

JULY 2017

OFID Quarterly

THE OPEC FUND
FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



Today's children: In safe hands?



Ministerial Council holds 38th Session

OFID Director-General receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Vietnam development in focus

OFID Annual Scholarship Award winners announced

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Uniting against Poverty

COMMENT

Children in need?	2
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SPECIAL FEATURE: CHILDREN

Children: In safe hands?	5
Perspectives on child refugees	11
Special protection: new UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict	14
OFID in the Field	16
Handicap International in Palestine	18
Mobilizing OFID's private sector to meet SDG education targets	20
Improving children's education in Grenada	22

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL HOLDS 38TH SESSION

Ministerial Council meets to set OFID policy	24
OFID Annual Award recognizes efforts to improve health in Guatemala	32
2017 OFID Scholarship Award Program winners announced	34
Annual Report 2016: OFID at 40	37

NEWSROUND

OFID renews its commitment to Vietnam	39
Director-General receives Lifetime Achievement Award	41
OFID Director-General publishes second book of highlights	42
Landmark deal to boost Sri Lankan enterprise	43
Art auction supports refugee action	44
OFID partners with UNIDO for fifth Vienna Energy Forum	46
Rural development loans benefit Bolivia, Ethiopia and Guinea	47
Clean water for Kenya's urban poor	48
Infrastructure boost to enhance Burundi's economy	49
OFID grant supports WFP humanitarian relief efforts in Iraq and Somalia	50
OFID prepares ground to boost Ukrainian private sector	51

OFID Diary	52
Meetings attended by OFID	55
159th Governing Board photo gallery	56

SPOTLIGHT

Off-grid, on target: Decentralized energy solutions	58
---	----

PERSPECTIVES

Interview with International Islamic Trade Finance CEO Hani Salem Sonbol	61
Interview with Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture President Jumana Trad	63

CONFERENCE WATCH

3rd Sustainable Energy for All Forum	64
3rd IEF – OFID Symposium on Energy Poverty	66

MEMBER STATES FOCUS

Contemporary designs revitalize traditional Algerian craft	68
Iraqi Embassy honors the late Dame Zaha Hadid	69
Saudi minister recognized for contributing to growth and prosperity	70

OPEC

172nd Meeting of the OPEC Conference	71
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Children in need?

Earlier this year, Vienna's International Mayors' Conference brought together 160 mayors, experts, politicians, refugees and NGO representatives from 22 nations to discuss a shared obligation toward children. Various disturbing children-related statistics abound, but this Conference focused on the following: 31 million children and teenagers are fleeing from war, violence or extreme poverty. A further 17 million children are displaced within their home countries. The gathering heard "heart-breaking, horrific things" and noted a growing rhetoric of xenophobia.

As the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) states, every child has the right to a fair chance in life. But millions of children are trapped in an intergenerational cycle of disadvantage that puts their futures—and the futures of their societies—at risk. Despite the gains made under the Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF predicts that unless the world tackles inequality today, in 2030: 167 million children will live in extreme poverty; 69 million children under the age of five will have died from preventable causes; and 60 million children of primary school age will be out of school.

Media reports are equally distressing, and there is no shortage of them: As Virginia Gamba, the UN's Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, says in our lead feature on page five, the reality is that difficult and complex challenges exist in several countries. However, during the past 20 years, she believes big progress has been made—evidenced, for example, by the thousands of child soldiers released and reintegrated into society each year. There is now a broad coalition of Member States, UN and civil society organizations committed to protecting schools and to helping more children continue learning in the midst of conflict, she explains. Efforts to protect healthcare and to curb sexual violence in conflict are just as impressive.

Attendees at Vienna's Mayors' Conference argued that while children (and children on the move, specifically) may be the most vulnerable members of society, they also offer an opportunity. If the international community gets its act together—for example, by providing more funding for education and emotional support, and granting full rights regardless of a child's residency status—the lives of vulnerable children can be improved. "Our learning from the past few days has given us hope," the Conference stated.

OFID is hopeful too, and works hard to protect children and improve their prospects through a variety of means. The organization has committed wholeheartedly to the 2030 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) thereof. This means its core activities—concessional lending, and grants and technical assistance, provided to the world's most vulnerable people—focus on SDG 7 (Affordable Clean Energy) as well as helping to achieve SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and ultimately all 17 SDGs. To put things in some kind of perspective, as of December 31, 2016, OFID had allocated more than US\$978 million to education-related initiatives, including the construction and modernization of primary, secondary and tertiary facilities, as well as supporting teacher training and capacity building.

OFID's focus on children can be understood more fully by reading this magazine's "OFID in the field" section on page 16, which highlights three OFID-funded projects: supporting workshops for children of varying abilities in Palestine; financing education and vocational training in Egypt; and improving education in Grenada. The latter project saw OFID co-finance the Schools Rehabilitation Project and the

Schools Feeding Program to the tune of US\$10.5 million following the Caribbean country's back-to-back hurricanes of 2004 and 2005.

But there are many other examples, too, like the support the organization provided for the construction of a children's home in Kiev in 2010 for Ukrainian orphans, in an attempt to create for them a sense of security and belonging—a basic right for any individual. In 2015, OFID's Annual Award for Development recognized and financially assisted the Children's Cancer Hospital, Egypt, for its work in alleviating suffering and its dedication to fighting cancer. Then there are the three schools of the Nahr el Bared Refugee Camp in Lebanon, and a program to improve education for 1,600 pupils attending schools at the Shu'fat Refugee Camp in East Jerusalem; both co-financed by OFID. The list goes on and on.

The Vienna International Mayors' Conference concluded that to help children and provide brighter opportunities and a more secure future, the most fundamental starting point for the world is to develop a better awareness of the issues they face. This edition of the OFID Quarterly magazine aims to contribute to that awareness and demonstrate how OFID is helping children across the globe. ■





Children: In safe hands?

Conflict and migration are two of the many apparently insurmountable challenges facing today's children. Is the global machinery of child protection fit for purpose? Or is it buckling under the weight of record numbers of vulnerable children? *Steve Hughes* investigates...

A wise person once said that it's easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults. But the world often seems a terribly inhospitable place for adults, never mind children. Over recent years, distressing media reports about children have been unrelenting: missing children, child soldiers, unaccompanied child refugees, malnourished and stunted orphans, child victims of suicide bombings. There seems little likelihood that the flow will be stemmed any time soon. But, if—as is often said—the way a society treats its children offers a window to that society's soul, how does our collective conscience measure up? Are the world's children in safe hands? Or are we, as grown-up global citizens, failing our children at every juncture?

Is it possible to protect children *en masse*?

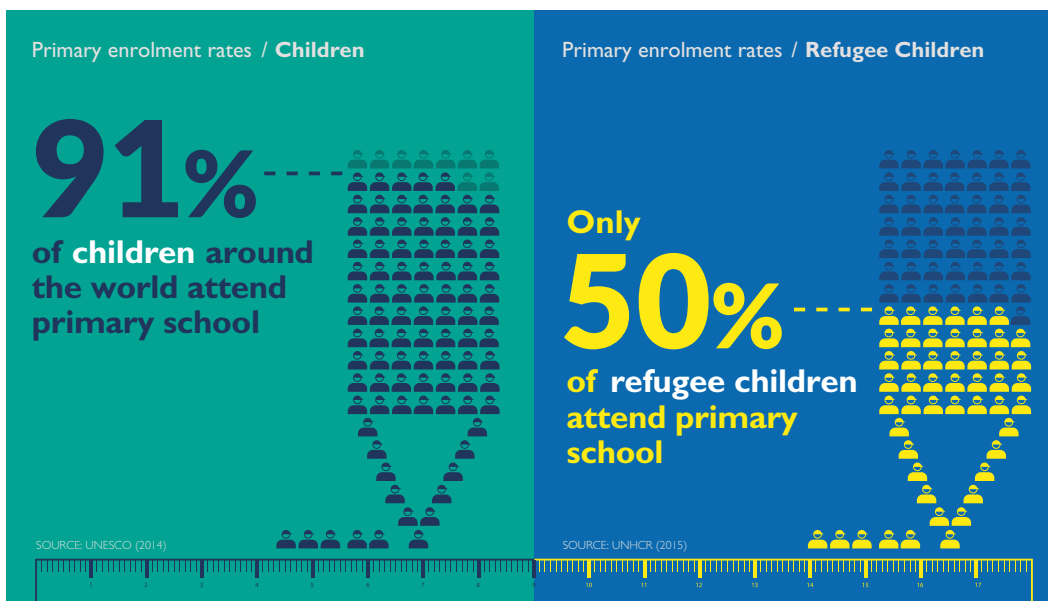
It was nearly three decades ago in 1989 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC—see page 9 for a summary), a landmark for human rights. It applies to all children and young people aged 17 and under. The treaty seeks to address the particular needs of children and to set minimum standards for the protection of their rights. It's the first international treaty to guarantee civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

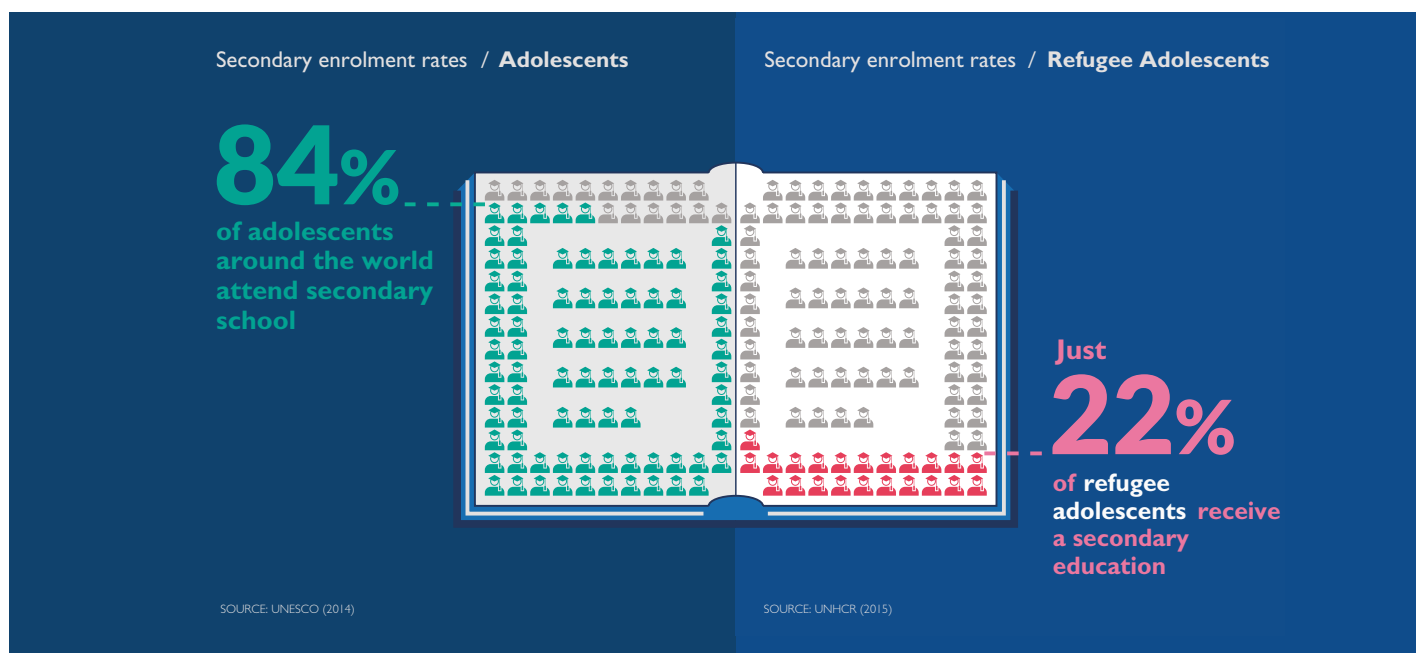
"The UN Convention provides an important backdrop," says Sonali Nag, Associate Pro-

fessor for Education and the Developing Child at the University of Oxford. She explains how, in a similar way, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a framework for countries to plan and measure children-related goals. "It's brought a shared vocabulary into country-level discussions about children," she says. "But as with all these things, there is a gap: between discussion and planning, and actual implementation."

Virginia Gamba, the UN's Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict says: "As the most ratified human rights treaty in the world, the CRC provides a solid foundation to our work and has resulted in a significant international consensus that the protection and promotion of the rights of children is a moral, social and legal imperative for everyone." Gamba goes on to explain how she uses the CRC as a "commonly agreed set of principles that form the basis of our engagement with governments and parties to conflict."

She gives a convincing and recent example of its power: In Somalia, the CRC was used to advocate with provincial authorities that children detained for their alleged association with Al-Shabaab (a jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa)—some of them even sentenced to death—should be handed over to child protection actors such as UNICEF to receive reintegration services and to be reunited with their families. This advocacy led to the release of most of the children.





Conflict and migration

In a recent UNICEF report, Afshan Khan, UNICEF Regional Director and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe, provided a sense of scale: “50 million children are on the move, some fleeing violence, war, poverty and climate change.” Conflict and migration are the headline issues for children right now, says Sarah Crowe, UNICEF’s Refugee and Migrant Crisis spokesperson. And despite overarching frameworks like the CRC, she says that across Europe, child protection systems are failing children. “Children are being pushed back and detained,” she explains. “They’re not always getting access to basic services. Many are ending up on the streets in places like Athens, Rome, Calais and Dunkirk in extremely vulnerable positions. The risks they’re taking to escape conflict or to improve their lives are life threatening from the minute they leave their homes. They’re facing dangers every step of the way.”

Ercan Nik Nafs, Children and Youth Ombudsman from Vienna’s Children and Youth Attorney’s Office, is also feeling the strain. “Let’s be clear,” he says. “There were children-related problems to do with education, housing and employment in Austria before the refugee crisis. But the increased numbers highlight these problems.” Nik Nafs’ organization helps all children in Vienna (and parents and teachers, too) with issues as wide ranging as bullying, radicalization, abuse and more. He believes there is a global political will to protect our children, but that there is still much work to be done on the ground.

Education and refugees

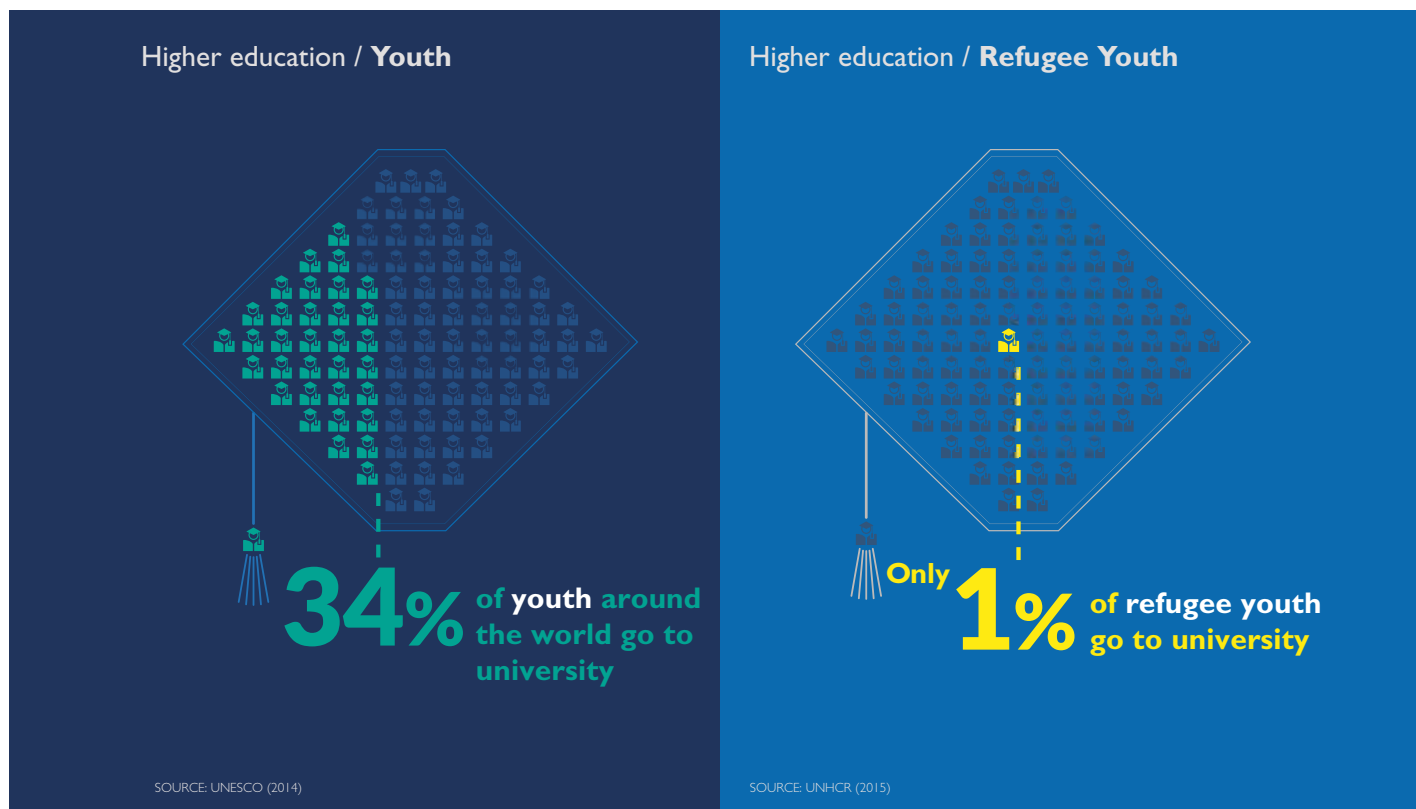
This last point echoes Nag’s argument regarding another integral relationship—between children and education. While the MDGs have ensured that more children than ever before now have access to primary education (i.e. the global will), many questions remain about the quality of such education. She says that today’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are important in this respect—particularly SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning—in helping to shift the conversation away from mere access toward quality. But again she worries about the gap between ambition and implementation: “The working out of what quality education looks like needs to be done in every classroom, community centre and village square.”

Regardless of the pressures and numbers, Nik Nafs and his team have seen successes in Vienna on the scale Nag talks about, especially when it comes to refugee children: “One of the main aims from the very start was to have refugee children in the same schools as Austrian children,” he says. “Excluding them would have made it impossible for them to integrate properly. I think Vienna is doing well in this respect.” He’s also proud of the progress the city has made in reducing the size of the ‘homes’ for unaccompanied minors and increasing the number of support staff for children who are housed there. “Before, they were in these huge houses and they were insufficiently attended,” he says. ▶



Afshan Khan, UNICEF Regional Director and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe.

PHOTO: PHOTO/EVAN SCHNEIDER



Education and culture

◀ Nag, who has advised post-genocide Rwanda on education policy, among other tough assignments, believes schools need to shift away from driving for attainment and instead focus on achieving a balance between happy and successful children. This is particularly important where refugees are concerned: “We need to create a culturally aware, well-functioning school system that brings stability to the life of children,” she says. “Schools need to acknowledge other cultures explicitly. If teachers have awareness of a refugee child’s language and culture, it will help to develop deeper relationships. In the current climate of migration, it’s worrying that host countries often view a child’s home culture and language as inferior.”

To address this, Nag proposes a simple two point agenda: facilitate improved home and school interaction, so that teachers better understand the ‘lived’ lives of children and can address any gaps in their understanding; and implement a clear plan to protect diversity. “My colleagues and I are currently looking at cultural sensitivity training across the support services,” she says.



Leila Zerrougui, former UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

PHOTO: UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

Education and conflict

But what good are schools if they don’t do the bare minimum of keeping our children safe? Leila Zerrougui, former UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (Gamba’s predecessor) wrote in an article for the UK newspaper *The Guardian* last year: “In conflicts raging across the world, the extremity of violence against children has increased. Every day, innocent lives are lost and many more altered irrevocably, with children often the direct targets of attacks intended to cause maximum civilian casualties, terrorize communities and provoke outrage worldwide.” She focused particularly on how extremist groups have targeted students, teachers and education facilities in recent years.

Zerrougui wrote that greater political will was needed to protect schools and urge all parties “to refrain from actions that deny children an education” and sign up to the Safe Schools Declaration—an intergovernmental political commitment that provides countries with the opportunity to express support for protecting students, teachers, schools, and universities from attack during times of armed conflict. ▶

A SUMMARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

ARTICLE 1 (definition of the child)

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

ARTICLE 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

ARTICLE 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

ARTICLE 4 (implementation of the Convention)

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

ARTICLE 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

ARTICLE 6 (life, survival and development)

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

ARTICLE 7 (birth registration, name, nationality, care)

Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

ARTICLE 8 (protection and preservation of identity)

Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

ARTICLE 9 (separation from parents)

Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

ARTICLE 10 (family reunification)

Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

ARTICLE 11 (abduction and non-return of children)

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

ARTICLE 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

ARTICLE 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

ARTICLE 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

ARTICLE 17 (access to information from the media)

Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

ARTICLE 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

ARTICLE 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

ARTICLE 20 (children unable to live with their family)

If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

ARTICLE 21 (adoption)

Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

ARTICLE 22 (refugee children)

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

ARTICLE 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

ARTICLE 24 (health and health services)

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 25 (review of treatment in care)

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

ARTICLE 26 (social security)

Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

ARTICLE 27 (adequate standard of living)

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

ARTICLE 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

ARTICLE 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

ARTICLE 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

ARTICLE 32 (child labour)

Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

ARTICLE 33 (drug abuse)

Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

ARTICLE 34 (sexual exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

ARTICLE 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)

Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

ARTICLE 36 (other forms of exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

ARTICLE 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)

Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

ARTICLE 38 (war and armed conflicts)

Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

ARTICLE 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

ARTICLE 40 (juvenile justice)

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

ARTICLE 41 (respect for higher national standards)

If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

ARTICLE 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

The Convention has 54 articles in total.

Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

ARTICLE 45

Unicef can provide expert advice and assistance on children's rights.

OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS

There are three agreements, called Optional Protocols, that strengthen the Convention and add further unique rights for children. They are optional because governments that ratify the Convention can decide whether or not to sign up to these Optional Protocols. They are: the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on a complaints mechanism for children (called Communications Procedure).

For more information go to unicef.org.uk/crc/op

◀ “When children lose this protective environment...families often have no other option but to flee in search of a safer alternative,” she wrote. “It is every parent’s imperative to provide their children with opportunities for a better future.”

Big progress but even more to be done

Gamba says the reality is that difficult and complex challenges remain in several countries. However, during the past 20 years, she believes the CRC and advocacy work has made a huge difference—evidenced, for example, by the thousands of child soldiers released and reintegrated into society each year—not just to the lives of those children, but to their societies, too (see pages 14 and 15). “There is also progress in other areas related to our mandate,” she explains. “There is now a broad coalition of Member States, UN and civil society organizations committed to protecting schools and to helping more children continue learning in the midst of

conflict. Efforts to protect healthcare, and to curb sexual violence in conflict are just as impressive.”

Writing in a 2009 UNICEF report entitled *The State of the World’s Children*, former Executive Director Ann Veneman wrote: “The CRC is testament to the common understanding among countries and communities that children have the right to survive and develop; to be protected from violence, abuse and exploitation; and for their views to be respected and actions concerning them to be taken in their best interests. Meeting children’s rights is not only fundamental for their development and well-being, it is also pivotal to creating the world envisioned by the Millennium Declaration—a world of peace, equity, security, respect for the environment and shared responsibility—in short, a world fit for children.”

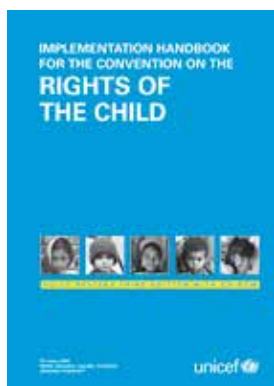
In *Humanitarian action for Children 2017*, current UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake wrote: “Around 535 million. That is the number of children living in countries affected by emergencies—one out of every four children in the world...Many of these children are already vulnerable—living in poverty, deprived of adequate nutrition, out of school, at risk of exploitation. Such complex and protracted emergencies aggravate the risks these children face and exacerbate their needs. They also threaten their societies—potentially reversing hard-won development gains around the world.” He also wrote: “...children are always the hope of the world.”

Gamba recognizes that the challenges are enormous. However, she remains optimistic: “Our collective work must continue. We all have a role to play to make a difference in children’s lives. Reducing the impact of conflict on children and ending violations committed against them is our primary objective. But, ultimately, our focus needs to be not only on resolving conflict, but also on preventing it. This is the only way to truly protect children.”

She concludes with a reminder about responsibilities: “We cannot overlook one important fact. Each country has the primary responsibility of protecting its own children. The role of the UN and international community is to support efforts undertaken at national level to improve the protection of children.” ■

How is the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child monitored?

The Committee on the Rights of the Child, an internationally elected body of independent experts that sits in Geneva to monitor the CRC’s implementation, requires governments that have ratified the CRC to submit regular reports on the status of children’s rights in their countries. The Committee reviews and comments on these reports and encourages states to take special measures and to develop special institutions for the promotion and protection of children’s rights. Where necessary, the Committee calls for international assistance from other governments and technical assistance from organizations like UNICEF. For more information, see the ‘Implementation handbook’ on unicef.org.



Perspectives on child refugees

PHOTOS: OFID/STEVE HUGHES



Ercan Nik Nafs, Children and Youth Ombudsman, from Vienna's Children and Youth Attorney's Office.

They have no roots anymore; they are not connected. They have to start from scratch. Some of them have left families behind, friends. Maybe they have even lost someone on the way.

The most difficult thing is the emotional condition they are in. There is still a lot that needs to be done in this area. It's not easy. We need more experts who know how to deal with such cases; who have the experience.

The challenge is for people to understand their situation. It is for people who already live here to approach the newcomers and tell them: 'You're welcome; this is who we are; this is how we can help you; this is what we offer.'

I am proud of Vienna, because I feel a lot of this work is being done. But it also takes a lot of energy.

14 year-old Shokria is originally from Afghanistan. She left when her father was killed. She has been in Vienna for one-and-a-half years.

It was difficult, because when I came to Austria, I was without my family. On the boat, I thought I was going to die.

The people here have been perfect. One person named Martin volunteered to give me German lessons, free of charge. He taught me every week and now I can speak.

Here, there's one rule that I like so much: everyone can go to school. There's no difference between me and Austrian people. Everyone is the same. First of all, school was really hard because I didn't have the language. Now it's okay.

I like schnitzels, but some food, I don't like. I miss some special food from Afghanistan. It's really difficult if you want to cook it. It needs a person that cooks it a lot, like my older sister or my mom. And I like karate. My karate teacher told me: 'You are the best.' I like the power.

I miss my friends and my family—so much. But I have many plans for the future. I want to be a lawyer, because in Afghanistan, as you know, there are no rights for women. I want to be a lawyer so I can help these women.



PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REFUGEES

**Maryam is a lawyer in Vienna
who works for an NGO that represents
unaccompanied minors.**

They will sometimes be picked up off the street by the police and taken to the station. They are held in custody for their protection, but do not really understand this and so it can actually be very scary. After, they'll be transported to the main reception center. It's a good process in theory, but they have no idea what's happening to them.

They're often terrified and / or traumatized from what they've experienced in their countries or on their journeys. Their access to psychological care is very limited. They get medication—anti-depressants perhaps—but it's not what they need.

If they're over 18, they'll be sent back to the first European country they arrived in. If they're under 18, they'll be allowed to have their asylum application considered in Austria.

We help them prepare for the asylum process—they have a right to a legal advisor—and we write a statement. Few children receive asylum, because they have to prove it is highly likely they'd be persecuted for reasons of religion, ethnicity, nationality etc. Often they cannot express the reasons themselves, or their parents sent them to safety and didn't tell them what the specific dangers were. They can also receive subsidiary protection if they prove they'd be in danger were they to return to their home country. This allows them to stay here, but it must be renewed every two years.

Austrian families can sponsor unaccompanied children—there's a formal process enabling them to provide financial and emotional support. The difference this can make is unbelievable.

See wirhelfen.univie.ac.at/en for a list of ways to help.



PHOTO: PACIFIC PRESS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SONALI NAG



Sonali Nag is Associate Professor for Education and the Developing Child at the University of Oxford.

Children vary enormously. Some weather the storms, helping others. Despite the crisis they are in themselves, they neither show bitterness and rage nor despair and hopelessness. But there will be others who are slow to respond to their new country or recover—after the loss of a parent or the emotional stress of war.

Still others are already vulnerable. They may never adjust to new realities. Every aspect of their life pushes them into more difficulty and they remain simply unable to cope.

Integration is a key challenge when children face multiple stress points. Sometimes they are pushed to walk and run when they're struggling to stand. Small pressure points like getting used to the weather, new modes of transport and methods of teaching in school can add up quickly. And then there is the obvious challenge in a new country of learning a new language.

Having emotional support makes a big difference. Even the children who have arrived with family members may find it difficult to integrate; if the mother is depressed because she has lost her husband, for example. Successful integration depends on the communities that take them in. Communities may be well meaning, but all too often there is little or no cultural sensitivity.

Sarah Crowe is UNICEF's Refugee and Migrant Crisis spokesperson.

Our message is that children are children, first and foremost, whether they're migrants, refugees or whatever. They don't know whether they are a refugee or a migrant. All they know is that they need help. They are children uprooted. We urge the authorities, even in Europe, to see a child as a child; not as a burden, not as a political pawn, not as a criminal, not as a threat. A child is a child.

Families should be kept together—that's the best way to protect children. Children should be reunited with families if it is in their best interest. And of course, all children should be learning and have access to health services. These are basic human rights.

We need to press for action on the underlying causes of large movements—what is causing children to move in the first place? At every step of the way, there should be measures in place to prevent marginalization, xenophobia and discrimination. Children should be treated as children.

We should also remember that the great majority of children uprooted flee to neighboring countries. Right across the world, they're going to go to the nearest country if they're fleeing conflict or deprivation. In the vast majority of cases, children don't want to come all the way to Europe—it's too far from home and is desperately unsettling when the language and culture is so different.



PHOTO: UN/LOEY FELIPE

Special protection

PHOTO: OFID/RANA WINTERSTEINER

Earlier this year, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed **Virginia Gamba** of Argentina as his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. She took time out with *Steve Hughes* to discuss one of the world's most high profile children-related roles...

“**T**he work done by my predecessors has already made a huge difference in the lives of tens of thousands of children,” says Virginia Gamba, who recently replaced Leila Zerrougui as the United Nations Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

Gamba was most recently Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (established by Security Council resolution 2235 in 2015 on the use of chemicals as weapons in Syria). She brings more than 30 years of experience on issues related to disarmament, peace and human security.

“There’s a momentum, and support, to reach even more children than in the past,” she says. “I am committed to building on the work already accomplished and to bringing more tangible results for children.

“There is strong international support and political will to protect children affected by armed conflict,” Gamba continues. “The

Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

The mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict was born following the realization that children were the main victims of armed conflict.

The Security Council has provided the Office of the Special Representative with a strong framework of tools to respond to violations against children.

Six grave violations affecting children in times of conflict have been identified. All of them, except denial of humanitarian access, are triggers for listing

in the annexes of the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict:

- **Recruitment and use of children**
- **Killing and maiming of children**
- **Sexual violence against children**
- **Attacks on schools and hospitals**
- **Abduction of children**
- **Denial of humanitarian access**



PHOTO: UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN

Virginia Gamba

mandate I represent has broad support from countries, regional organizations, and others who are truly committed to making a difference for children growing up in times of war. Their support is manifested by political support, action and also through programs that directly help children affected by war.

So what does success look like? “Success can take many forms,” says Gamba. “Looking at this through the lens of our mandate, success is the thousands of child soldiers released every year, who receive assistance through reintegration programs and are able to go back to school, learn a job and reunite with their families.

“Success is also the signing of new Action Plans with parties to conflict,” she says. “This is a commitment by government security forces or an armed group to take concrete action to protect children. We have new Action Plans signed every year (three last year) and we also see progress in the

implementation of Action Plans signed previously in places as difficult as Afghanistan or the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example.”

More generally, Gamba explains, as a result of the UN’s work and engagement of the past 20 years, there is now a global consensus that children do not belong in

security forces in conflict: “Efforts and advocacy—notably through a campaign launched by my office and UNICEF called Children, Not Soldiers—have helped the UN, Member States and our NGO partners, work with national authorities concerned by this problem—including Afghanistan, Chad, DR Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen—to build capacity and develop strong national ownership of measures included in Action Plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.” ■

The UN is mandated to:

- *gather information, report on how and where children are affected by armed conflict*
- *name parties to conflict who recruit and use children, kill and maim, commit sexual violence, abduct children, attack schools and hospitals*
- *use this information to take action to protect children—to engage in dialogue with government forces and armed groups to develop Action Plans aimed at ending and preventing violations against children.*

OFID in the Field





OFID supports a wide variety of projects that benefit children, in an attempt to improve safety, health and education prospects. Over the following pages, we report on projects in Palestine, North Africa and Latin America.



A kite for Yousef

The completion of an OFID-sponsored project to improve inclusive services for people with varying abilities in Palestine has significantly enriched many young lives.

BY ARYA GUNAWAN USIS

Yousef al-Bouji's dream seemed simple: this 11-year-old boy wished to fly a kite. However, the dream was complicated by Yousef's physical ability and his use of a wheelchair. During kite season, children of his age and even younger throng to the fields of Rafah city, where Yousef resides, to fly kites. Rafah is a Palestinian city and refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip. Located 30km south of Gaza City, Rafah has a population of more than 150,000.

Last year, for the first time, Yousef's dream came true—though not in the way he may have imagined. Alongside 42 other children (more than half with disabilities) from Rafah, he participated in film-making workshops—one of a series of activities staged by Handicap International, an organization that aims to help disabled and vulnerable people in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. This particular project was supported by a US\$750,000 grant from OFID. Similar workshops were held in Gaza City. During the six-day workshop, Yousef contributed drawings for

an animated film entitled *Green Blue*. The film constitutes Yousef's dream of flying a kite.

"I wish I could fly a kite," said Yousef. "I sat at the window to see the neighbor boy flying his kite. I want to fly a kite as he does. One day he was flying the kite and the tail of the kite fell on the windowsill. I took it in my hands. I was so happy. Today, in the workshop, I made film pictures of the kite flying. It was so nice to see how the kite was flying and flying. I made many film pictures. I know that I made many more film shots than needed!"

The project was designed to enrich the lives of people, in particular children, with varying abilities in Palestine. Those with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in Palestine and their needs the most pressing. However, mainstream services often fail to include people with disabilities. This project covered three main components: strengthening adapted educational programs and psychosocial support for children with disabilities in targeted areas of the Gaza Strip; developing mobile reha-



PHOTO: HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

*Yousef al-Bouji,
who benefited
from a workshop
supported by OFID.*

bilitation services for populations in deprived communities of the West Bank; and providing support to multi-disciplinary rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, and particularly children with cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities.

The project was remarkably successful, significantly impacting the lives and wellbeing of the beneficiaries. More than 120 children received assistive devices such as mobility, hearing and visual aids, and made use of adapted desks and accessible books. In addition, more than 200 children benefited from psychosocial support sessions that included teachers and family members. Other children benefited from educational counseling sessions.

OFID welcomed the outcome of this operation and commended Handicap International on its comprehensive approach and the timely and efficient implementation of the project. "OFID will continue to cooperate with its wide network of partners in Palestine in support of social and developmental interventions," said

Dr Walid Mehalaine, Head of OFID's Grants and Technical Assistance Unit.

In addition, some 100 school kits, which included stationary and books, were purchased and donated to the most economically-challenged children with disabilities. A total of 33 teachers also received capacity building training, enabling them to better respond to children's needs. The lives of close to one thousand family members who received education and awareness sessions were also improved.

A manual entitled *Technical Guide: Inclusive good practices in schools* has been produced on the back of the project to share learnings. Bruno Leclercq, Head of Mission of Handicap International in Palestine, says: "This document offers a practical perspective and tools for teachers to help them make their classrooms more welcoming and lively places of learning for all children, including children with disabilities." ■

Mobilizing OFID's private sector to meet SDG education targets

Substantial financing will be needed to strengthen education and vocational training to meet the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of inclusive, quality education for all and the promotion of lifelong learning. OFID is rising to the challenge using private sector mechanisms.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

Much progress has been made to raise global school enrolment levels and increase access to education, yet some 103 million youth worldwide—60 percent of whom are women—still lack basic literacy skills.

Inclusive, viable education requires investments in infrastructure, teaching staff and support to develop coherent and effective education systems. However, in 2009, education account for a mere two percent of humanitarian

aid. With aid allocations falling steadily—according to OECD reports, aid to basic education is currently six percent lower than in 2010—the United Nations has called on the donor community to focus more attention on this vital sector, especially in the poorest countries.

“The private sector needs to get involved to bridge the massive financing gap,” said Tareq Alnassar, OFID's Head of Private Sector and Trade Finance Operations.

An example of OFID's intervention is the organization's participation in the Abraaj North Africa Fund II (ANAF II – see overleaf), which has supported an investment in CIRA, the largest K-12* education group in Egypt. With more than 20 schools operating under the brand ‘Future Schools’, CIRA provides affordable quality education for Egyptian families. The additional equity provided by ANAF II is helping CIRA increase the number of Future Schools facilities across the country and build the new Badr University in Cairo, with room for 20,000 students.

“The education sector is a key pillar of Egyptian economic growth,” said Dr Hassan El Kalla, Chairman of CIRA. He explained that the company focuses on the largely underserved mass market segment, which represents almost 70 percent of the Egyptian population.

OFID's Alnassar says this is indicative of how private sector engagement can increase the effectiveness of school systems: “Our involvement is as much about helping to raise environmental, social and governance standards, in addition to improving management capacity, as it is about mobilizing resources.”

The schools—built, owned and operated by CIRA—offer national and international curricula with integrated skills-based subjects, such as technology and foreign languages. By serving students in parallel to the public schooling system, CIRA is lightening the burden on already overstretched public infrastructure. ■

* K-12 is a term used to define publicly-supported school grades prior to college.



PHOTOS: SIEMEN/MOSTAFA DARWISH

CIRA provides affordable quality education for Egyptian families.

The Abraaj North Africa Fund II

In 2014, OFID participated in the Abraaj Group's second dedicated North Africa private equity fund ANAF II. The fund invests in high-growth, mid-market businesses in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. ANAF II targets investments that meet or exceed the financial return requirements of investors, while also supporting social and environmental outcomes. This is important for accel-

erating inclusive economic growth and employment creation in a region with high population growth. ANAF II also focuses on sectors that aim to support the continued growth of the expanding middle class in its target countries, such as healthcare, education, consumer goods and services, business services, materials and logistics. See www.abraaj.com for more information.



Education for refugee children

The refugee crisis in 2015 saw some 130,000 registered Syrian refugees in Egypt. In reaction to this, CIRA created a special program for Syrian refugees. Using the existing infrastructure of a 'Future School,' an evening school for Syrian refugee children was set up in Cairo. Children are taught by qualified teachers from the same refugee community, 80 percent of

whom are women. The school fees are subsidized to alleviate the financial burden on families. Since the pilot program commenced more than 18 months ago, more than 800 Syrian refugee children have been enrolled (with a waiting list of over 1,000). CIRA is currently working to obtain government permits to roll out this model at other schools.

Improving children's education in Grenada

Nearly 8,000 children have benefited from an OFID co-financed project to rehabilitate damaged school infrastructure following devastating natural disasters.

BY SILVIA MATEYKA



After the destruction of back-to-back hurricanes in 2004 and 2005, net enrolment in Grenada's schools dipped to 62 percent—well below average—as students abandoned damaged infrastructure and dropped out of secondary schools to seek employment in the construction industry.

The government, quickly declaring education a priority sector, set to work. OFID, recognizing that education and socioeconomic development are tightly linked, co-financed the Schools Rehabilitation Project and the Schools Feeding Program to the tune of US\$10.5 million. The total project cost was US\$13.10 million and the government of Grenada contributed US\$2.60 million.

Rehabilitation works ranged from minor repairs to the complete reconstruction or replacement of buildings and school kitchens at five primary and secondary schools. The projects also supported capacity building and institution strengthening. An estimated 7,900 chil-

dren have benefited and are now able to enrol each year at the newly-rehabilitated schools.

“A quality education is a basic human right and the cornerstone of the economic and social progress of every country,” said Arij Senussi, OFID country officer for Grenada. “OFID’s support of this project did not only help the government of Grenada enhance its education system, but it also provided opportunities for Grenada’s youth to realize their full potential,” she added.

OFID has contributed to the development of Grenada since 1977. To date, the organization has approved a total of US\$68.85 million in public sector lending, comprising debt relief and financing aimed at strengthening the country’s transportation and education sectors. Grenada was also a beneficiary of a national grant drawn from the United Nations Development Program Energy Account.

With a population of around 107,000 people, Grenada is one of the smallest countries in



PHOTO: ANTHONY ASAEU/ART IN ALL OF US/CONTRIBUTOR

the world. In addition to its main island, the Caribbean country has two dependencies—Pettit Martinique and Carriacou—and a number of smaller islets.

In September 2004, hurricane Ivan swept through Grenada. Classified as a category three storm, Ivan left tremendous devastation in its wake, destroying 90 percent of the country's buildings. The financial costs of the disaster were estimated at more than US\$900 million. Nearly all of the 75 schools on the island were severely damaged. In 2005, the country was hit by a second natural disaster—hurricane Emily—which worsened the already dire situation.

In Grenada, as in all other countries, education attainment is strongly linked with economic gains and lower poverty rates. It is also integral to personal and social development. The government of Grenada has been investing approximately 5.2 percent of GDP annually in education, spending almost US\$38 million in 2015. This was more than was spent on any

other sector. It was also among the highest spent on education in the Eastern Caribbean States.

As a consequence, Grenada has made remarkable advances in meeting several basic education targets. In 2012, the country achieved universal secondary education. In addition, Grenada attained the Millennium Development Goals and Caribbean-specific targets related to education, and virtually eliminated enrolment disparities between male and female children.

Children make up a significant proportion of the country's population. Just over one-quarter of Grenadians are under 14 years old. According to UNESCO, Grenada has over 22,000 pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education.

Grenada continues to work hard to support the wellbeing of its people. OFID values its efforts and looks forward to continued cooperation. ■

*“A quality education
is a basic human right
and the cornerstone
of the economic and
social progress of
every country”*

ARIJ SENUSSI, OFID COUNTRY
OFFICER FOR GRENADA



OFID's Ministerial Council gathers to set policy

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL HOLDS 38TH SESSION



OFID's Ministerial Council is the organization's supreme governing authority. Made up of finance ministers and other high-level representatives of OFID Member Countries, it meets once a year to review performance and set policy. This year's meeting was held on July 6 at OFID's headquarters in Vienna.

BY STEVE HUGHES



Newly-elected Ministerial Council Chairman and Minister of Economy and Finance of Ecuador, Carlos Alberto de la Torre (center), with Governing Board Chairman Abdul Wahab Al-Bader (left) and OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish (right).

OFID's highest policy making body, the Ministerial Council, held its 38th annual session in Vienna in July to review the organization's performance and set policy for the coming year. The Council elected the Republic of Ecuador to the chair, represented by Carlos Alberto de la Torre, Minister of Economy and Finance. He replaces the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, represented by Abderrahmane Raouia, Minister of Finance.

Welcoming fellow ministers, outgoing Chairman Raouia focused on OFID's commitment to the 2030 Development Agenda and working toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "OFID's work has focused on addressing essential development needs—in particular food, water and energy resources—all of which are fundamental to economic growth, the provision of social services and improving the lives of developing societies," Raouia said. "OFID, along with its other partners in development, has a key role to play in ensuring that the [SDG] goals will be achieved in 2030." He added that OFID's advocacy had helped ensure the importance of energy was recognized as a standalone goal through SDG 7: 'Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.'

The highlight of the Council's public session was the presentation of the OFID Annual Award for Development to the aQ'on Jay Pro-

gram of the Foundation for Integral Development (FUDI) in Guatemala. The program will receive US\$100,000 from OFID in support of its efforts to improve maternal and child health and nutrition (see page 32).

The Council also announced the winners of the 2017 OFID Scholarship Award Program. This year, more than 20,000 students from OFID partner countries applied for a chance to complete their higher-level university studies with OFID's support. Ten young and remarkable individuals were selected from Colombia, Egypt, Guyana, Mongolia, Rwanda (two students), Sudan, Vietnam, Yemen and Zimbabwe. Since 2006, OFID has supported 40 outstanding young people to attend top ranking universities including Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge (see page 34).

In the Council's working session, Governing Board Chairman and Director-General of the Kuwait Fund, Abdulwahab A Al-Bader, reported on the work of the Board since the last meeting of the Council. He disclosed that during 2016, OFID approved US\$1,338.6 million in fresh financing for development; an increase of around \$200 million over 2015. Operations continued to be led by the energy–water–food nexus, supported by the transportation sector. Together, these four areas accounted for some 73 percent of aggregate approvals for the year.

In his statement to ministers, OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish said: “OFID has evolved over four decades. Today we are both a trusted global lending institution and a major player in the international development arena.”

Al-Herbish continued: “By the end of 2016, through the expert management of paid-in resources of just over US\$2.4 billion, we had committed more than US\$20 billion in support of over 3,600 development operations across 134 countries. This is a remarkable achievement considering our modest size.

“The journey has been extraordinary. We have embraced new financing instruments and models, built a more diverse partnership network and, occasionally, as our Annual Report shows, we have even ventured into uncharted territory. This is shown by the subordinated debt facilities provided to banks in Honduras and Nicaragua; the first of their kind under the Private Sector facility.”

Al-Herbish concluded his statement by thanking OFID’s ministers and Member Countries: “For all that we have achieved in 2016—and indeed over the past 40 years—we are mindful that nothing would have been possible without the trust of our Member Countries. Thank you all for your unwavering support. For this we are truly grateful. It has allowed OFID to mature into an organization that sets agendas and drives the sustainable development debate, month after month, year after year.”

Other matters during the session included: consideration and approval of OFID’s financial statements and Annual Report for 2016 (see page 37); and reports on the 20th Lending Program and grant operations. The Ministerial Council comprises the finance ministers and other high-level representatives of OFID Member Countries. It meets once a year. ■

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





The Council elected to the chair the Republic of Ecuador, represented by Carlos Alberto de la Torre, Minister of Economy and Finance.

38th Session of the Ministerial Council

photo gallery

*“OFID has evolved over four decades.
Today we are both a trusted global
lending institution and a major player
in the international development arena.”*

OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish



Abderrahmane Raouia
Minister of Finance, Algeria and
outgoing Ministerial Council Chairman.



Jean Jacques Essono Nguema
Governor of Gabon to OFID.



Made Arya Wijaya
Alternate Governor of Indonesia to OFID.



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



Muwafaq Taha Ezzulddin
Alternate Governor of Iraq to OFID.



Anas Khaled Al-Saleh
Minister of Finance, Kuwait.



Bader Ahmed Al Qayed
Governor of Qatar to OFID.



Mohammed Abdullah Al-Kharashi
Governor of Saudi Arabia to OFID.



Osama Saad Hamad Saleh
Minister of Finance, Libya.



Kemi Adeosun
Minister of Finance, Nigeria.



Younes Haji Al Khoury
Deputy Minister of Finance, United Arab Emirates.



Dulfa Dalila Hernández
Governor ad-hoc of Venezuela to OFID.



(From left) Mr Abdul Wahab Al-Bader, Governor of Kuwait to OFID and Chairman of the Governing Board; FUDI Chairman Juan Carlos Méndez; outgoing Ministerial Council Chairman Abderrahmane Raouia; Ambassador of the Republic of Guatemala Antonio Roberto Castellanos Lopez; and OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish.

OFID Annual Award recognizes efforts to improve health in Guatemala

The 2017 OFID Annual Award for Development has been presented to the aQ'on Jay Health Center for its contribution to improving maternal and child health and nutrition in the Guatemalan highlands.

BY DAMELYS DELGADO

The award, which comes with a US\$100,000 prize, was announced on the sidelines of the 38th session of the OFID Ministerial Council in Vienna, Austria. The award was presented jointly by OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish and Abderrahmane Raouia, Minister of Finance of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and Chairman of OFID's Ministerial Council.

"We are delighted to recognize the aQ'on Jay Program in this way," said Al-Herbish. "The program's focus on maternal and child health is in line with OFID's focus on tackling the significant challenges related to the 2030 goals for improved global health. Targets include, among others, improvements to maternal, child and re-

productive health, the reduction and prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and access for all to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and vaccines."

Accepting the award, FUDI Chairman Juan Carlos Méndez said: "At FUDI, we are deeply honored with this recognition. We receive it on behalf of our aQ'on Jay Health Center, and on behalf of all the rural families that are assisted through this health and nutrition program. We can assure you that these resources will strengthen the type of assistance provided at the Center to mothers and children under five years of age who are vulnerable to chronic malnutrition in the rural areas of Chimaltenango, Guatemala."

FUDI: Solidarity after a tragedy

In February of 1976, a deadly earthquake shook Guatemala, with effects felt in Belize, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico. More than 23,000 people were killed, 76,000 seriously injured and more than a million experienced damage of one kind or another. Entire settlements in Chimaltenango were devastated.

Three months after the disaster, FUDI began its activities to help restore the damaged infrastructure and to provide health and sanitation services. To complicate matters further, Guatemala's longstanding civil war was ongoing, making the needs of the country almost insurmountable. Over the years, FUDI has expanded its activities to help alleviate the plight of rural and poorer inhabitants of Chimaltenango communities by improving access to food, health services and nutrition.

FUDI, supported by several donors, provides assistance through three programs: The Rural Promotion Center, Utz Samaj, aims to develop and improve agricultural productivity; the Center Ixoqi supports the productive activity of 600 indigenous women from small communities; and the OFID Annual Award for Development-winning aQ'on Jay Health Center works to improve access to specialized health services and medical assistance for some 200,000 people in Guatemala's western highlands.

More than medical assistance

The lack of health access besetting rural and indigenous populations increases mortality rates because of the frequent occurrence of preventable diseases. The aQ'on Jay Program tackles health issues by creating an efficient medical care system that works on two fronts: the School of Education in Health and the Medical Referral Center.

The School of Education in Health provides preventive education, offering courses in hygiene and basic health practices to school



children, teachers, midwives and local authorities. Courses are also offered in environmental protection and the proper use of community resources. More than 5,500 people have been trained to date.

The Medical Referral Center offers general medical, ophthalmic and dental services and provides medication through the Central Pharmacy. The Center aims to reduce rural mortality by increasing access to health services for 143 indigenous communities. Since its inception, incidents of acute malnutrition affecting 80 percent of indigenous children have been reduced by 25 percent, while chronic malnutrition has been lowered by five percent. More than 11,000 patients with nutritional problems have been successfully treated. ■

“At FUDI, we are deeply honored with this recognition... We can assure you that these resources will strengthen the type of assistance provided at the Center to mothers and children...”

FUDI CHAIRMAN
JUAN CARLOS MÉNDEZ

And the winners were...

This is the third time since its inception in 2006 that OFID's Annual Award for Development has gone to Latin America, one of the highest-ranking regions on the planet in terms of inequality. The other two recipients from the region were Bartolina Sisa National Confederation of Peasant Indigenous Native Women of Bolivia and the Yelé Haiti Foundation, in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

Other past winners include: Syrian refugee Doaa Al Zamel; the Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt; Kenya's Kakenya Center for Excellence; Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan; Dr Mazen Al-Hajri, renowned ENT surgeon and philanthropist; and Professor Muhammad Yunus, among other distinguished personalities and institutions.

2017 OFID Scholarship Award Program winners announced

2017 was a record year for applications for the OFID Scholarship Award Program (OSAP) as the organization received the highest number of applications (more than 20,000) since the program's inception. The Award enables students to complete their higher level studies with OFID's support. Ten young and remarkable individuals have been selected from an outstanding application pool.

BY FATMA ELZAHRA ELSHHATI, LILIAN AL-BAZAZ AND MOZN AL-HINAI

THE TEN REMARKABLE WINNERS:

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF OFID 2017 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



23 year-old **Ahmed Khair** from Sudan has been selected to pursue an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies at Oxford University, UK. Ahmed's passion is rooted in his interest in the role of the environment in humanitarian emergencies. "If governments and practitioners are able to reconcile their policies of providing short-term humanitarian relief with long-term development, then Africa will be more adept at tackling [its] issues," Ahmed said. With the knowledge he gains, Ahmed aims to set up the first independent policy think tank dedicated to human rights and development in his home country.

Olive Musoni is 27 and from Rwanda. She will complete a Master's in Social Work at the University of Alabama, USA. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 deeply affected Olive and her family who, as a result, lived through extreme poverty and lacked basic essentials including health-care and education. "The fact that I lived and survived a life full of great hardship has led me to dedicate my life to serving humanity and speak out for those without a voice," Olive said. She hopes to serve as a role model for children in her village.



Christelle Umuhoza, 27 and also from Rwanda, will be pursuing a Master's in International Development Management from the University of Bradford, UK. Christelle is the founder of the *Umuhoza* (Comforter) program, which provides support to empower youth in Rwanda. "I believe education is the key to success, both for individuals and nations—especially the education of girls," she said. During her studies, Christelle aims to improve her knowledge about international policy and development issues.



24 year-old **Phuong Tran** from Vietnam will pursue a Master's in Global Health at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Through her work, Phuong has been evaluating the challenges facing breast cancer services in Vietnam. "I strongly believe in the impact of innovative tools such as social networks, digital devices and visual arts to informally educate people," she said. She wishes to expand her knowledge and network with other students to create a public health awareness program for rural women.



27 year-old **Sarah Al-Furasi** from Yemen will study for an MSc in Public and Environmental Health Sciences at the University of Birmingham, UK. With her medical background, Sarah has already been actively involved in community public health awareness campaigns in war-torn Sana'a. "I'm motivated to improve health-care on a local, national and international level," she said. Sarah aims to return to Yemen to support the rehabilitation of the public health system.

Since 2006, OFID has supported 40 outstanding young individuals to attend top ranking universities including Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge. Equipped with their hard-earned knowledge, these students have become OFID ambassadors and many have returned home to contribute to development in their own communities.



Amgalanzaya Tserenbaljir, 31 and from Mongolia, will pursue a Master's degree in Adult Education, Community Development and Youth Work at the University of Glasgow, UK. She has been working at an orphanage, helping to empower young girls by building their leadership and communication skills, as well as encouraging them to become independent learners. "I consider the most important part to address development challenges is an empowered community," she said. Upon completing her degree, Amgalanzaya aims to return to work with community-based local organizations in her home country.

Leonardo Parraga, 25 and from Colombia, will pursue his degree in International Education Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA. Leonardo is the founder of Fundacion BogotArt; a youth-led NGO dedicated to creating innovative solutions for social integration in marginalized neighborhoods. "I want to address [the] issue [of inequality] by providing the people in the bottom of the pyramid with a chance to improve their livelihood and access better personal development opportunities," he said. Upon completing his degree, Leonardo plans to propose a public education policy program to foster and finance self-organized community learning spaces.



24 year-old **Alaa Mohamed** from Egypt will pursue a Master's degree in Science and Molecular Medicine at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her desire to study medicine was fuelled by wanting to help members of her own community. "...a better understanding of genetic and epigenetic abnormalities will contribute to the development of novel therapies," she said. Alaa aims to bring her newly-earned knowledge back to her home country to help advance paediatric cancer care and research.



32 year-old **Vanessa Williams-Rodriguez** from Guyana will pursue an MSc in Social Development at the University of Sussex, UK. Vanessa volunteered with abused children and victims of crimes. As a single mother, Vanessa wishes to set an example for her daughter and break out of the cycle of poverty. "[My work] gave me a strong sense of commitment to working with young people...who needed guidance and support," she said. Vanessa hopes to work to improve the lives of women and young adults in her own country.



Anthony Musiwa is 30 and from Zimbabwe. He will pursue an MSc in Policy Research at the University of Bristol, UK. Anthony is currently working to provide proper HIV / AIDS treatment and care to orphaned and vulnerable children and adolescent girls in Zimbabwe. "I believe I am a key contributor to Zimbabwe's positive change journey," he said. Anthony aims to return to his home country to contribute to relevant, evidence-based and effective HIV / AIDS policy research for child protection interventions.

Annual Report 2016: OFID at 40

OFID's cumulative commitments to global development topped US\$20 billion in 2016—the organization's 40th year, and one in which it approved US\$1,339 million of new funds.

BY STEVE HUGHES

The Annual Report, released on July 6 following its adoption by the Ministerial Council, OFID's highest governing body, shows how the organization continues to mature. It details OFID's activities by sector, geographical region and financial mechanism. Sector wise, energy led the way in 2016, with new approvals of US\$412 million. This remains OFID's main focus and represents one-third of total approvals—almost double that provided in 2015. The funding supported a variety of solutions, from power plants to rural electrification to small-scale renewable energy schemes. As always, all financing mechanisms were brought into play.

With maiden energy projects in Botswana, Somalia and South Africa, OFID's energy footprint now extends to 90 partner countries. And in line with the organization's focus on the energy-water-food nexus, plus transportation, nearly three-quarters of all approvals were earmarked for projects in related fields.

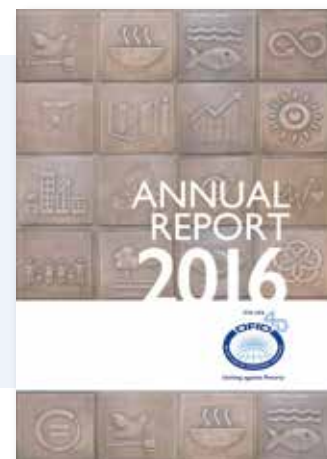
OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish, writing in the Annual Report's Foreword, drew attention to the organization's progress: "By the end of 2016, and through the astute management of paid-in resources of just over US\$2.4 billion, OFID had committed over US\$20 billion in support of more than 3,600 development operations across 134 countries.

Considering the institution's modest size, this is an outstanding achievement by any reckoning."

Other highlights in the report include news of OFID's Private Sector Facility approving a record US\$417 million in new financing in 2016, more than double the sum approved in 2015. The new peak reflects OFID's growing reputation and capability to take on projects across the developing world. OFID's Trade Facility, which forms part of the same window, approved US\$294 million. The bulk of trade finance was drawn from an existing global trade participation scheme with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation. Here, too, OFID continued to expand its outreach, with maiden transactions benefiting Costa Rica and Djibouti.

Recognizing OFID's continued journey, Al-Herbish wrote: "In the space of four decades, OFID has evolved from a temporary account with limited resources and ambitions into a pioneering international development finance institution of considerable substance, presence and influence."

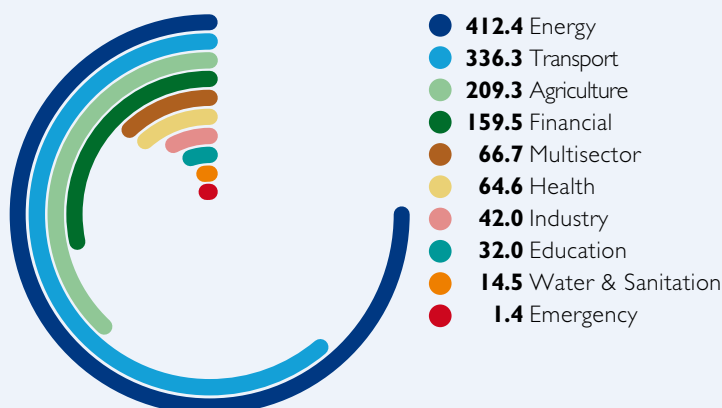
In line with OFID's mandate, however, it was the public sector that formed the central pillar of activities in 2016, with US\$615 million approved for new projects. Reflecting the priorities of partner countries, the majority of these ►



The 2016 Annual Report is available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish and on USB in all four languages, as well as in PDF format for downloading from the OFID website www.ofid.org.

Approvals in 2016 by sector*

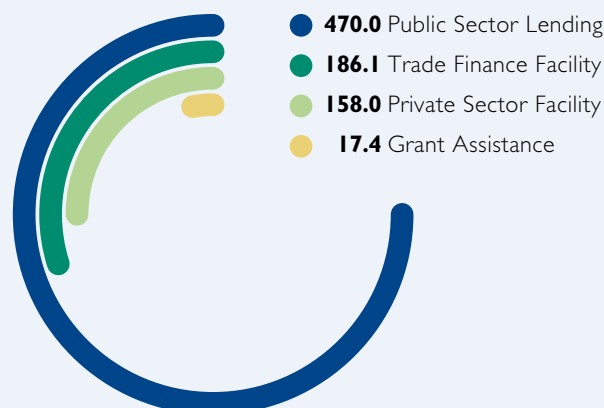
(US\$ million)



***Total approvals:**
US\$1,338.6 million

Disbursements in 2016 by mechanism**

(US\$ million)



****Total disbursements:**
US\$831.4 million

◀ will strengthen infrastructure in the transportation and energy sectors, as well as support agriculture and food security.

Resources channeled through OFID's grant program totaled US\$11.7 million and focused mainly on food security and access to basic services, health and education. Grant funding represents an important instrument of development, and the organization remains committed to reaching out to vulnerable and marginalized groups and providing them with the means to improve their lives.

Al-Herbish continued: "For all that we have achieved in 2016—and indeed over the past 40 years—we are mindful that nothing would have been possible without the trust and support of our Member Countries. For this we

are deeply grateful. A debt of thanks is also due to our host nation Austria and the beautiful city of Vienna, where we are so fortunate to have our headquarters."

The report also documents how, as a token of OFID's gratitude, the organization presented the City of Vienna with a specially commissioned sculpture depicting the roots of development. The monument takes pride of place directly outside the Vienna International Center on the northern bank of the River Danube.

"It is not only a gift to our generous hosts but an enduring symbol of our shared ideals," wrote Al-Herbish. "It gives me great pleasure to know that we will forever have a footprint in Vienna, just as we have in the other 134 countries around the globe where we have a presence." ■

Other Annual Report 2016 highlights

- PSF extends first subordinated debt
- First private sector transactions in Turkey and Madagascar
- Equal dreams campaign highlights plight of refugees
- Launch of OFID blog unitingagainstopoverty.org
- Over 7 million people reached via social media
- Launch of Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform



PHOTO: VUBAOKHANH

OFID Director-General Al-Herbish and Vietnam's Minister of Finance Dinh Tien Dung shaking hands (front, middle) with other members of the OFID / Vietnamese delegations.

OFID renews its commitment to Vietnam

Director-General visits Hanoi for signing of Dam Vac Bridge loan agreement

BY FATMA ELZAHRA ELSHHATI

Suleiman Al-Herbish traveled to Hanoi, Vietnam in May for the signing ceremony of the US\$21.8 million Dam Vac Bridge project loan agreement. During the visit Al-Herbish and his delegation met with Vietnamese officials including Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Minister of Finance Dinh Tien Dung, and visited the OFID-funded Central Transport Hospital.

The Dam Vac Bridge project, upon completion in 2021, will connect the northern urban and southern rural regions of the provincial capital of Vinh Yen city. The project aims to meet the demand for transport infrastructure in the industrial province, contributing to the reduction of traffic in urban areas and boosting tourism around the Dam Vac Lake.

Next year marks 40 years of cooperation between OFID and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Since 1978, OFID has extended 21 public sector loans totaling US\$284 million, supporting education, health, rural development and transportation projects.

Building bridges: lasting cooperation

During his meeting with Prime Minister Phuc, Al-Herbish commended Vietnam on the tremendous progress made over the last decade. Commenting on the Dam Vac Bridge project in particular—and referring to OFID's aims of promoting cooperation between OPEC Member Countries

and other developing countries as an expression of South-South solidarity—Al-Herbish told the Prime Minister: “This project is of a special nature. It is a bridge, and indeed OFID is a bridge: between South and South and between our Member Countries and Vietnam. I look forward to continuing our work together to develop more infrastructure,” he added.

Prime Minister Phuc thanked OFID for its close cooperation: “We have enjoyed OFID's concessional loans, including for the Dam Vac Bridge project signed this week. We look forward to further cooperation and assistance.” The Prime Minister affirmed Vietnam's commitment to socioeconomic development and said the country will continue to work with OFID in line with the country's development strategy.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister also made calls for closer relationships with OFID's Private Sector Facility, stressing the importance of such investments. Last December, OFID signed a US\$20 million loan agreement with the Vietnam Prosperity Joint Stock Commercial Bank (VPBank). The loan will be used to ►

Hanoi's Central Transport Hospital



PHOTO: VUBAOKHANH

In 2011, OFID extended a US\$22.5 million public sector loan in support of developing the health-care sector in Vietnam. During the recent May visit, the OFID delegation toured the Central Transport Hospital in Hanoi, one of the hospitals that benefited from the loan.

Since the hospital was inaugurated by OFID, it has made remarkable strides toward providing

quality patient care for more than 700 people, daily. OFID's loan equipped the hospital with high-tech equipment, including an MRI machine, and built emergency, surgical and maternity wards furnished with over 200 beds.

In recognition of its facilities and services, the Central Transport Hospital won a gold medal from the Ministry of Construction in 2016.

◀ support Vietnam's micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), in particular those owned by women.

Promoting balanced development

The loan signing ceremony was held at the Ministry of Finance, where Finance Minister Dinh Tien Dung welcomed the delegation: "Vietnam has focused its efforts on developing infrastructure in rural areas; especially transport infrastructure," he said.

In the past decades, Vietnam has experienced extraordinary economic growth that has propelled the country from being one of the poorest in the region to becoming a middle-income country. This growth,

however, remains uneven, and many rural regions, provinces and localities, home to 70 percent of the population, continue to endure high poverty levels. The government has focused on improving transportation infrastructure and connecting rural provinces to essential infrastructure and services.

Al-Herbish affirmed OFID's continued support to Vietnam: "Together we have financed projects that have targeted rural development—38 percent have supported the transportation sector and 29 percent have gone toward agriculture projects," he said. "This is in line with our Corporate Plan that aims to improve transportation infrastructure and revive agriculture as a means to eliminate poverty."

OFID's Corporate Plan anticipates that 70 percent of the organization's activities in the coming decade will be geared toward the energy-water-food nexus, with transportation as an additional enabling sector.

In 2016, OFID committed over US\$66 million in support of transport projects, including US\$45 million in support of the Da Nang City transport project that aims to improve connectivity for Vietnam's third largest city.

Vietnam has taken a decentralized approach to managing its loans; the government on-lends directly to the provinces. Such on-lending is part of the government's policy to strengthen public debt management. ■

OFID Director-General receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Suleiman Al-Herbish has been presented with the 2017 Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiah International Energy Award for Lifetime Achievement for the Advancement of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

BY STEVE HUGHES

Praising Al-Herbish's efforts toward universal energy poverty alleviation, Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiah, Chairman of the Al-Attiah Foundation and former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, said Al-Herbish had: "...championed tirelessly at the highest level."

Al-Attiah told Al-Herbish: "Since assuming office, you have led numerous initiatives to make OFID's work more relevant and efficient, which has led to milestone partnership agreements with a large number of bilateral and multilateral partners."

Accepting the award, Al-Herbish thanked the selection committee, Al-Attiah and the foundation. He praised the Member Countries of OFID and OPEC, including his own country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: "It is only through their unwavering support that I have been able to dedicate my career to OPEC, spending 13 years as a member of the Board of Governors. I have also been able to commit fully to international development—specifically to our Energy for the Poor advocacy at OFID. I am truly thankful," he said.

Al-Herbish dedicated the award to his family and made special mention of friends "who have stood by me over the years." He further dedicated the award to the staff of OFID: "These people have supported our noble mission to eradicate energy poverty. They are the ones that have ensured access to energy is recognized the world over as the seventh Sustainable Development Goal after it was ignored under the Millennium Development Goals."

Al-Herbish was among seven distinguished winners to receive awards from

the Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiah International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development at a ceremony and gala dinner held at the Sheraton Hotel, Doha. The foundation established the annual awards in 2013. They recognize outstanding accomplishment in the advancement of the global energy industry. Winners must show distinct personal achievement in their sector over a consistent career spanning at least 30 years.

An independent international selection committee invited by the foundation

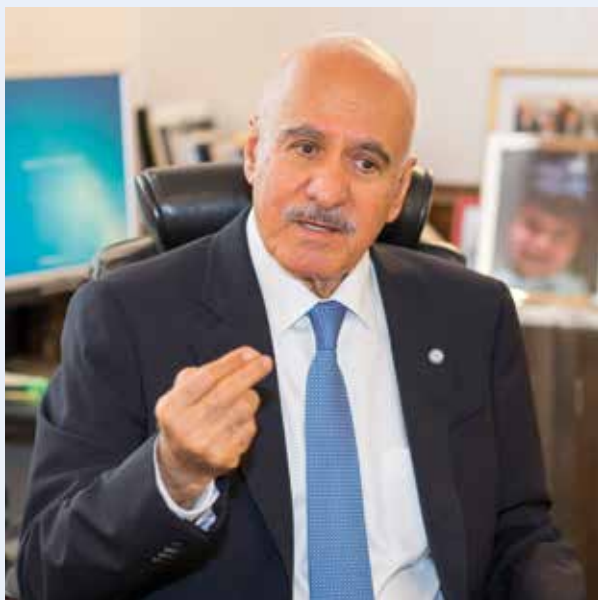
selects the winners. This year's committee included: Dr Majid A Al-Moneef, Advisor to the Royal Court of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Adnan Z Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency; Hamad Rashid Al-Mohannadi, Senior Advisor, Qatar Petroleum; Claude Mandil, former Executive Director, International Energy Agency; Dr Basam Fattouh, Director, Oxford Institute for Energy Studies; and Margaret McQuaile, former Senior Correspondent, S&P Global Platts.



Walid Khadduri (left), former Editor-in-Chief, MEES (Middle East Economic Survey); HE Abdulla bin Hamad Al-Attiah (center), Qatar's former Energy Minister and the host of the award ceremony and OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish, upon receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for the Advancement of OPEC.

PHOTO: COURTESY GULF INTELLIGENCE

OFID Director-General publishes second book of highlights



Suleiman Al-Herbish has been OFID Director-General since 2003. He has made OFID's work more relevant and visible, and strengthened cooperation with other development organizations. His second book of highlights—*Uniting against poverty: OFID's Suleiman Jasir Al-Herbish and the fight for sustainable development*—was recently published. Below are edited extracts from interviews with Mr Al-Herbish...

My family was not poor, but my whole city—Ar Rass in Saudi Arabia—was poor in terms of electricity, facilities and infrastructure. When I was a child, we didn't even hear about electricity. I would study until midnight under the light of the kerosene lantern with my mother at my side (I was the only boy and she spoiled me). When I was done with my homework, she would blow out the flame with a "Pfffeww." Later, I moved to Riyadh. Not even then did I have electricity. In the evenings I would go to the mosques—where there was electricity—to study. This problem has always remained in the back of my mind. It is something, I think, that has driven me on.

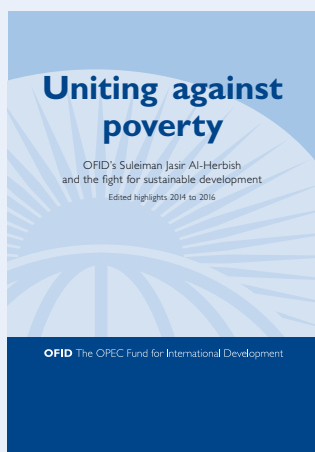
Some 1.2 billion people still live without electricity and 2.7 billion peo-

ple are without clean cooking facilities. This has been my focus for most of my career. So for me, becoming Director-General of OFID was like having the best job in the world.

One very special high point of my career was the US\$1 billion resource replenishment we received from our Member Countries in 2012. This was the first resource boost in 30 years and a resounding endorsement of our work. I was in the OFID headquarters shortly after, preparing for a follow-up meeting. One of my colleagues said: "We need you in the conference room. Please, just one minute." I went and found everybody was there. They applauded me. And I have to admit that I cried. And my colleagues applauded me again. There are many of us in OFID that are not just *with* the organization. We are *of* the organization.

Another highlight was the inclusion of energy poverty eradication in the outcome document of the Third OPEC Summit in Riyadh in 2007. Not many people know that the relevant article of the Riyadh Declaration was actually drafted here in OFID. We were the ones who took the idea to our Member Countries. They took it on board and made it a decision of the Summit. Their call—on all OPEC aid institutions including OFID—was the springboard that launched OFID on a new path and marked a major watershed in terms of OFID's position in the international development community.

But I think I speak for everyone at OFID when I say that our most momentous achievement is the inclusion of energy poverty eradication as a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Development Agenda. It represents the outcome of seven or eight years of hard advocacy. We were the ones—working with our partners—who brought this issue to the attention of the world. There is still a distance to go to deliver on the agenda, but energy access is finally *on* the agenda. It is also now recognized as central to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.



Landmark deal to boost Sri Lankan enterprise

A new agreement between OFID, the Development Bank of Austria (OeEB) and the German development finance institution DEG promises to promote inclusive and sustainable economic development in Sri Lanka by providing Seylan Bank with US\$45 million in funding for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

BY NADIA BENAMARA

The five-year loan agreement—signed at OFID’s Vienna headquarters in April—is the first joint financing facility between OFID, OeEB and DEG, and part of a first round of international fundraising for Seylan Bank—one of Sri Lanka’s leading MSME banks.

OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish welcomed the collaboration as an opportunity to further the global sus-

tainable development agenda. “This financing for Seylan Bank is another step forward in supporting the achievement of SDG 8, which focuses on the promotion of inclusive and sustainable economic growth,” he said.

Al-Herbish also noted that the loan represents OFID’s first collaboration of this type under a 2014 Cooperation Agreement with OeEB. “We need to work

together and build effective partnerships,” said Al-Herbish. “Both OeEB and DEG are important strategic partners for OFID and we anticipate further developing and strengthening our relationship with these leading European DFIs.”

Rena Terfrüchte, Director of Financial Institutions Europe / Asia at DEG, pointed out that the transaction meets one of DEG’s central financing goals by contributing to the overall development of Sri Lanka’s economy through the financing of MSMEs. MSMEs in Sri Lanka contribute an estimated 50 percent to GDP and employ 45 percent of the population. However, they typically lack access to long-term finance. Underscoring the vital role MSMEs play, Terfrüchte said: “MSMEs create local jobs and income by producing competitive goods and providing necessary services. So they are key to successful and sustainable development, but they need financing. They need banks who believe in them and provide much needed capital.” Over one-third of the new funding will target MSMEs in Sri Lanka’s northern and eastern provinces, which have been most affected by the country’s 26-year civil war.

Al-Herbish said: “Seylan Bank, given its wide coverage, client-centric approach and strong client base, is an ideal partner to support the sustainable development of these provinces.”

OeEB Executive Board Member Andrea Hagmann highlighted the added value of the agreement’s technical assistance component, under which OeEB will help the bank develop and implement an Environmental and Social Management System that meets international standards.

“Local banks can work as a catalyst,” explained Hagmann. “When they apply high social and environment standards, and pass those on to their customers, they can reach many different types of enterprises and raise general awareness.” ►



Back, left to right: Kapila Ariyaratne, CEO, Seylan Bank; OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish; Ramesh Jayasekara, Chief Risk Officer, Seylan Bank. Front, left to right: Rena Terfrüchte, Director of Financial Institutions Europe / Asia, DEG; Andrea Hagmann, member of OeEB’s Executive Board; Sabine Gaber, Managing Director Investment Finance, OeEB; Maria Spölggen, Vice President, DEG.

◀ She added that compliance with international standards will enable Seylan Bank to better evaluate the impact of new investments and grant it easier access to capital from other development banks.

Hagmann also said that OeEB valued its ongoing relationships with OFID and DEG, describing them as mutually beneficial, thanks to shared priorities and open informational exchanges.

DEG's Terfrüchte remarked: "Our three institutions have a similar understanding of financial requirements and sustainable governance structures as well as of the risks and opportunities involved in emerging markets. That makes it easy for us to cooperate on a level playing field."

Speaking at the loan signing ceremony in Vienna, Seylan Bank CEO Kapila Ariyaratne thanked the three institutions for recognizing his bank's contribution to Sri Lanka's MSME sector. Ariyaratne said: "It is the first time we are teaming up with three highly respected DFIs, who have come forward to assist us with our plans to deepen our involvement with the needier sectors of our economy. These sectors are full of potential but crying out for holistic, integrated solutions to their business needs; solutions that are not limited to lending them money.

"Building an integrated, specialized and differentiated MSME solution is one of the key pillars of our new strategic plan," continued Kapila. "It involves the creation of MSME hubs in selected regions and the employment of a dedicated sales force to canvass and manage customer relationships. Implementation starts in May / June. So our partnership is very timely and I look forward to receiving your continued support, not only with competitive funding but also with ideas and guidance based on your extensive experience around the world," Kapila concluded.

Alpen Capital, a Dubai-based financial advisory firm acting on behalf of Seylan Bank, originally brought this transaction to OFID's attention. OFID has to date committed over US\$500 million in funding toward development in Sri Lanka through its Public, Private Sector, Trade Finance and Grants operations. ■



Art auction supports refugee action

OFID's second charity art auction raised more than €60,000 for Austria's Red Cross refugee program.

BY KARIN OSZUSZKY

OFID's second art auction in April proved even more successful than the 2016 event. Held in the organization's Deutschmeister Palais headquarters, it was again organized in tandem with the Austrian Red Cross in support of the integration of refugees.

This year some 80 artists donated artworks. Besides well-known names, such as Hermann Nitsch, Herbert Brandl, Daniel Richter and Peter Kogler, Syrian artists also donated paintings and were thereby able to support their own people.

The auction attracted around 200 guests from the financial, business and law sectors as well as diplomats and artists themselves, a number of whom were returnees from the 2016 event. The former stables of the Palais provided a perfect venue for the pre-auction presentation of art and prospective bidders enjoyed the opportunity to review the wide spectrum of work on sale.



Michael Opriesnig, acting Secretary-General of the Austrian Red Cross.

The evening started with a short speech from Michael Opriesnig, the acting Secretary-General of the Austrian Red Cross, who thanked the organizers and stressed the importance of education for integration and personal development.



A short film then highlighted the remarkable work of the Austrian Red Cross—the largest humanitarian organization in Austria—which has played a leading role helping refugees in Austria over the past years. The film documented the success of the 2016 auction, which raised more than €50,000 and enabled some two hundred refugees to attend German language classes.

This year's event was again conducted by Andrea Jungmann, Managing Director of Sotheby's Austria, Hungary and Poland, who helped rouse the audience into bidding generously. The money raised will continue to help refugees benefit from German language courses and learning assistance.

The Acting Head of OFID's Communication Department Reem Aljarbou stressed the importance of continued support for refugees in Austria. She was particularly pleased that a number of Syrian artists had the opportunity to contribute and delighted that the event surpassed the total raised in 2016.

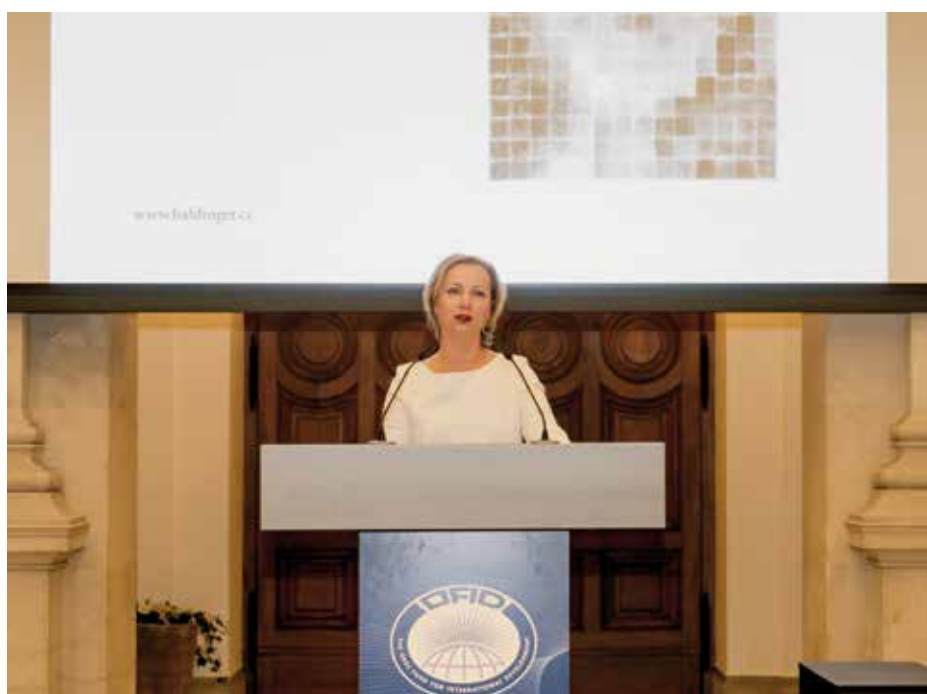
The partnership between OFID and the global Red Cross / Red Crescent movement dates back more than 30 years. During this time, OFID has provided some 75 grants in support of emergency relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts. More recently, OFID has also extended technical assistance

grants to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in support of projects in the water and sanitation sector.

Dr Walid Mehalaine, head of OFID's Grants and Technical Assistance Unit, said: "Since its establishment in 1976, OFID has been very responsive to the plight of victims of all kinds of disasters and conflicts around the world, and has attempted to alleviate their suffering through the

provision of humanitarian aid. A special emergency aid grants program was inceptioned for this purpose a decade ago.

"But most importantly, as part of our mission to promote the sustainable development of our partner countries, we have committed, through our various financing windows, considerable resources to support programs and projects aimed at tackling fragility, poverty and vulnerability to conflict and disaster." ■



Sotheby's Andrea Jungmann conducted the auction.



OFID Strategic Planning and Economic Services Director Faris Hasan (with microphone) outlines the organization's role in funding development operations.

OFID partners with UNIDO for fifth Vienna Energy Forum

Vienna Energy Forum (VEF) can help provide practical solutions to complex developmental challenges, says OFID Director-General.

BY STEVE HUGHES

This year's event focused on 'Sustainable energy for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement.' Speakers highlighted the vital links between energy, climate and development as well as synergies among the SDGs, and the importance of joint and integrated approaches.

In his comments during a high-level lunch hosted by OFID, Director-General

Suleiman Al-Herbish said: "We are convinced of the strategic value of the VEF as a global multi-stakeholder forum for debate on practical solutions to the complex developmental challenges viewed from the perspective of sustainable energy. One great achievement of the VEF is that the Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) initiative was born here, in the debates and discussions of the VEF, and that the forum has been a major contributor to the design of the initiative's goals."

Al-Herbish reminded guests that energy poverty alleviation is a cause that OFID has championed since receiving a special mandate from the Third OPEC Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in November 2007. Working with like-minded partners, including the UN SEforALL initiative, OFID was instrumental in securing an explicit goal for energy in Agenda 2030.

Faris Hasan, Director of Strategic Planning and Economic Services at OFID, was one of this year's keynote speakers. During a high-level plenary session, Hasan outlined the challenges to implementing development projects and discussed the active role OFID has played in funding solutions. He also emphasized the importance of partnerships for addressing interrelated nexus issues.

OFID has adopted the energy-water-food nexus as the central theme of its 2016–2025 Corporate Plan. Based on this plan, 70 percent of the organization's activities in the coming decade will be dedi-



Rural development loans benefit Bolivia, Ethiopia and Guinea

More than 1.5 million people stand to benefit from three OFID co-financed projects that aim to enhance food security, improve transport links and upgrade basic infrastructure.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

The three public sector loan agreements with partner countries Bolivia, Ethiopia and Guinea totaled US\$111 million. They were signed by OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish and ministers from the beneficiary countries on the sidelines of April's World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington, DC.

The projects are being co-financed by the governments of the recipient countries, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) in Bolivia and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) in Ethiopia and Guinea.

"These areas fall in line with OFID's strategic plan, which focuses on a nexus approach as a means of helping to alleviate poverty," said Al-Herbish.

US\$61 million will support a dams and irrigation investment program in Bolivia. Improved water management plays a fundamental role in increasing agricultural production and diversification, as well as rural employment, while also guaranteeing food security.

The government of Bolivia aims to increase reserves in dams and related infrastructure in seven departments with ►

cated to these critical sectors, with transportation as an additional enabling sector.

Some 1,500 participants from more than 100 countries gathered for the event at Vienna's Hofburg Palace. They were welcomed by Michael Linhart, Deputy Foreign Minister of Austria, who said: "It gives me great pleasure that this forum has been set up in Vienna, once more underlining the city's and Austria's position as an influential international hub, also for the discussion of wide-ranging energy and energy-related issues."

This year's event marked the first time the forum has been held since 'affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all' was recognized as a stand-alone goal under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2017 also marks the tenth anniversary of the Riyadh declaration, which called upon OFID to intensify and align its efforts to eradicate energy poverty in the developing world. ■



PHOTO: JBODANE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Well-functioning transport infrastructure is critical to development.

◀ high poverty levels. Activities will focus on improving irrigation and expanding cultivatable land to boost agricultural productivity. Technical assistance and capacity-building components are also planned to ensure sustainability. Around 100,000 people reliant on subsistence agriculture, especially among indigenous, rural communities, are expected to benefit.

The project in Ethiopia receives US\$20 million in OFID funding to improve a 96km-long stretch of the Shambu-Agamsa road situated in the central / western region. Well-functioning transport

systems are critical to food security. But in Ethiopia, the country's land-locked position, extreme topography, and the dispersed nature of the population, with long distances between the areas of food production and food consumption, make transport difficult and costly. The current Shambu-Agamsa earth and gravel road connects these towns and others en-route to the capital Addis Ababa. It will be paved and upgraded to increase agricultural transportation capacity and ease mobility to social services.

In Guinea, the project also focuses on integrated rural development, enhanc-

ing food security in rural areas in the eastern and southern parts of the country. Project works cover improvements to hydro-agricultural infrastructure for the production of vegetables and fruit, and construction of 350km of rural roads. Water supply infrastructure will also be introduced to some 450 villages, with estimated populations of 1.4 million.

Additional institutional capacity strengthening elements, project implementation support and consultancy services will focus on training and advising regional workers to ensure that long-term benefits of the works are realized. ■

Clean water for Kenya's urban poor

Working with the UK government's Department for International Development, Water for the World, and Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, OFID extends water services to more than 50,000 of Kenya's poorest.

BY JUSTINE WÜRTZ

○ FID's US\$400,000 grant to Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) co-financed a two-year program in Kenya to extend piped water services to the poorest communities living in slums around the capital, Nairobi.

Now completed, and inaugurated at a ceremony in Nairobi on May 5, the project means that more than 50,000 residents in the Mukuru Sinai and Korogocho settlements have access to reliable, safe and affordable drinking water.

The project, signed in 2014, was implemented and managed by WSUP, a partnership of the private sector, NGOs and research institutions focused on solving global issues of inadequate water and sanitation in low-income urban communities.

Water dispensers have been installed in settlements giving inhabitants reliable access to affordable clean water.

PHOTO: WSUPERIC GITONG



OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish said: “OFID’s contribution to the water and sanitation sector reached US\$1,151 million as of year-end 2016. These resources have supported a wide range of operations, from large-scale water storage, treatment and distribution projects, to village pumps and school latrines, as well as schemes for the rationalization of water use in arid regions. We are proud to have been part of this project and will continue to support sustainable development across the globe.”

Kenya, like many countries, is undergoing rapid urbanization, with migrants from rural areas moving into informal settlements around the major cities. In Nairobi, these slums cover just six percent of the total residential land area, yet house 60 percent of the city’s population. Residents have little or no access to water and sanitation and are prone to outbreaks of HIV, cholera, malaria and Ebola.

Cut off from basic services and city infrastructure, the Mukuru Sinai and Korogocho settlements typified these areas. Local water provider the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC) lacked the resources and expertise to install piped water connections. Inhabitants were forced to either buy water from expensive street vendors or use dangerous open water sources.

Using durable polyethylene (PE) pipes provided by Water for the World—the joint corporate social responsibility program of chemical and plastics providers Borealis and Borouge—WSUP worked with NCWSC to extend the existing city network into the settlements.

“Innovative PE pipes can play an important role in addressing the global water challenge,” says Dorothea Wiplinger, Borealis Sustainability Manager. “To avoid the loss of water due to leakages and assure residents receive clean water that they can afford, PE pipes are an excellent solution because they last three times longer than existing pipes, suffer fewer breakages and need less maintenance.”

The pipe network has enabled pre-paid water dispensers to be installed in the settlements giving inhabitants reliable access to affordable clean water, thereby raising health standards in the areas. ■

Infrastructure boost to enhance Burundi’s economy

OFID agrees US\$15 million loan to upgrade the road network in Burundi—a project that is expected to improve the living standards of about 200,000 people.

BY ARYA GUNAWAN USIS



Domitien Ndiwokubwayo, Minister of Finance, Budget and Privatization of Burundi, with OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish.

The signing of the loan agreement between OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish and Burundi’s Minister of Finance, Budget and Privatization Dr Domitien Ndiwokubwayo took place at OFID’s headquarters in May.

In his remarks, Al-Herbish expressed his delight at OFID’s involvement in such an integral project, working alongside key partners: “We are proud to be a partner—along with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Saudi Fund—in the implementation of this important project, especially considering the project will contribute to improving the living standards of 200,000 people,” said Al-Herbish. The Burundi government will also provide US\$3.6 million.

Around 35km of road (from Bururi to Gakuba) will be improved. The project is expected to increase access to the central part of Burundi by lowering transport cost and travel time, while improving safety. The project will also help improve and

commercialize agricultural production and the living conditions of the local population in the immediate vicinity of the road.

Ndiwokubwayo welcomed OFID’s assistance. He said the project would significantly impact Burundi’s development. The region is known for its palm oil and diverse agricultural products, as well as for livestock. In addition, the project should enhance the handicraft sector and trade in the urban areas of Bururi and Gitega. “The upgraded road that is co-financed by OFID will definitely further strengthen the economic activities in the region,” Ndiwokubwayo said.

Since the establishment of a partnership with Burundi in 1977, OFID has channeled funding to nearly 30 development projects in the country, with a total amount of more than US\$186 million. In addition, Burundi has also benefited from OFID grants at both national and regional levels. ■

OFID grant supports WFP humanitarian relief efforts in Iraq and Somalia

US\$700,000 drawn from OFID's Grant Program for Emergency Relief Operations to help meet the food needs of displaced people and the most vulnerable drought-affected communities.

BY STEVE HUGHES

It is expected that OFID's grant will enable the World Food Program (WFP) to support nearly 30,000 vulnerable people in Iraq by providing family food rations to address urgent food and nutrition needs. This particular effort follows an escalation in the conflict that has left an estimated three million people displaced and 2.4 million unable to meet their dietary needs and food preferences since 2014.

In Somalia, as part of the international humanitarian response, the WFP is working toward the goal of reaching 2.1 million people suffering with acute hunger. In February this year, the WFP reached almost one million people using a combination of food distributions and digital cash cards that allow people to buy food in local markets. However, this

represents just 46 percent of the targeted population. OFID's support will enable the efforts to continue.

Commenting on these emergency grants, Dr Walid Mehalaine, Head of OFID's Grants and Technical Assistance Unit, said: "We hope that this aid will help meet the immediate needs of food insecure people in Iraq and Somalia, although we believe that this effort cannot be sustained without a more long-term response aimed at addressing the underlying factors that may have led to these crises. This two-pronged approach has been embraced by OFID since inception."

Iraq's economy continues to face significant challenges and remains exposed to a volatile oil market. Ongoing conflict has also negatively affected the country's agricultural sector. As a result, poverty,

food insecurity and general vulnerability have increased in many areas.

Somalia is facing similarly daunting challenges. The country is on the brink of its second famine in less than a decade. More than six million people—around half the population of the African country—are currently facing food insecurity. Of this number, nearly three million are unable to meet their daily food requirements and are in dire need of life-saving assistance.

OFID's grant assistance also contributes to the development of effective and successful partnerships with a wide range of international development institutions, including UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations, particularly in the areas of eradicating energy poverty, education, food security, water and sanitation and health.

PHOTO: WFP/JOELLE EID



PHOTO: WFP/INGER MARIE VENNIZE

"We hope this aid will help meet the immediate needs of food insecure people in Iraq and Somalia"

Dr Walid Mehalaine, Head of OFID's Grants and Technical Assistance Unit



First Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, Stepan Kubiv (left) and OFID Assistant Director-General Fuad Albassam.

OFID prepares ground to boost Ukrainian private sector

OFID and the Ukraine have signed an Agreement for the Encouragement and Protection of Investment (AEPI) which sets the framework for OFID to begin private sector operations in the Eastern European country.

BY STEVE HUGHES

The agreement was signed by OFID Assistant Director-General Fuad Albassam, and First Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, Stepan Kubiv.

Albassam said the agreement prepared the ground for OFID to help promote social and economic development within Ukraine by encouraging the growth of productive private enterprise and supporting the development of the private sector. “We are very pleased to begin what we see as a long and lasting relationship with Ukraine,” he said. “OFID’s Private Sector and Trade Finance Operations department represents an important instrument of development.”

Kubiv said that due to challenging circumstances, Ukraine had lost about 20 percent of its economy. “As a result, we’re

witnessing social and economic problems,” he explained. “This agreement lays new foundations for cooperation between Ukraine and OFID. It is mutually beneficial, as one of OFID’s mandates is rendering development assistance to states in circumstances such as ours.

“We have a concrete plan of action for the development of our economy and to improve living standards and this AEPI provides new impetus for investment activities and social recovery,” Kubiv continued, explaining how Ukraine is committed to continuing reform efforts, and a wide-ranging reform agenda is now being followed. “Ukraine is implementing the government strategy for 2020. We have a concrete parliamentary program that outlines the necessary legislative changes for the development of the economy and

society. We have already achieved a significant growth in GDP, which is now 2.3 percent versus minus 43 percent three years ago. These positive changes are underpinned by 140 laws adopted by parliament.

“These steps will change the face of Ukraine, building trust and preventing corruption,” Kubiv continued. “Over the last year, investment has risen by 16 percent and we now have good prospects. Today’s agreement will strengthen Ukraine.”

The Ukraine initially reached out to OFID for support in 2015; a move Albassam said he appreciated. He also explained how he looked forward to working with Ukraine across all of OFID’s finance mechanisms in support of the country’s development and in pursuit of the organization’s mandate. ■



June 28: OFID has signed a US\$50 million loan agreement with Pakistan to support the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program. The agreement was signed by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Austria Ayesha Riyaz and OFID Director-General Suleiman J Al-Herbish.



April 20: OFID Assistant Director-General Fuad Albassam with Guinea's Minister of Economy and Finance Malado Kaba, who co-signed a US\$20 million Integrated Rural Development loan agreement.

APRIL 12

Humanitarian aid grant approved

World Food Program (WFP). US\$700,000. To support WFP's relief program to help meet the food assistance needs of the most vulnerable communities, especially acutely malnourished women and children, in Somalia and Iraq.

APRIL 25

Research grant approved

SEforALL. US\$50,000. To support the participation of 50 delegates from developing countries in the Third Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Forum, April 3–5, 2017, in New York City, USA.

MAY 15

Public sector loan agreement signed

Burundi. US\$15 million. To pave a 35km portion of the national RN16 that crosses the Bururi and Gitega provinces and connects the country's south and central regions. This will enable approximately 200,000 inhabitants to transport inputs, agricultural produce and livestock more efficiently and reach important social services, thereby raising living standards and incomes.

MAY 23

Research grants approved

Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED). US\$50,000. To sponsor the AFED annual report entitled *Arab Environment in 10 years* and conference, planned for November 2017.

International Water Association (IWA). US\$100,000.

To support the participation of 30 delegates from developing countries in the fifth IWA Development Congress and Exhibition, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, November 13–16, 2017, and the production of the IWA Waste Water Report, which will be launched on that occasion.

Lindau Foundation.

US\$157,500. To sponsor the attendance of around 90 young scientists, researchers and economists from developing countries at three Lindau Nobel Laureate meetings that will be held in 2017 and 2018 in Lindau, Germany.

JUNE 10

The international exhibition, EXPO 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan, began. OFID will facilitate an exhibition stand for the duration of the event, which will conclude on September 10. Dr Namat Abu Alsoof, OFID consultant for the Strategic and

June 20: OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish (fourth from right) received a delegation from Norway including: Bente Angell-Hansen (second from left), Ambassador of Norway to Austria; and Vidar Helgesen (third from left), Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment. Strategic Planning and Economic Services Director Faris Hasan (left) was also at the meeting, which considered potential collaboration.



Economic Planning Services Department, made a presentation at the EXPO showcasing the organization's activities and operations—especially those related to energy poverty alleviation—at the Future Energy and Technologies event, hosted by the International Science and Technology Center.

JULY 6

Ministerial Council holds 38th Annual Session

See story, page 24.

JULY 7

159th session of the Governing Board

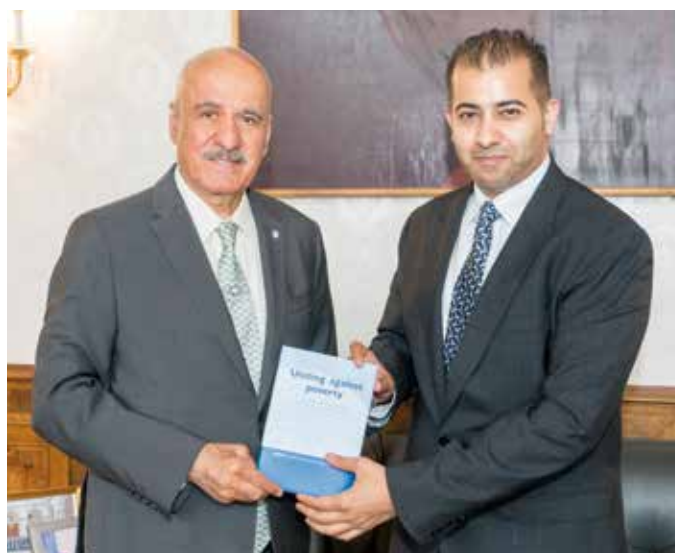
Public sector projects approved

Bangladesh. US\$30 million. Paira Bridge. To build a 1.5km bridge over the Paira River to connect the districts of Barisal and Pataukhali in the south-central region, and construct access roads to the national highway. A riverbank protection component will help prevent flooding and enable year-round access. In addition to providing the population with more efficient and safer travel, the bridge will improve access to income-generating opportunities, marketplaces and social services, further supporting development.

Belize. US\$12 million. Haulover Bridge Replacement. To construct a 147m bridge west of Belize City in the Belize District, an economically-important region due to major tourism, and industrial and agricultural-related activities. The bridge will link two highways to the airport, accommodate rising traffic levels and withstand inclement weather. Around 70,000 people are expected to benefit from the project.

Lesotho. US\$14 million. Greater Maseru Water Supply. To build new water transmission lines and other infrastructure in the peri-urban areas of the capital Maseru to serve the city's growing population. Clean drinking water will be provided to an estimated 120,000 people. This will reduce the spread of water-borne diseases, improve living conditions and save households the considerable cost of purchasing water.

Mauritania. US\$18 million. Boulanouar Wind Farm. To enhance economic development by providing an efficient and cheaper means of producing energy. A 102MW, 39-turbine wind farm will be built in the Boulanouar region. The project will help Mauritania meet its growing domestic demand and produce a surplus that can be exported.



June 22: OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish received Hamad Alkaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Austria. Al-Herbish presented the Ambassador with a copy of his second book of speeches *Uniting against Poverty*.



June 19: OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish received Helen Eduards, Ambassador of Sweden to Austria.



June 30: The DG received Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Austria, and was invited to participate in the Seventh Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA-VII) in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, in November.

May 12: OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish received United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed.



June 6: OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish received Auday Al-Khairalla, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Austria.

Nicaragua. US\$10.5 million. Caribbean Coast Rural Electrification Phase II. To provide modern energy services to off-grid, remote communities in high poverty areas. This will boost Nicaragua's development, enhance quality of life and promote income-generating activities for over 33,000 people. OFID also co-financed the first phase of the project.

Tajikistan. US\$10 million. Kulyab-Kalaikhumb Road. To upgrade two sections of road linking the western and eastern regions of Tajikistan. Other works will include the repair and construction of bridges, and a 1.2km tunnel. The project will provide a direct connection between western Tajikistan, including the capital Dushanbe, and the eastern region of Gorny-Badakhshan, one of the poorest in the country. It will also open up trade opportunities with neighboring countries.

Uzbekistan. US\$16.25 million. Rehabilitation and Construction of Water Networks in the Cities of Kasan, Mubarak and Rural Affiliates. To boost access to safe drinking water and improve the health of people in the Kashkardaya region. Works will include the construction and repair of water infrastructure. On completion, the water supply is expected to benefit an additional 110,000 people.

Technical assistance grants approved

Global LPG Partnership. US\$200,000. To support a 'Clean Cooking for Africa' project comprising two main components aimed at promoting liquid petroleum gas (LPG) rather than traditional biomass and kerosene. This will include a 'Bottled Gas for a Better Life' pilot scheme in Cameroon that will provide micro-financing loans and awareness campaigns. Another component will formulate policy to assist

15 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in refining their approach to scaling-up and promoting clean cooking solutions.

IFAD. US\$1 million.

To improve the livelihoods of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Djibouti and Somalia via technology packages related to rainfed agriculture, small-scale irrigation and small ruminant farming. Also planned is the provision of efficient, affordable watershed management techniques and capacity building. The program is expected to benefit about 45,000 people.

ICRC MoveAbility Foundation.

US\$1 million. To promote the socioeconomic inclusion of people with disabilities, focusing on building the capacities of national service providers in the physical rehabilitation sector to create a sustainable response. The program will target nearly 67,000 individuals in Benin, El Salvador Haiti, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Somalia, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

ITF Enhancing Human

Security. US\$500,000. To address the acute shortage of specialized rehabilitation services and orthopaedic devices for disabled people in Palestine. This will be done by establishing and equipping a special rehabilitation center within the Palestine Hospital in Bethlehem. OFID's grant will cover the equipping and furnishing of five rooms.

Participatory Microfinance Group for Africa (PAMIGA).

US\$400,000. To provide access to solar energy for rural households and micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in Benin, Cameroon and Kenya through the establishment of microfinance services. At least 30,000 rural households presently not connected to the electricity grid are expected to benefit.

Meetings attended by OFID

APRIL 3–5

NEW YORK, USA

3rd Sustainable Energy for All FORUM: Going Further, Faster – Together

APRIL 4–6

RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

79th Heads of Operations Coordination Group Meeting

APRIL 12

TUNIS, TUNISIA

3rd International Energy Forum / OFID Symposium on Energy Poverty

APRIL 18–19

RABAT, MOROCCO

Joint Annual Meeting of Arab Financial Institutions

APRIL 19–23

WASHINGTON DC, USA

World Bank and International Monetary Fund spring meetings

APRIL 23–24

WASHINGTON DC, USA

13th Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

MAY 2–3

RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

2017 Euromoney Saudi Arabia Conference '2030: Delivering the Vision'

MAY 3

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Executive Committee meeting of the Oil and Gas Industry Energy Access Platform

MAY 3–4

LONDON, UK

5th Africa Financial Services Conference

MAY 4–7

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

50th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank

MAY 9–11

NICOSIA, CYPRUS

2017 Annual Meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

MAY 9–12

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna Energy Forum: Sustainable energy for the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement

MAY 13–18

JEDDAH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

42nd Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank

MAY 17–18

FRANKFURT, GERMANY

2017 Annual Meeting of the Heads of Administration in International Financial Institutions

MAY 21–26

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

47th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank

MAY 22–26

AHMEDABAD, INDIA

52nd Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank

MAY 30–JUNE 1

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

International Conference on the International Atomic Energy Association Technical Cooperation Program: Sixty Years and Beyond – Contributing to Development

JUNE 7–9

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

19th Annual Africa Energy Forum

JUNE 8–9

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

14th Annual Global Commodities Finance Conference

JUNE 8–10

FLORENCE, ITALY

Development Finance Institutions Risk Forum

JUNE 10–SEPTEMBER 10

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

EXPO 2017: Future Energy

JUNE 11–14

ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN

8th International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development

JUNE 14–18

NAIROBI, KENYA

18th Annual Meeting of the General Counsels of International Finance Institutions

JUNE 20

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

1st R20 Austrian World Summit: From Sustainable Goals to Real Action

JUNE 27

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

CTBTO Science & Technology 2017 Conference



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

159th Session of the Governing Board

OFID's Governing Board approved more than US\$320 million of new development funding to benefit developing countries across the globe at its 159th session in Vienna on July 7. The loans underlined OFID's commitment to the energy–water–food nexus, as well as the transportation sector. The public sector loans, which totaled US\$111 million, will support projects in Bangladesh, Belize, Lesotho, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Other approvals included five grants totaling US\$3.1 million to: the Global LPG Partnership; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the ICRC MoveAbility Foundation; the ITF Enhancing Human Security; and the Participatory Microfinance Group for Africa (PAMIGA). Under OFID's

Private Sector facility, financing facilities totaling over US\$67 million were approved for projects in El Salvador and Turkey. Also approved was an equity participation in a fund providing financing to companies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Under OFID's Trade Finance operations, the Board approved four financing facilities totaling US\$140 million for the purchase, storage and sale of agricultural commodities in various countries in Asia and Africa, and to fund international trade finance activities in El Salvador. Another facility will support on-lending to corporate and government institutions primarily in the Eastern and Southern African region. See the press releases section on www.ofid.org for more information.

Wilson Pastor Morris
Governor, Ecuador



Farid Tiaiba
Governor, Algeria

Ahmed Menesi
Governor, Libya



Majed Ali Omran
Governor, United Arab Emirates

Off-grid, on target: How energy providers are increasing productivity through decentralized solutions

Decentralized energy solutions can help transform the lives of the people who lack access to basic energy services.

BY IMAN ALSHAMMARI



Addressing the needs of populations with minimal or no access to energy or related services is a critical part of sustainable development. There is no single standard for how energy development should take place. However, decentralized solutions have many advantages: they are highly flexible, meaning they can be tailored to local conditions and installed much faster than a centralized system; they can include new technologies that are safe for global dissemination; and they allow public facilities—such as clinics and schools—in poor or more remote communities to be immediately electrified without major capital input.

Any which way

Long lasting and sustainable investments in energy poverty eradication can be made through various finance windows, such as public, private, trade finance and grants facilities. The idea is not to push for a single mechanism, but to encourage the development of multiple options on the basis of global, regional, bilateral, national or local initiatives.

Several financing mechanisms have been devised and tested by OFID and other DFIs, governments and NGOs to promote increasing productivity through decentralized solutions. Examples of distributed, small-scale, stand-alone systems that OFID is supporting include the following:

Capital pool

In 2011, OFID piloted a revolving working capital facility with the Shell Foundation and d.light, the social enterprise solar-light manufacturer. The project supplied solar lanterns to the rural poor in Kenya and Tanzania. The working capital facility helped distributors of solar lanterns by lowering their cost of borrowing. The project exceeded expectations and more than 450,000 solar lights (against a 225,000 target) were sold.

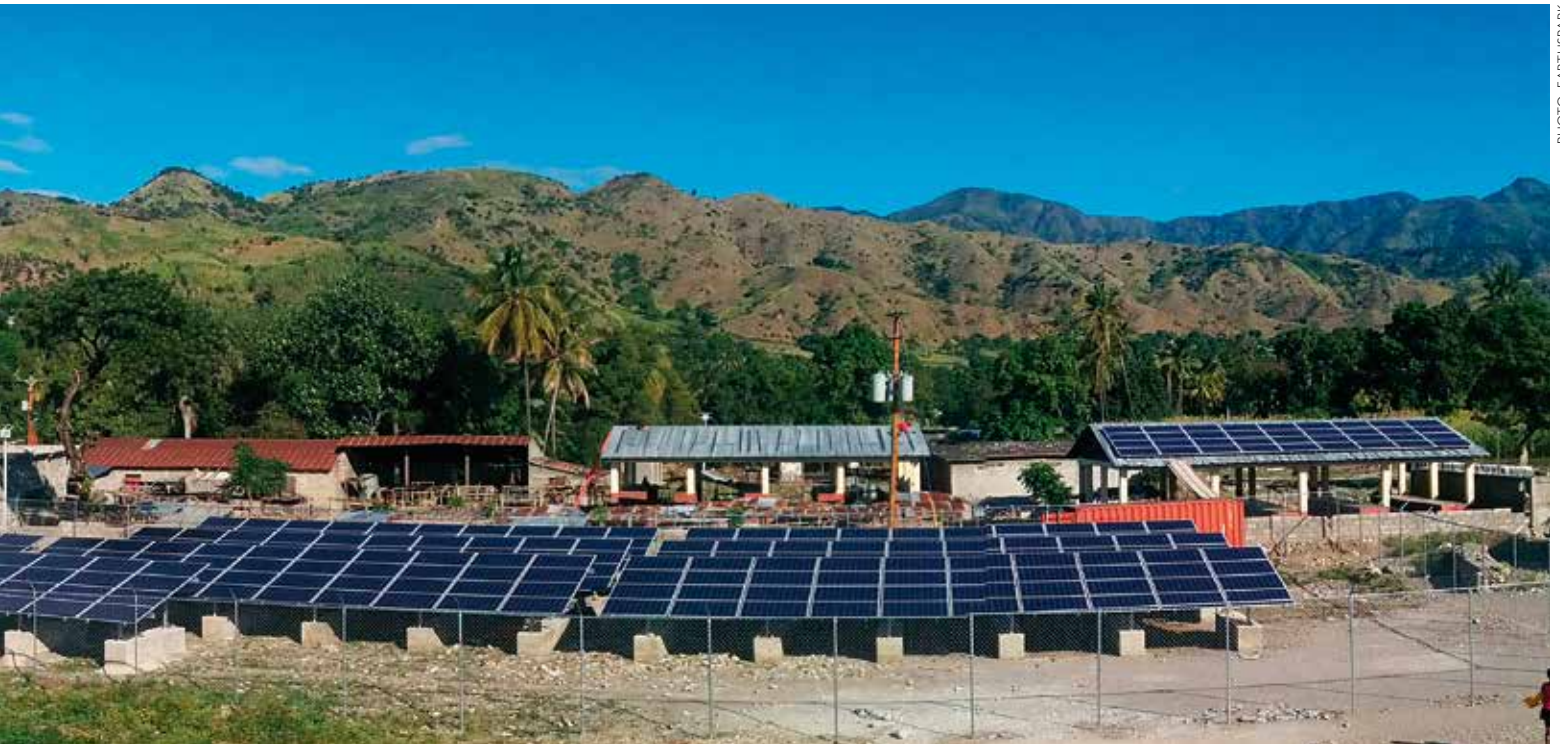
Microfinance

Microfinance can help to bring new energy online in previously underserved communities by providing loans to individuals and small businesses lacking access to traditional financial services.

In 2014, OFID made US\$1 million available for improving access to efficient cookstoves in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America with the Shell Foundation. The project involved the manufacturing and distribution of cookstoves and is expected to benefit more than one million people in 13 countries.

SMEs

SMEs can be efficient vehicles for enabling entrepreneurs to provide alternative energy supplies in remote and rural areas, while also



providing jobs, lowering energy costs and reducing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2014, to encourage energy SMEs offering solutions in the agrifood value chain to adopt the nexus approach (focusing on the interrelated sectors of water, energy and food), OFID cooperated with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Network (REEEP). Together, the organizations established the OFID-REEEP Revolving Capital Pool. Offering repayable grants at zero interest, the pool partially funded an energy access project in Kenya, where 825 smallholder farms will benefit from the installation of solar irrigation pumps. The project will pave the way for private sector investment that should increase the uptake of solar irrigation and it has the potential to reach 20,000 smallholder farmers.

Prepaid meters

Pre-payment for energy consumption is a viable billing model, since it eliminates the exposure to risk of payment default for lenders and providers, thereby making investment more attractive.

In 2016, OFID teamed up with the Shell Foundation to support an innovative distributed energy solution whereby Husk Power Systems will install solar / biomass hybrid minigrid systems. The systems will provide 24 / 7 power for households and businesses in India and

Tanzania. Each power plant is 50kW in size and a minigrid spans a radius of 3km. Smart pre-paid metering systems taking mobile payment will be used to enable both tiered tariff settings and cashless transactions.

Crowd funding

Networks of lenders offer a good option for providing financial support to energy projects. In 2016, OFID teamed up with EarthSpark International to develop and launch a town-sized, solar-powered smartgrid in Tiburon, Haiti. The aim was to validate a business model and investment plan for the construction of 80 town-sized solar-powered smart microgrids across the country. A network of lenders provided financial support.

Private capital

This form of finance represents an enormous source of global wealth that has not historically played a significant role in development. Many opportunities in developing countries are often perceived as too risky or uncertain by private investors.

OFID is prioritizing encouraging private sector involvement in the minigrids market. The financial aid extended by the organization is intended to provide a de-risking mechanism to stimulate project replication and up-scaling. ►

Through years of experience, OFID has learned that decentralized energy solutions should play the major role in alleviating energy poverty in rural settings and in locations that are too small, remote and widely dispersed for grid connection.



PHOTO: JEFFREY M WALCOTT

The public and private sector must continue to take non-traditional approaches to support the use of alternative energy in rural areas of poor and developing countries.

◀ In 2015, for example, OFID signed an agreement with the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE) to support the accelerated deployment and productive use of hybrid minigrids in Bangladesh, India, Mali and Mozambique.

OFID's US\$10 million loan to Armenia's Ardshinbank is another example of a successful private capital project. The finance was used to fund local SMEs involved in the construction of small-scale hydropower plants in the country. This demonstrates how international DFIs can strengthen the domestic financial sector.

Similarly, OFID participated in the Energy Access Fund (EAF), an impact investment fund sponsored by Schneider Electric, by providing €5 million in equity. The EAF supports smaller businesses in Africa that specialize in promoting low carbon and low cost distributed electricity access solutions in rural areas and close to main towns. In addition, the fund provides a range of technical support for local businesses including advice about management, governance, energy efficiency and environmental best practices.

What we've learned

Through years of experience, OFID has learned that decentralized solutions should play the major role in alleviating energy poverty in rural settings and in locations that are too small, remote and widely dispersed for grid connection to be a technically or economically-feasible option.

It is also clear, however, that much work needs to be done to expand the spread of stand-alone systems and minigrids in poor developing countries: costs need to be further reduced, appropriate business models have to be developed; and the universal energy access challenge must be transformed into an opportunity for entrepreneurship.

Public-private partnerships, particularly, can stimulate growth, improve efficiency, and make better use of subsidy funds by engaging diverse stakeholders. Such stakeholders include financial and industry players, project developers and local communities. Similarly, it is important to encourage the take-up of locally developed technology in different offerings.

In line with all this, the public and private sector must continue to take non-traditional approaches to support the use of alternative energy technology in rural areas of poor and developing countries. The needs are many, the contexts are diverse, the solutions are varied and the players are multiple. However, adequate, accessible and affordable energy that satisfies basic human needs and promotes economic growth can be achieved if the right approaches are adopted. ■



PHOTO: D LIGHT

If the right approaches are adopted, accessible energy for all is achievable.

SME development should be the primary focus of Organization of Islamic Cooperation member countries, says ITFC's Sonbol

International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) CEO Eng Hani Salem Sonbol visited OFID having secured a grant in support of the Arab-Africa Trade Bridges Program (AATB). OFID has co-financed over 35 projects with the ITFC through its Trade Finance Facility since 2012. Here, Sonbol shares his views on trade development and more.

INTERVIEW BY NADIA BENAMARA



OQ: *What are the unique challenges to trade among Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member countries?*

HS: Dependence on a single commodity is a challenge for any country engaged in trade, especially those producing oil or food items, so economic diversification is one of the major objectives for OIC member countries. Infrastructure presents another major challenge, especially on a continent like Africa where the gap in meeting infrastructural needs is to the tune of around US\$600–700 billion. Building the capacities of OIC member countries through knowledge transfers and training is also key.

OQ: *What is ITFC doing to overcome these challenges?*

HS: ITFC provides trade solutions that foster economic and social development in OIC member countries. Trade finance has been our primary tool, and we've approved more than US\$60 billion for trade finance operations since inception in 2008. We've also developed numerous programs devoted to trade facilitation and promotion, and brought different business



PHOTO: J. H. SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“One of our most recent successes has been organizing major business-to-business exchanges between cotton producers in Africa and cotton importers in different parts of the world.”

communities closer together to learn about what's happening in their respective countries. One of our most recent successes has been organizing major business-to-business exchanges between cotton producers in Africa and cotton importers in different parts of the world, especially in Asia.

OQ: *How successful have these efforts been?*

HS: We've made great progress in increasing the percentage of intra-OIC trade over the last decade. It was at 10 percent in 2008. When Islamic leaders decided to target 20 percent by 2015, we worked very hard, together with our partners, to meet that goal. Intra-OIC trade was reported at higher than 20 percent last year, which is a big achievement for all of us.

OQ: *What do you hope to accomplish with the Arab-Africa Trade Bridges Program (AATB)?*

HS: AATB aims to achieve greater regional trade integration by building on the historic relationship between Arab and sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries through trade facilitation, trade promotion, infrastructure improvement ►



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International
Islamic Trade
Finance Corporation

ITFC is an autonomous entity within the Islamic Development Bank Group. It serves as a catalyst for the development of trade among the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member countries.

◀ and commodity development. We designed the three-year program in collaboration with members of the international coordination group on trade, including OFID.

Today's grant from OFID will support the implementation of AATB's first-year action plan and mainly finance trade capacity building activities, workshops and training courses for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in SSA countries.

A study by the International Trade Center (ITC) shows that, on a five-year average (2011–2015), 17 countries from the Arab region exported US\$1.06 trillion to the world, while 22 SSA countries exported US\$0.16 trillion to the world. This indicates significant untapped export potentials.

OQ: *Are there specific policy measures that governments themselves can enact to better facilitate trade among OIC member countries?*

HS: In addition to placing trade at the heart of their national development plans, OIC members should really focus on SMEs. SMEs consti-

tute almost 80 percent of the economic fabric of any country, and despite many past efforts, still need help upgrading services and structures so they can improve the quality of their work as well as their ability to adapt to change. The three major things SMEs require are: financing, advisory services and capacity building. I would urge all OIC member countries to concentrate on this in the coming years.

OQ: *How important are partnerships with DFIs such as OFID to your overall mission?*

HS: The gap in trade finance is getting bigger, exceeding US\$700 billion in Africa alone. In Asia, it's almost US\$120 billion. We'll never be able to fill those gaps unless we build on partnerships with like-minded institutions such as OFID. We've successfully completed numerous joint initiatives in the agricultural and energy sectors, particularly in Africa, and developed programs in new areas like renewable energy and climate change. Working together on common goals brings us that much closer to achieving our mission of advancing trade and improving lives.

OQ: *What steps is ITFC taking to mitigate the impact of climate change on trade?*

HS: Droughts, storms, flooding, severely hot or cold conditions; any change in climate can affect entire supply chains, in particular the quantity and quality of food being produced. Countries that are dependent on agriculture are especially vulnerable. Financing alone won't help them achieve sustainability. One of our current programs provides lines of financing for coffee farmers in Indonesia. In order to have a larger developmental impact, we're simultaneously providing training, technology and know-how so they can improve their overall performance and yields. They also need to be connected to the rest of the world through B2B contacts, so we provide a complete package that aims for sustainability by building capacities and resilience. ■



Self-sufficiency and culture-focused development

Jumana Trad, President of the Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture (FPSC)—a non-governmental development organization engaged in global projects and a longtime OFID partner—speaks to the *OFID Quarterly* about the importance of supporting self-sufficient communities.

INTERVIEW BY FATMA ELZAHRA ELSHHATI

OQ: *Why is culture so important to development and to your organization's operations?*

JT: We believe that development should be centered on human beings and not macro statistics. Each person is part of a culture and history, so when we center development on human beings, you have to respect their culture. FPSC always works through local organizations because we believe that we have to respect the culture of each country and its local people. We give the people the tools to form their own technical expertise. It's not only about preserving art and literature. We look at it in terms of maintaining the richness of identity and diversity for all of mankind.

OQ: *What constitutes a successful development project for the FPSC?*

JT: Having the capacity to reinforce a local partner so it becomes self-sufficient, viable and sustainable in its own country. It's important to us that when we complete a project, it will not stop after we leave. This is how we promote development. We train the people of a country in order for them to help their own country and alleviate poverty themselves.

OQ: *FPSC began working with OFID in 2002. Why are the two organizations such a good fit?*

JT: We share a common vision of development that emphasizes the human being rather than the economic impact. Last year, two of our OFID projects in Guate-

mala were recognized as 'Best Social Project of the Year.' In Bolivia, our joint project has also received recognition from the Bolivian government as one of the most successful. Our work focuses particularly on empowering women. Women are statistically in the poorest single group, globally. They are the pillar of the family. We believe it is important for them to be able to pass on values and understanding of rights, especially to their children. Through our projects, we're giving women the tools to be the protagonists of their own development.

OQ: *This issue of the OFID Quarterly magazine focuses on children and their rights to a healthy and secure childhood. What is your organization's experience of working with children? How can we better protect children?*

JT: We work with children and particularly those with special needs. We've created a safe space in refugee camps and have provided services and tools to improve their mobility. We have also supported access to psychological services. In one case, we built a small theater in a refugee camp. This is a very special program. In many traditional societies, children with special needs are hidden from view. Our program mixes children of varying abilities. Our theater is inclusive, so everyone is on stage. It was great for us to see how many mothers brought their children and also volunteered to help.



FPSC President Jumana Trad

OQ: *Why does the FPSC place so much emphasis on education?*

JT: Education is the motor of development. Not just any education, but an education in values: an education that supports children to defend their fundamental rights, to look for peace and to become mature adults. It is also essential for people to build their capacity to work—to contribute to the development of their countries—and to fulfil their potential. The most basic challenge to development in poor countries is schooling. If you don't invest in education, you can forget about the rest. ■

Event: **3rd Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Forum**

Theme: Sustainable energy

Hosted by: SEforALL

Venue: New York City, USA

Date: April 3–5, 2017

OFID “a very critical piece” of the energy puzzle, says SEforALL chief

OFID Director-General recognized as “one of the leading lights” in the movement for sustainable energy for all at New York forum.

BY STEVE HUGHES



Faris Hasan, Director of OFID's Strategic Planning and Economic Services Department at the Deep Dive session *Off Grid-On Target*.

PHOTO: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish led a delegation to the 3rd Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Forum in New York City, USA.

On the sidelines of the event, in an interview with Rachel Kyte, Chief Executive Officer and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for SEforALL, aired live on Facebook, Al-Herbish said that OFID was working to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) “for future generations.”

Kyte called Al-Herbish, who is a member of SEforALL's Advisory Board, “one of the leading lights in the movement to get sustainable energy for all.” She added that OFID was “a very critical piece of the puzzle” toward solving the energy dilemma “investing, and making funding available to entrepreneurs and those who need it.”

Al-Herbish said: “Sustainable development for OFID is a journey not a destination.” He added that OFID was building alliances with stakeholders, working with like-minded institutions, and leading a group of ten Arab institutions “not only to find solutions but to fund solutions.”

OFID has long argued that human development and energy use are intrinsically linked: energy is development, because without energy to fuel industry and support business, hospitals and schools, there can be no economic or social progress. This is why the organization prioritizes the alleviation of energy poverty; it is central to the achievement of the SDGs.

Faris Hasan, Director of OFID's Strategic Planning and Economic Services department, participated in the Deep Dive session entitled “Off Grid-On Target,” which reviewed how energy providers are increasing productivity through decentralized solutions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Hasan was also on the panel of the Partner Working Session entitled: “Partnerships to integrate energy resources and last mile access for income generation.”

At the forum, SEforALL announced its intention to launch a new ‘People-Centered Accelerator’ to support gender equality, social inclusion and women's empowerment in the energy sector. The Accelerator will bring together a voluntary group of like-minded partners who are committed to advancing such goals. The group will work with global leaders to promote an energy transition “that leaves no one behind.”

By working together, partners supporting the Accelerator aim to: enhance modern energy access for the very poorest people who will not be reached by business-as-usual approaches; increase women's full participation in sustain-



PHOTO: SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

able energy solutions; bring together and strengthen collaboration between local, regional, national and international stakeholders that are active in the energy, gender and social justice sectors; and help unlock finance from private and public sources.

Over 1,000 high-level representatives from government, business, civil society and international organizations from 110 countries came together under the Forum theme “Going Further, Faster-Together” toward global energy goals and progress on Sustainable Development Goal 7—Affordable and Clean Energy: ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

More than 75 sessions were held during the Forum’s three days, with activity focused on the urgency and action needed to achieve the SDGs. Kyte, speaking to the crowd on the opening morning, said: “Business as usual is not good enough. We need speed and scale.”

In her closing remarks, Kyte said: “The latest evidence shows we’re not on track to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable clean energy service by 2030. We now need urgent action. At this SEforALL Forum, small businesses, big businesses, community leaders and investors to city leaders and ministers from around the world, all came together to learn how they can go further and faster by working together. Given the evidence, the price of technologies, the innovation among committed investors and the transformation of lives when access to energy is secured, we should be continually ask-

ing leaders why they are not acting now to secure sustainable energy for all.”

The SEforALL Forum is one of the most important gatherings celebrating the global sustainable energy movement. It aims to accelerate and scale energy access and energy productivity. It also acts as a marketplace to help broker new partnerships and ideas, spur investment and drive action towards sustainable energy and realising SDG 7.

See www.seforall.org for more information.

OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish is interviewed by Rachel Kyte, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for SEforALL.



PHOTO: OFID/ALESANDRA SOLANO

Event: **3rd IEF–OFID Symposium on Energy Poverty**

Theme: To accelerate collective efforts to provide access to modern energy services in Africa by 2030

Hosted by: OFID, IEF and Ministry of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies of Tunisia

Venue: Tunis, Tunisia

Date: April 11–12, 2017

OFID and IEF call for more collective action on energy access in Africa

3rd IEF–OFID Symposium on Energy Poverty in Tunis, Tunisia finds broader partnerships and strengthened international cooperation necessary.

BY STEVE HUGHES



Dr Fuad Siala,
OFID Senior Advisor.

The Symposium, held to accelerate collective efforts to provide access to modern energy services in Africa by 2030, addressed the extent of energy poverty, the roles of various energy sources and technologies, and regulatory options available to African countries to encourage energy investment.

“We exchanged views on enhancing international cooperation,” said Dr Fuad Siala, OFID Senior Advisor, who was at the event representing OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish. “The challenge of eradicating energy poverty in Africa is complex—it is too much for any stakeholder to overcome individually. We must broaden partnerships and strengthen international cooperation; and this is something delegates at the Symposium worked toward.”

Siala and other participants noted that efforts to eradicate energy poverty must be technology neutral. Renewable energy technologies offer new opportunities to overcome energy poverty and can achieve a secure and sustainable supply where economics permit. However,



PHOTOS: IEF/AL ZAYER AND TORIKATA

Siala stressed that poor countries cannot be deprived of energy to grow their economies and keep up with demographic trends during the transition to a more diversified and sustainable energy mix.

With this in mind, delegates noted that financing for large centralized power plants and distributed energy solutions operating on both conventional and renewable energy technologies was equally important. Siala stressed that all available types and sources of funding will be needed to successfully eradicate energy poverty, including that from international financial institutions, public-private partnerships and local resources. He also noted that there was a growing need for more innovative financing vehicles and policies.

Energy poverty is about more than the lack of access to electricity, said Siala. “The use of traditional biomass for cooking, heating and



Hamdi Harrouch, Director-General of the National Energy Conservation Agency.



Dr Sun Xiansheng, IEF Secretary-General.

lighting is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular,” he said. “This represents a serious health hazard and can contribute to deforestation and gender inequality.”

The Symposium was supported by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies of Tunisia over two days in April and was

opened by Hela Cheikhrouhou, Minister of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies, represented by Hamdi Harrouch, Director-General of the National Energy Conservation Agency. Dr Sun Xiansheng, Secretary General of the International Energy Forum (IEF) was also in attendance.

The Symposium comprised representatives from African countries, the African Energy Commission (AFREC), Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), and representatives of the partner organizations of the Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI), including the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the United Nations Statistics Division, the Gas Exporting Country Forum (GECF), as well as international energy sector practitioners from the private sector and the International Gas Union (IGU).

Sub-Saharan stats

The Symposium noted that energy poverty impacts development prospects and demographic trends across Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, only **31 percent** of the population has access to electricity, while in certain countries, electrification can be as low as nine to 20 percent.

15th Regional JODI Training Workshop for African Countries

Discussions at the 3rd IEF–OFID Symposium on Energy Poverty took place in parallel with the 15th Regional Joint Organizations Data Initiative (JODI) Training Workshop. The Workshop focused on building capacity for energy sector data collection to better inform policy and investment decisions for alleviating energy poverty in Africa. The event was hosted by the government of Tunisia.

Contemporary designs revitalize traditional Algerian craft

An exquisite collection of copper and brass tableware, exhibited in collaboration with the Algerian Embassy in Vienna, brought the vibrant cultural heritage of Constantine, Algeria to light in April.

BY NADIA BENAMARA



Crafted by artisanal coppersmiths in the historic city of Constantine, the ‘Marvelous Cirta’ collection melds centuries of tradition with innovative design.

The collection encompasses eight individual sets of trays, bowls and spoons inlaid with intricate patterns and calligraphy. Each pays homage to a different era or aspect of Constantine’s cultural renown.

Marvelous Cirta was produced in partnership with the Austrian design team *zerunianandweisz* and students from the *Ecole Regionale des Beaux Arts* in Constantine under the banner of Creative Mediterranean—an ongoing initiative to support creative industries in the southern Mediterranean region.



Designer Peter Weisz.



Designer Nadja Zerunian

“The underlying idea was to promote the traditional handicraft of Algeria,” said designer Peter Weisz of *zerunianandweisz*. “Constantine’s coppersmiths work according to very old traditions that can no longer sustain their livelihoods, so the challenge lay in finding ways to fuse these old traditions with new ideas so that they can have contemporary use and value.”

Meeting up in Constantine for the very first time, designers, students and craftspeople grappled with the additional challenge of completing an entire collection in time for an international trade fair four weeks hence.

Designer Nadja Zerunian credited the team’s enormous passion and dedication for making the seemingly impossible possible. Praising the local craftsmen in particular, she said: “It’s an incredible skillset that requires great precision and focus. Looking at the complexity and sheer symmetry of their patterns, I never could have imagined that they were manmade.

“Some trace the designs using paper templates, but some design freely by hand, relying on their incredible memory of what the shape is supposed to look like,” continued Zerunian. “I still find it absolutely amazing.”

Weisz added: “We’re very proud of this project; not only the collection itself but the human experiences it involved—connecting craftsmen, designers and entrepreneurs, as well as national and international institutions.”

In addition to promoting the development of a new collection, Creative Mediterranean is supporting the improve-

ment of working conditions for Constantine's craftspeople in partnership with local and regional authorities.

Meriem Terki, National Coordinator for Creative Mediterranean in Algeria, explained: "We are currently developing new design spaces and working with Algeria's public institutions to implement production processes that will protect the environment and be safer for our craftsmen as well as the next generation of craftsmen."

In a statement, participating craftsman Messaoud Lechehab said: "Copper has been produced in Constantine since the Middle Ages. I learned the craft from

my father, who learned it from his own father. We cannot lose this tradition. On the contrary, we have to modernize our creations to create jobs for our youth. This is Marvelous Cirta's spirit: showing that our expertise can survive through contemporary designs."

Creative Mediterranean is a cooperative program implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) with funding from the European Union and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Speaking at the opening for Marvelous Cirta in Vienna, Gerardo Pataconi,

Officer-in-Charge at UNIDO's Department of Agribusiness Development, thanked everyone involved for making the project a success. "Its success is demonstrated by the fact that young designers and artisans were able to work together to produce pieces for an international export market; pieces that people want to use and display in their homes," said Pataconi. "Creativity is the key to that success and we need to support that creativity with development resources." ■

For more, see www.medcreative.org and www.zerunianandweisz.com

Iraqi Embassy honors the late Dame Zaha Hadid

Iraq's Ambassador to Austria, Auday Al-Khairalla, hosted a special event commemorating the life and work of renowned Iraqi-British Architect Zaha Hadid at the Iraqi Embassy in Vienna.

The day-long tribute was held in April and attracted fellow architects, artistic collaborators, academics and journalists, as well as the diplomatic representatives of countries where some of Hadid's most ambitious projects are located.

Welcoming guests, Al-Khairalla said: "From the USA to Europe to Asia, there's hardly a major modern city without a Zaha Hadid project. She left us too soon, at the height of her career, but she will remain immortal in her work and an inspiration for generations to come."

Patrick Schumacher, Hadid's long-term collaborator and principal partner at Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA), held a keynote address detailing her artistic development and pioneering contribution to the architectural profession.

He deemed the embassy in Vienna a fitting place to recognize Hadid's work, not only because she was "a lover of Viennese culture" and had designed the central buildings of the city's new University of Economics, but most importantly be-



Dame Zaha Hadid, 1950–2016

cause her 15-year tenure as a guest professor at Vienna's University of Applied Arts had helped foster her ongoing creativity.

Schumacher referenced Hadid's extensive body of work by highlighting her numerous architectural innovations: chief among them, the idea of exploding or opening up space in order to encourage

the free-flow of movement between separate zones.

Hadid also wanted to transform architecture by making it more like a landscape—irregular, varied, versatile—and adapt buildings to local conditions, incorporating cultural as well as climactic sensitivities.

"I think it was very important for her to go back to the Middle East and contribute to projects in the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algiers, and of course, Iraq," continued Schumacher. "These projects rely on freedom in generating form to adapt to local conditions like wind and sun."

He showcased two recent designs that are to be constructed in Baghdad: a park-like complex for the Iraqi Parliament and a tower for the Iraqi Central Bank.

Commenting on the latter, Schumacher said: "We didn't want to just do a glass building in that very hot climate, so there are a lot of solid parts. We still used a lot of glass but the way we placed and angled it is all about directing the view and cutting out direct sunlight."

Zaha Hadid was born in Baghdad in 1950. She founded her London-based architectural firm ZHA in 1979 and completed its first building, the Vitra Fire Station in Germany, in 1993. Hadid was the first woman to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize, in 2004; was named a UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2010; and was made a Dame Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth in 2012. She died in March 2016. ■

PHOTO: MARY MCCARTNEY

Saudi minister recognized for contributing to growth and prosperity

Dr Ibrahim Al Assaf honored at meetings of the Arab financial institutions

OFID Director-General Suleiman Al-Herbish and the organization's Assistant Director-General of Operations Fuad Albassam participated in the joint meetings of the Arab financial institutions in Morocco in April, at which Dr Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al Assaf, Saudi Arabia's Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers, was honored.

A special ceremony was held for Al Assaf during the opening session of the meetings. Saudi's Minister of Finance, Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jadaan, who headed the Kingdom's delegation, said that the Arab institutions were recognizing Al Assaf in "...an appreciation of his efforts to serve his country and the institutions, and for contributing effectively to growth and prosperity." He highlighted Al Assaf's role in achieving development within Saudi, as well as among Arab financial institutions.

Abdlatif Al-Hamad, Director-General and Chairman of the Board of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, delivered the statement honoring Al Assaf, highlighting his long career and vision, especially in strengthening the tools necessary for economic development within Arab countries.

Al-Hamad said: "The journey of Arab financial institutions and their progression, and the strengthening of their roles, would not have been achieved with such success without Al Assaf's endeavor." Al-Hamad added that finding appropriate solutions to urgent Arab development issues was at the heart of his vision.

Accepting the Award, Al Assaf said: "I am very thankful and humbled to be honored today among colleagues with whom I have worked for over two decades. However, what is far more important and touching for me is that this honor is directed towards my country, which has contributed toward the growth and development of many Arab and Islamic countries, and on the global front."

Al Assaf added that he was also honored to have worked under the leadership of three Saudi kings. He also felt fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with various financial institutions and witness their growth and contribution to millions of people's lives, globally. He commended the strong cooperation of all the development funds and financial institutions when implementing various projects—a cooperation that continues to grow.

Sharing news of Al Assaf's recognition with colleagues at OFID, Al-Herbish said "Al Assaf has committed to working for the good of the Kingdom of Saudi



Dr Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al Assaf, Saudi Arabia's Minister of State and Member of the Council of Ministers (right), with Mohamed Boussaid, Morocco's Minister of Economy and Finance.

Arabia and the developing world with such conviction that he is an inspiration to us all. Recognizing Al Assaf's dedication and achievements on this global platform brings him to the attention of an even wider audience; something that can only raise the profile of the important sustainable development issues he works so hard to promote. On behalf of OFID, I would like to congratulate him for all that he has achieved. I will always consider him as a good friend. With his support, I have been able to deliver OFID's noble mission."

Al Assaf has held a number of key positions during his long and distinguished career, including Assistant Professor of Economic Sciences and Head of Administrative Sciences, King Abdulaziz Military Academy; Executive Director of the World Bank Group for Saudi Arabia; Dean of the World Bank Group board of directors; and many more besides.

The joint meetings of the Arab financial institutions represent an important platform to discuss key topics including finance, economy and the creation of future strategies to support sustainable development for Arab countries. They aim to support the exchange of views and ideas about international financial issues of interest to Arab countries.

King Mohammed VI of Morocco opened the meetings and addressed participants stating: "This meeting is an opportunity to assess what has been achieved in supporting the economic and social development of the Arab countries and to explore the best ways and means of strengthening South-South cooperation." He added that the meeting served as an opportunity to reflect on the future prospects of the work of the institutions, especially in view of the important developments in the region and the common economic, social and development challenges facing them.

The event incorporated a series of meetings including: the opening session of the 46th meeting of the Board of Governors of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; the 40th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Arab Monetary Fund; the 44th session of the Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation; the 42nd meeting of the Board of Governors of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa; the 41st Meeting of the Shareholders Council of the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development; and the eighth ordinary session of the Council of Arab Ministers of Finance. ■



Khalid A Al-Falih (center), Conference President and Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, Saudi Arabia; Estêvão Pedro (left), Governor for OPEC, Chairman of the Board of Governors; and Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo (right), OPEC Secretary-General.

The 172nd Meeting of the OPEC Conference

The 172nd Meeting of the OPEC Conference was held in Vienna on Thursday, May 25, 2017. Attended by delegations from all 13 of the Organization's Member Countries, the meeting was held under the chairmanship of Conference President, Khalid A Al-Falih, Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia, who also served as Head of the country's delegation.

COURTESY OF THE OPEC BULLETIN

In an opening address, the President of the OPEC Conference, Khalid A Al-Falih, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, stated that "the main focus for today remains on consolidating, strengthening and accelerating the process of rebalancing, alongside the important task of drawing down global oil inventories."

His comments underscored the importance for open discussions on the

ongoing challenges facing the oil market. Delegates to the Conference then reviewed the oil market outlook for the remainder of 2017 and considered various reports, including those from both the Secretary-General, as well as the Organization's Economic Commission Board. Overall, the oil market situation showed marked improvement since the 171st Meeting of the Conference held on November 30, 2016.

The Conference President noted: "We started with a bearish sentiment, but the market is now well on its way toward rebalancing. We have more work to do in lowering inventories toward the last five-year average, but we are on the right track."

In the meantime, the Conference President said he expected global conditions to continue improving—"assisted by a more robust global economy and higher GDP growth in 2017, as well as fairly healthy oil demand growth this year, particularly in Asia."

He also reminded delegates of the main task before them, emphasizing that "nurturing a constructive and stable market environment is our highest priority." Ensuring a sustainable future for oil supply and demand—and in order to avoid price spikes and other risks to global energy security—was critical.

The other key objectives for the OPEC Conference "include strengthening cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC producers, and fostering excellent relations with international energy institutions to promote greater understanding of vital issues." ▶

An extension of the decision

◀ In line with the decision taken at the 171st Meeting of the OPEC Conference, as well as with the Declaration of Cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC producers on December 10, 2016, and based on analytical reports presented by the OPEC Secretariat, OPEC delegates from all 13 Member Countries decided to extend the original production adjustment of 1.2m b/d for a further period of nine months. This was to take effect on July 1, 2017.

Through this decision, Member Countries not only displayed unity once again, but also confirmed their commitment to strive for a stable and balanced oil market. The objective of achieving price levels that are suitable for both producers and consumers, and for the sake of the industry and the global economy, continues to be the overarching goal of OPEC Member Countries.

At various times during the meeting, OPEC delegates expressed thanks to other Member Countries for their shared commitment and cooperative spirit, particularly as it was reflected in the most recent conformity levels to the decision taken at the 171st OPEC Ministerial Conference. These conformity levels, which approached 100 percent, were seen as unprecedented and were interpreted as robust, thus providing encouragement to continue efforts.

Delegates also acknowledged the crucial role played by participating non-OPEC producers through the Declaration of Cooperation. They welcomed the constructive and positive dialogue that had emerged, and praised the technical interactions that have evolved among experts from all participating countries. In fact, at the conclusion of the 172nd Conference, the request of one formerly non-OPEC producing country to join the Organization was formally accepted, with immediate effect—thus making Equatorial Guinea OPEC's 14th Member Country.

The Conference President also praised OPEC's "firm and unwavering resolve," along with that of participating

non-OPEC producing countries, extolling the virtues of "the extensive process of consultations and discussions involving all... OPEC Member Countries and the participating non-OPEC producing countries."

The work of the JMMC

Attendees also considered a report and numerous recommendations made by the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), which was set up last year to monitor conformity to the voluntary production adjustments decided upon by OPEC and participating non-OPEC oil producers at the meeting on December 10. The work of the JMMC, which is supported by a Joint Technical Committee (JTC), remains ongoing, and will be particularly important to the work of the Organization—and other non-OPEC producers—especially in the coming months.

Given the need to continue studying market conditions and the evolution of supply and demand factors worldwide, delegates to the Conference asked the JMMC—and more specifically, the JTC—to continue its important work during the period of the nine-month extension. During the first period of the production adjustment, the JMMC and JTC had made valuable contributions which had provided the technical input and the transparency needed to implement the adjustment decisions in a timely manner.

The mandate of the JMMC was also a subject of some discussion, with OPEC delegates expressing a desire to see it extended. This would be necessary in order to continue to monitor conformity with the voluntary production adjustments, as well as to engage in ongoing evaluation of market developments and to follow through with any necessary recommendations. With the support and input of the OPEC Secretariat, the JTC will continue to provide monthly technical input to the JMMC throughout the agreed-upon extension period.

The Conference also gave special attention to improving the 'environmental footprint' of oil, and it would, according

to the President, engage in an appropriate manner with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Ministerial acknowledgments

As usual, the delegates of the OPEC Conference recognized the achievements and previous contributions of outgoing officials. Minister José Icaza Romero, from Ecuador, Minister Etienne Dieudonné Ngoubou, from Gabon, Acting Minister Anas Khaled Al-Saleh, from Kuwait, and Minister Eng Eulogio Del Pino, from Venezuela, have all left their ministerial posts. These four men played an important role in helping OPEC and non-OPEC producers reach the historic and landmark decisions of last year, and the Conference extended its appreciation for their commitment to the work of the Organization.

Separately, the Conference congratulated their incoming replacements: Ing Carlos Pérez, the new Minister of Hydrocarbons of Ecuador; Pascal Houangni Ambourou, the new Minister of Petroleum and Hydrocarbons of Gabon; Issam A Almarzooq, Kuwait's Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water; and, finally, Dr Nelson P Martínez, the new People's Minister of Petroleum of Venezuela.

While the new ministers and their respective teams will continue the work of their predecessors, joining other Member Countries in the hard work ahead, they continue to display optimism for the future. During his address to all delegates, the Conference President said OPEC "has a fundamental interest in the health of the global economy and the worldwide energy industry." It must necessarily be so in order for appropriate levels of investment to be maintained and for technological progress to continue to be encouraged and nurtured. "The task in front of us is admittedly challenging and complex, but I'm confident that by working together we can and will accomplish our goals for the mutual benefit of all," he said.

The next meeting of the OPEC Conference will convene in Vienna on November 30, 2017. ■

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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