environment on supply and demand, stability and growth. This was moderated by Paul Horsnell, Head of Commodities Research at Standard Chartered, and saw presentations from Amrita Sen, Chief Oil Analyst at Energy Aspects; Eugene McQuaid, Senior Economist at the Saudi Arabia General Investment Authority; Tatiana Mitrova, Head of the Oil and Gas Department, Energy Research Institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences; and Alexander Poegl, Head of Business Development at JBC Energy.

Continuing dialogue

In the closing remarks, the valuable contributions from, and interactions among the experts during the open discussions were commended. There was also general agreement that the Symposium had once again been a success and that work between the organizations on better harmonizing energy outlooks would continue in the coming year.

Looking ahead, the three organizations also have other joint events planned for 2016—the 5th Workshop on Interactions between Physical and Financial Energy Markets and the 4th Symposium on Gas and Coal Market Outlooks. ■

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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