

Empowering people and building peaceful societies

Cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme in the Arab States region



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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Introduction

“Empowering people and building peaceful societies” is the first major publication about the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Arab States region. It describes the context, goals and added value of the partnership, takes stock of how it has made a difference in people’s lives across the region and discusses opportunities that can make joint EU–UNDP work even stronger in the coming years.



// We believe in the United Nations because we believe in the same principles, in the same values, and our communities are built upon the same fundamental ideals. //

Federica Mogherini,

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission

Foreword

Stefano Manservigi

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Cooperating with partners makes assistance more effective and leads to greater positive impacts on people's lives. The partnership between UNDP and the European Commission in the Arab world is an excellent example of the benefits of working together.

Throughout the transformations of the past years, the EU has sought to strengthen its ties and cooperation with the countries of the region, sharing experiences and promoting the values and ambitions that we share with Arab partners. Where conflict is raging, we have worked together to uphold peace, prosperity and reconciliation, and find sustainable solutions that promote solidarity with affected populations and show our support for accountable and effective institutions.

The task is complex and often takes place in difficult environments: countries with protracted conflicts, affected by different challenges – collapse in governance, economic crises, high unemployment rates, internal and external migratory flows, brain drain – the list is long.

Young people make up a large part of the population in the region and have great expectations for change and hopes for a better life. Their dynamism is essential in a region where sustained efforts are needed to create opportunities for all. To respond to these expectations, we need to deliver quickly, efficiently and with limited funds.

This publication showcases the strength of EU-UNDP cooperation in delivering concrete results benefiting people. We look forward to continuing this fruitful cooperation and supporting prosperity and stability for all.

Foreword

Mourad Wahba

Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme



Across the Arab world, lives are changed for the better through a dynamic partnership between the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. From constitutional change that finally recognizes the voices of women, to democratic elections, to innovative programmes that help turn the young away from the siren song of violent extremism, our joint work is at the forefront of change in the Arab world. Together, the EU and UNDP are agents of peace and stability, relief and resilience for a region that has suffered more than most in the turbulent twenty-first century.

This publication showcases some of the results of this dynamic partnership, and the benefits it has brought in the past years to the Arab region, but also to Europe. They are a testimonial that well-thought-out programmes can bring prosperity to the peoples they are designed to serve, and to the surrounding countries that can only benefit from regional stability and prosperity.

I warmly encourage you to read this short review, and to follow up in greater detail, our joint work for development. The EU and UNDP partnership to meet the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab world is a strong impetus to peace and stability in the region. At UNDP, we are proud to join with the European Commission in service to men, women and children in the Arab region.

The EU–UNDP partnership in the Arab States region

The Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004 is based on a shared set of goals for advancing peace and security, human rights and development across the globe. A guiding principle of our work is to support countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 universal goals adopted by world leaders at the United Nations in September 2015 to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future by 2030.

Our work in the Arab States region extends across all three of UNDP's focus areas:

- Sustainable Development
- Democratic Governance and Peacebuilding
- Climate and Disaster Resilience

Sustainable Development Goals



We have made significant achievements in each area:

- We work in partnership with **14 countries to advance good governance**, including at the local level, support the deepening of democracy and promote efforts to make societies more inclusive.
- We work with **five countries to help them make their political processes more transparent, effective and representative**. We work to boost the capacities of national institutions and officials so they can organize free and fair elections, and seek to increase and improve the political participation of women and vulnerable groups.
- We supported the drafting, signing and dissemination of **Tunisia's new constitution**, a vital step in strengthening that country's democratic institutions; and we continue to support the people of **Somalia** in their mission to build a responsive and accountable State.
- We are helping nine countries to build resilience or recover from crisis. In war-torn **Syria**, nine schools have been refurbished and over 10,000 jobs created to help Syrians get back on their feet. In **Sudan**, an estimated 66,500 people have benefitted from efforts to establish peace and prevent future conflicts. In **Yemen**, a cash-for-work campaign is aiming to help 42,000 vulnerable people in rural communities become more resilient while meeting immediate basic needs.
- We work with communities in **Iraq, Lebanon and Libya** to improve stability, using tools such as joint conflict analysis to help prevent conflicts and secure peace.

EU-UNDP Cooperation: Shared principles and values for development in the Arab States region

Our partnership's efforts in the Arab States region are guided by values and principles that strategically draw on the complementary strengths of the EU and UNDP:

National ownership and impartiality

We help countries achieve their development goals by working as “honest brokers” with all parties in politically-, culturally- and economically-sensitive situations.

Respect and advocacy for human rights

Our work is guided by the promotion of international human rights norms and conventions, as well as internationally agreed goals.

Integrated responses, built on lessons learned

We stand at the forefront of innovative initiatives that collaborate with national and international partners to build resilience to conflicts, disasters and the effects of climate change.

Convening and coordinating partnerships

We have strategic partnerships with international, national and local actors operating in the Arab States region, including national and local governments, other UN agencies, regional institutions, inter-country and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and national and international NGOs. These partnerships foster trust and dialogue, as well as create room for experience-transfer among key actors operating within crisis/post-crisis environments, particularly at the regional level.

In-depth field knowledge and field-based technical competence

Our partnership draws on our respective institutions' deep knowledge of the Arab States region's social, humanitarian, political and economic circumstances, as well as an extensive field presence that is equipped with broad technical expertise to address short- and long-term issues in the areas of inclusive growth, sustainable development, and governance and peacebuilding.

Fostering efficiency and cost-effectiveness

Our joint work draws on each institution's operational and programmatic strengths—as well as our systems at global and regional levels—to bring down the costs of multi-country programmes. For example, UNDP's Regional Hub in Amman hosts consolidated capacities for evaluation, monitoring, reporting and results-based management systems, serving all of UNDP's country offices in the Arab States region.

Mobilizing public support by raising awareness

Through our local, national, regional and global communication channels, we raise the awareness of specific and general audiences in the region—as well as in the EU and globally—to strengthen support for the partnership's development efforts and crisis responses.



Rebuilding a road in Lahi, Yemen, a priority in the community's effort to build resilience. Photo: UNDP





Building a sustainable, inclusive future

The Arab States region is struggling to put itself on a sustainable development path. Despite relatively high levels of economic growth in many cases, Arab countries are not creating enough jobs or substantially improving household incomes. Many women, youth and vulnerable groups continue to be deprived of basic rights, resources, voice and economic opportunities. Such shortfalls make Arab societies highly susceptible to shocks and threaten to undo the development progress that has been achieved across the region.

To address these challenges, the EU and UNDP work together to promote an inclusive, sustainable development agenda in the region. Using innovative approaches, we help local governments, communities and community organisations create and carry out impactful development plans that can boost local economies and help Arab States achieve the SDGs. Equally important are our efforts to empower women, youth and vulnerable groups so that social and political opportunities are available to all.

Sustainable development planning and capacity development

We work across the region to create and carry out smart, community-focused plans that reduce poverty and inequality. In **Iraq**, the Local Area Development Programme (LADP) helps governorates formulate development strategies that empower women and youth, as well as help spur recovery in communities affected by the military campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In **Somalia**, we contributed to the creation of the country's first National Development Plan in 30 years, an achievement that will boost economic growth and employment, improve education levels and health, and strengthen resilience in the face of cyclical drought. In **Algeria**, the Local Development and Participatory Democracy Programme (CapDEL) is making municipal development programmes more effective by improving cooperation between local governments and communities.

In **Egypt**, we supported the clearance of mines from 121,780 acres in the North-West Coast. This is an important step in the city of New Alamein's drive to become a central hub for tourism, finance, commerce and industry – the city is projected to attract some 400,000 inhabitants and create 280,000 jobs. We also supported the Artificial Limbs Center, which offers rehabilitation services for mine victims and leads awareness campaigns about mine safety.

In the **occupied Palestinian territory**, the Productivity and Urban Renewal in East Jerusalem Programme (PURE) is working to revitalize the city's Salah Eddin

Left: The clearance of mines from 121,780 acres in Egypt's North West Coast will help the city of New Alamein become a hub for tourism, finance, commerce and industry.
Photo: UNDP/Abdel Hamid Ezzat

and Sultan Suleiman streets. Over 120 commercial enterprises and 50 businesses have directly benefited so far.

Tourism for development

In **Jordan**, we taught community members in the Tafleeh and Ajloun governorates to operate and manage tourism sites that feature important archaeological landmarks and stunning natural vistas; 22 tourism services have been established, and 84 jobs created. The tourism industry is also ripe for growth in the **occupied Palestinian territory**, where we contributed to the revitalization of Khan Al Wakaleh and Maqam En-Nabi Musa, two important historical sites. In Khan Al Wakaleh, which served as a caravanserai for merchants en route from Asia to North Africa more than 350 years ago, we helped create hundreds of jobs by supporting the expansion of a historical compound.

Promoting sustainable industries

In **Lebanon**, we helped build a briquetting plant in Bkessine village that produces 500 tonnes of wood briquettes annually (equivalent to 250,000 litres of diesel fuel) and employs 6 full-time and 3 part-time employees. The plant is an important step in a country-wide effort to promote a sustainable life cycle in the country's forests, increase rural jobs and revenue, reduce forest fires and secure a reliable energy source for heating.

Grants to communities in the Tafleeh and Ajloun governorates in Jordan have supported 28 small-scale food-processing businesses and created 80 jobs. Our partnership's mentors are working with beneficiaries to improve their financial management and administrative skills, which will ensure the sustainability of the new businesses.

Opposite: The restoration of Khan Al Wakaleh, which served as a stop for merchants en route from Asia to North Africa more than 350 years ago. *Photo: UNDP/PAPP.*

Right: Vocational training on food processing in Hama, Syria. *Photo: UNDP.*







Community participation and women's empowerment

The campaign to end female genital mutilation (FGM) continues in **Egypt**, where we contributed to the effort to amend a 2008 law criminalizing FGM; the amendments have been endorsed by the Parliament of Egypt and are expected to lead to a decrease in FGM. We also helped build the capacities of forensic medical doctors and over 1,000 district attorneys and judges who encounter FGM in their work.

Gender equality is also gaining ground in **Libya**, where we are helping increase women's participation in elections. In 2012 and 2013, six events were held to promote women's electoral participation and raise awareness about how certain types of electoral systems, temporary special measures and campaign strategies can empower women.

Marginalized communities in **Iraq** are being given a voice through the Local Area Development Programme (LADP). A photo exhibition showing life in a Syrian refugee camp has travelled throughout the country to raise awareness about the difficult living conditions of Syrian refugees, especially children. In Basra, widows and youth from rural areas were given the opportunity to display their art and handicrafts at the Kerka'an Bazar. In Basra, Missan and Karbala, women were better incorporated into local planning efforts. And through LADP's Innovation for Development Initiative, young Iraqi innovators and entrepreneurs were taught strategies to connect with potential partners and funders.



Opposite: Women and girls gathered to denounce female genital mutilation in Qena governorate, Egypt.
Photo: UNDP Egypt/Dylan Lowthian

Left: Photo exhibition "Exile Voices: Camp Reporters", supported by the EU-UNDP Local Area Development Programme in Iraq, at the European Commission, 25 November 2016, Brussels. *Photo: Reza*

Building a business, building a life

Mariam Al-Fares, 27, is a small business owner from Ajloun, Jordan, who received grant support from the 'Promoting Local Economic Development Programme in Jordan', an initiative funded by the European Union, managed by the Ministry of Interior and implemented by UNDP.

My father left us when we were kids—he re-married and didn't support us financially. My mother took care of us. She used to prepare and produce herbs and spices and would sell them to our neighbours. My older sister and I used to help her with the preparations. In a very traditional way, we learned how to sift, roast, and extract seeds and package the herbs and plants.

My mom passed away, which was a shock to me; she was the only person I ever felt safe with. My siblings married and left me at home to take care of my disabled brother. I found myself on my own in a situation where I had to fight poverty. I finished my Tawjihi [secondary level] certificate, but I couldn't enroll in a college or university. I was so down and didn't know what to do.

Then I decided to use what we learned from my mother. I started preparing herbs and leaves for our neighbours the way my mom used to. This kept my brother and me alive. One day, a friend of mine rushed into my house and told me there was a grant application to support small businesses. The programme asked me to prepare a business and financial plan, which was very difficult. [But] with help from the programme's team, I managed to prepare my plan and was thrilled to learn I was to be a beneficiary.

I had no previous experience in managing and administrating a business. I encountered many difficulties in establishing the shop. Being a woman, the merchants tried to deceive me. But the project team, especially the local officer, was of great help; she gave me insights and advice on how to avoid pitfalls. For example, she provided me with advice on how to get different price offers and how to select good suppliers, as well as connected me to other grantees.

My shop is known in the area now and even in other cities—I'm getting calls from Amman to participate in exhibitions and to send [businesses] my product in bulk! I started out only producing three herbs, but now I'm working with many other products, [like] leaves and nuts. I bought two new roasting and blending machines. The sales are increasing. I have savings now. I'm thinking of expanding my shop.

Right: Miriam Al-Fares at work in her dry goods shop, which has benefitted from EU-UNDP support. *Photo: UNDP*





Laying the groundwork for peace and democracy

Many Arab governments are failing to deliver basic services and govern in an open, democratic manner. Transparency is lacking, populations are being excluded from the political process - especially women, youth and vulnerable groups - and citizens are being deprived of channels through which they can voice their needs and concerns. These shortcomings not only lower the quality of life of millions of people—they often lead to political turmoil and armed conflict.

To ensure a stable, democratic future for all people in the region, we support efforts to promote government accountability and transparency; help governments better deliver basic social services and boost economic development; and promote the rule of law to advance justice, security and the protection of human rights. In countries struggling with conflict or its aftereffects, we support joint conflict analysis, early warning and risk management, as well as national and local dialogues that can lead to lasting peace, trust, inclusion and social cohesion.

Rule of law and access to justice

We have worked in close partnership with **Tunisia** to enhance the rule of law in the country. We sponsored 2 national consultations and dialogues across 24 governorates that allowed over 5,000 citizens, 300 civil society organizations and 320 academics to participate in the drafting process for the new constitution. We also helped build the capacity of the Tunisian parliament and supported the Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC) with its preparation of cases and the training of its staff and magistrates.

Left: Following an extensive partnership-supported consultative process, the Tunisian parliament votes to approve a new constitution. *Photo: UNDP.*

Right: Community members in North Darfur, Sudan, participate in a dialogue meeting entitled "Let's Talk Peace". *Photo: UNDP.*



The vision of a sustainable legal aid system in the **occupied Palestinian territory** is becoming a reality. With our support, civil society legal aid providers, university legal aid clinics and the Palestinian Bar Association joined forces to deliver legal aid to some 13,500 people. We also contributed to the formation of the National Legal Aid Committee, which is now working to develop Palestine's first national legal aid strategy and legal aid law.

We are part of the effort to strengthen the rule of law in **Somalia**. In 2016, we provided a wide array of support to the Somali judicial system—from providing police and justice officials with 21 vehicles to sponsoring a 2-day conference that reactivated the Puntland Bar Association.

Building capacity in electoral systems and governments

We continue to back historic elections across the region. In **Libya**, we worked with the High National Election Committee on all stages of the country's electoral process; we supported the election of the body responsible for drafting Libya's new constitution and provided capacity building for both organisations. In **Somalia**, we provided fiduciary monitoring, financial oversight and advising, and logistical support to ensure parliamentary power was handed over to a new assembly in a peaceful, democratic manner. In **Jordan**, we improved the Independent Election Commission's capacity to conduct fair and transparent elections, as well as helped it create a voter registration database.

Confidence in state-building and trust in government is on the rise in **Somalia**. We supported state-formation and conflict resolution conferences and workshops attended by 2,798 persons, as well as helped the Federal Ministry of Interior and Federalism Affairs develop its basic structure and capacities.

In **Tunisia**, the Joint Migration and Development Initiative helps manage the on-going migrant flows out of North Africa. The initiative improves cooperation between officials in the migration and development sectors, as well as bolsters the leadership skills of local authorities.

In **Sudan**, we are helping improve aid delivery to crisis-affected areas by training government staff members in negotiation skills, assisting with data collection and stakeholder consultations, and supporting the development of the Sudan Aid Information Database.

Right: A Somali woman participates in a 2-day conference to reactivate the Puntland Bar Association, an important step toward establishing the rule of law in Somalia.
Photo: UNDP.

إصلاح المؤسسات
رأس الحكمة



الأخلاق العظيمة من الأرض لم يعد لوجود الإنسان قيمة
أحسن أي الناس تستعمل قلوبهم

TO BETTER TO BARKA



Adel Mehdewi receives treatment at the Benghazi Kidney Center, a complex that was rehabilitated by the Stabilization Facility for Libya. Photo: UNDP.

Peacebuilding

As areas of **Iraq** have been retaken from ISIL and declared safe for civilians, the partnership-supported Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) has helped restore confidence in government and given populations a sense of progress. FFS has repaired essential public infrastructure, employed youth in work brigades to remove rubble, opened transport routes, provided cash grants to help businesses reopen, and rehabilitated schools, health centres and pharmacies. Critical infrastructure and services are also being restored in **Libya**, where the Stabilization Facility for Libya has worked closely with local governments and communities to refurbish public buildings and procure critical equipment.





In **Sudan**, our Joint Conflict Reduction Programme (JCRP) promoted reconciliation and peace in areas affected by armed conflict. By the end of February 2016, 22 of 23 peace agreements facilitated by JCRP were still in effect, while our work with border demarcation and local peace stakeholders in Blue Nile State helped decrease reported clashes there by 80 percent. Overall, 66,500 people directly or indirectly benefitted from JCRP.

Members of the Somali police attend a training on election security. *Photo: UNDP.*

In **Yemen**, we have helped conflict-affected communities develop or reactivate 123 Village Cooperative Councils. Counting 1,393 members, these councils are integral in the creation of community resilience plans and community self-help initiatives.

In **Lebanon**, we supported efforts to highlight the media's important role in strengthening civil peace, including a widely endorsed 2013 pact that affirms media's role in stability.



Conflict prevention

The EU and UNDP recognize the vital role dialogue plays in efforts to achieve peace. In **Sudan**, we facilitate dialogues that identify the root causes of conflict and establish strategies to address resource-based tribal clashes; thus far, we have conducted 59 local level consultations with 9,440 people. In **Libya**, we have supported political dialogue that will help spur progress toward advancing the Libya Political Agreement and strengthening the Government of National Accord, both crucial components in the campaign to achieve national reconciliation and stability. The principle of “do no harm” is being applied to all joint activities in Libya, which helps to promote conflict-sensitive approaches to governance and prevent further violence. In **Yemen**, we are improving the capacities of trainers to facilitate dialogues and design conflict analysis; to date, the initiative’s beneficiaries have trained 200 inside mediators in conflict resolution skills.



Above: Lebanese journalists and representatives of press syndicates sign a pact affirming the media’s important role in maintaining stability. *Photo: UNDP.*

Left: Newly elected members of the Somali Federal Parliament are sworn into office. *Photo: UNDP.*

With the help of legal aid clinics, women in Gaza are claiming their rights

Aziza was forced to marry when she was 16. She divorced her first husband two years later, and subsequently married a man she would remain with for the next two decades. These were not happy years: her husband was physically abusive and addicted to drugs.

Aziza felt trapped—she was already suffering from stigma for divorcing her first husband, and feared the consequences of getting divorced for a second time. But after her husband married another woman, forced the two wives to live in the same house, and then one day locked Aziza in a room and prohibited her from calling her family, Aziza decided she'd had enough.

She escaped the house and moved in with her family. They tried convincing her husband to divorce her, but he refused, leaving Aziza in legal and social limbo. But she escaped this, too, after learning about the legal aid clinic at the Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection.

“Visiting the legal clinic presented new hope for me. I had this burden for a year and a half and I needed to get it off my chest. No one listened to me before. After the first visit, I got out of the clinic feeling very light, feeling very relieved. I just felt good!” Aziza says.

In an effort to empower local communities and improve access to justice for vulnerable people, the “Strengthening the Rule of Law: Justice and Security for the Palestinian People” programme has helped establish a network of legal aid providers in Gaza. The network provides an array of legal services, including representation, litigation, mediation and arbitration. Since April 2011, the network has been operating 18 clinics across the Gaza Strip and provides free legal consultations and representation for men and women of various ages and social statuses.

After three months in court, Aziza was finally granted a divorce, as well as a settlement to be paid out monthly.

“When I was informed by the clinic that I got the divorce, I was very happy. I felt ready to start over and rebuild my life. I pursued my education and took courses in economic development. I am very good in embroidery and tailoring. I bought a machine and now produce great pieces and sell them either to the community or to organisations that can sell them for me. I am currently planning to save money to get my own workshop and build my own room in my family’s home.”

Over 10,000 people have received legal aid services at the clinics, and some 30,000 people have received legal information from them.

Right: Aziza (left) receives legal advice from a case worker at the Aisha Association for Woman and Child Protection. *Photo: UNDP.*



An agent for change in Blue Nile State

Hanadi Al-Nour Adlan Al-Mak worked with the Joint Conflict Reduction Programme (JCRP), an initiative that promoted reconciliation and peace in areas of Sudan affected by armed conflict. 66,500 people directly or indirectly benefitted from JCRP by the time of the programme's completion in 2016.

Hanadi Al-Nour Adlan Al-Mak was born in Sudan's Blue Nile State. A daughter of the former chief of all the state's tribes, Hanadi grew up watching her father serve as a broker for peace and a provider of refuge during trying times—he led efforts to settle disputes and also gave shelter to community members fleeing armed conflict. Such experiences showed Hanadi the vital role community mediators play in building peace.

Now 45 and a parent herself, Hanadi has continued her father's legacy by becoming a local leader in conflict resolution. In 2010, Hanadi joined UNDP's Peace Center in Blue Nile State, where she was part of an effort to spread awareness about the importance of peace consultations in conflict-afflicted areas. In 2012, Hanadi became a Peace Ambassador for UNDP's Joint Conflict Reduction Programme (JCRP) and worked with the programme through its completion in 2016.

She is currently working with Blue Nile State's Ministry of Agriculture to organize sessions that will bring together herders and farmers—two groups whose disputes often flare into violence—and training them in conflict resolution and natural resource management skills.

"My usual reconciliation sessions are done over Jabana [coffee]," she says. "I urge the women and men to analyse their disputes, reconsider their positions and identify the genesis behind [them]. Small tensions could escalate out of proportion if we do not contain them."

Despite continuing instability in Blue Nile State and other areas of Sudan, Hanadi believes deeply in the value of her vocation, especially when it comes to encouraging more women to work in conflict resolution.

"It is important for women to become part of these initiatives," she says. "The techniques I have learned over the past two years have enabled me to restore trust between communities [...] My aim is to empower more women in our community by passing on this knowledge."

Right: Hanadi Al-Nour Adlan Al-Mak is a leader in the EU-UNDP effort to use dialogue as a tool for peace in Sudan. *Photo: UNDP.*



Building resilience

The Arab States region is susceptible to a wide range of climatic and man-made threats. It is home to fragile ecosystems, extreme weather and natural disasters such as catastrophic droughts and floods—dangers that are only being exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Many countries are also grappling with protracted armed conflict, an issue that is by no means separate from the environmental challenges effecting the region, as a scarcity of natural resources created by climate change is leading to increasingly violent clashes over what resources remain. Together, these challenges are combining to threaten the very real progress that has been made by Arab States.

To protect this progress, we support efforts to improve food and water security, increase communities' abilities to respond to climatic disasters, and ensure that crisis and conflict recovery are carried out in a way that makes communities resilient against future shocks. To help Arab States become as resilient as possible, we work with governments, civil societies and the private sector, as well as regional partners, sister UN agencies and global funds, such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund.

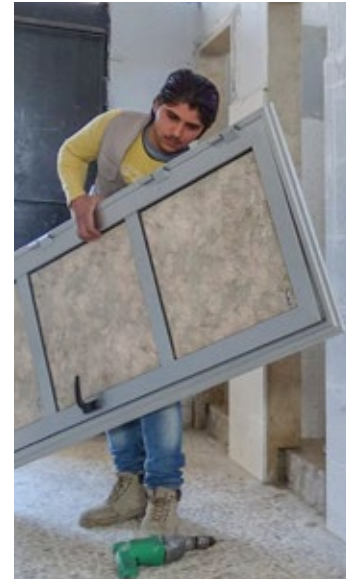
Building climate resilience through renewable energy

Solar technologies and policies are helping bring a reliable, renewable source of energy to the region. In **Yemen**, over 250,000 people will benefit from solar technologies the partnership has provided to 800 households and 60 health centres, local government offices and schools. In **Lebanon**, we supported the introduction of hybrid solar-diesel systems to organisations in the non-profit, commercial and industrial sectors; as a result, the equivalent of 1,414 tonnes of CO₂ will be prevented from entering the atmosphere. In **Lebanon**, environmentally-minded policymaking is helping lead the country into a greener future—we supported the creation of an important guidelines report on hybrid solar-diesel systems, as well as a strategy for the Lebanese Army to use ground-source heating pumps and a sustainable energy strategy.

The success of the 22nd Conference of Parties in **Morocco** was made possible in part by the EU-UNDP partnership's support of the "Civil Society and Innovation Zone", which included 9 conference rooms used by some 24,000 people over the course of the conference.

Resilience-building in protracted conflict

We continue to contribute to the massive effort to rebuild infrastructure,



livelihoods and lives in war-torn **Syria**. With our assistance, 295,798 tonnes of solid waste and 21 tonnes of debris were removed from former conflict zones; 9 schools were rehabilitated; and 10,641 monthly jobs were created. Syrian persons with disabilities (PWDs) are especially vulnerable in the crisis, and we have supported nearly 600 of them over recent years: we helped build the capacities of technicians and managers in two prosthetic workshops in Damascus and Tartous, and trained 158 PWDs in vocational skills to help them find new sources of income.

In **Yemen**, 1,699 people affected by the current crisis have benefitted from cash-for-work activities—this has proven an important boon to local small businesses, which have been struggling to create new jobs.

Early warning and crisis response

We helped the **League of Arab States** Secretariat and its Member States establish early warning systems and other effective responses to impending regional crises, conflicts and post-conflict situations. With EC-UNDP support, the Arab Cooperation Framework was established and the early warning/crisis response capacities of national bodies were enhanced.

Left: A compactor is constructed in a sustainable briquetting plant in Lebanon. Photo: UNDP.

Above: School rehabilitation in Hama Governorate, Syria. Photo: UNDP.



A beneficiary of the Local Area Development Programme sells watermelons at an Iraqi market.
Photo: UNDP



A new job, a more resilient life

Nizar is one of thousands of beneficiaries of the partnership's effort to rebuild infrastructure, livelihoods and lives in war-torn Syria.

Nizar, 32, and his wife were raising their three young children in Dar'a, Syria, when the security situation there began deteriorating badly in 2014. A tiler by training, Nizar watched the conflict consume more and more of his city and strangle the economy, making it increasingly difficult for him to find enough work to support his family.

When conditions became too dangerous in Dar'a, Nizar and his family moved to the city of Hama, which was relatively safer than Dar'a and home to some of Nizar's extended family. Nizar rented a house, but he was only able to find work as a day labourer. As he scrambled to support his family, he continued searching for higher-paying jobs that would make use of his tiling skills.

After two years, an opportunity finally arose for him to put those skills to use: a UNDP effort sponsored by the EU that seeks to restore livelihood opportunities for people like Nizar.

He was hired to help tile four of the nine schools that were being rehabilitated by the project, and his earnings were substantial enough to enable him to purchase a taxi. With his new vehicle, Nizar can now consistently provide for the basic needs of his family.

"Finding a job in a tense situation was very difficult," he says. "The project supported my livelihood and enhanced my skills. I am glad to meet new people and I feel that I have become a productive member in the community."

Right: Nizar contributes his tiling skills to the rehabilitation work in Syria, supported by the EU and UNDP. *Photo: UNDP.*



Looking forward

In 2004, UNDP and the European Commission signed the “Strategic Partnership Agreement”, a document that outlines the institutions’ shared goals of establishing solid foundations for peace, strengthening recovery from crisis and promoting the fight against poverty. Since then, our partnership has helped millions of people around the world and has expanded to address all of development’s most pressing needs.

Our portfolio has significantly evolved in the Arab States region—indeed, while the results listed in this publication provide a representative picture of the impact the EU and UNDP are having on development there, they represent only a fraction of our total joint initiatives.

But much work remains to be done. To respond successfully to global crises, threats, and challenges, the international community needs an efficient multi-lateral system that is founded on universal rules and values. The Arab States region faces multi-faceted challenges of every type and size, and in the coming years the EU and UNDP will continue our joint effort to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security while keeping the region on a sustainable development path guided by the 2030 Agenda. No person or community should be left behind, and though the future will doubtless hold many unexpected challenges, one thing will remain constant – the EU and UNDP will always help more communities when we work together.



Members of the Bedouin community who will be benefiting from the rehabilitation of Maqam Nabi Musa in Jericho, in the background. *Photo: UNDP/PAPP*



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Resilient nations.*