

# NEWSLETTER

United Nations Development Programme



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## From oneself to impacting the world – Youth Leadership Programme 5

Amman, 14 November, 2019 - The Youth Leadership Programme's (YLP) fifth year culminated with the regional forum held in Amman from 11-14 November 2019, gathering more than 100 participants, including youth, youth-serving organizations and UNDP Focal Points as well as public and private sector partners from across the Arab region.

This year the forum's theme was 'Engagement in full circle', reflecting three areas of engagement: with oneself, with other people, and other actors and institutions. Participants were asked to reflect on questions like *What does it mean to lead oneself? How can youth's work impact others around them? How can youth engage with the decision-making actors and policymakers to make a difference?* Social innovation does not happen in a vacuum, disconnected from the social and political realities. Exploring these linkages and challenges was a key feature of the sessions during the four-day event. The youth participants identified challenges and opportunities to becoming leaders in the Arab region and reflected on the similarities and differences amongst varying national contexts. Together with policymakers, the youth explored different ways of active citizenship exchanged stories of civic action on the ground, and made recommendations on how different actors, such as the media, electoral management bodies, civil society organizations and parliaments can increase youth political and civic participation.

*"YLP can fill the gap between the innovators and decisionmakers and see how we can together collaborate and make the world a better place for us and the generations to come."* Sara Hammoud, YLP5 youth participant, Lebanon

The forum emphasized that the change begins with each of us. To bring social innovations into reality and engaging different stakeholders, skills such as self-awareness, inter-personal communication and emotional intelligence are needed. These kinds of soft skills play a great role in developing social initiatives and businesses, specifically during the first step of the Design Thinking process, empathizing. This stage requires the innovator to understand the real needs of the target group and its broader context when designing an innovative solution to tackle development challenges. The participants explored what do these themes mean for their social innovations and their role as a changemaker.

*"I used to say that the more we understand who we are and how our brains work, the more we control our reactions and make the best decisions in the right moments, and [the self-awareness session] was perfect to boost this idea... Practicing this will contribute to our leadership skills and make one a better changemaker."* Seifeddine Trabelsi, YLP alumni, Tunisia

From using sewage water to create self-healing concrete, to a mobile app that makes tourism



accessible for people with disabilities, to an e-commerce site that support women in marginalized communities, all these examples are only a fraction of the innovative solutions the youth have developed through the YLP5 national workshops.

*“YLP has propelled my project forward in terms of realizing that it is possible. I have seen other youth in similar situations and seeing this has given me the confidence to accomplish my own goals.”* Abdirazaq Sheikh Abdjeahid Hassan, YLP5 youth participant, Somalia

In the Forum, youth pitched their ideas to panels of experts and received immediate feedback. They also presented their projects in an evening exhibition, attended by policymakers, investors, UNDP staff and other potential partners, to see their hard work coming to fruition. You can watch a livestream from the exhibition [here](#).

The forum also served as a space for networking, sharing of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned for youth-serving organizations implementing YLP activities at the national level. Working together to achieve sustainable development in the Arab region, the youth-serving organizations are the key partners of the YLP.

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## Towards Customs Digitalization for Trade Facilitation in the Arab region

*Khartoum, 26 November 2019* –The Regional Workshop for ASYCUDA User Countries in the Arab Region, under the patronage of H.E. Lieutenant General Dr. Bashir El Tahir Bashir, Head of the Sudanese Customs Authority, took place in Khartoum on 26 and 27 November 2019 with the participation of experts on customs automation from eight countries. The workshop focused on digitalization of public services in customs administrations of Arab countries using UNCTADs Automated SYstem for CUstoms Data

(ASYCUDA) and explored pathways to achieve further efficiency towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In his opening remarks, Dr. Bashir El Tahir highlighted that Sudan is well engaged in the simplification of its customs procedures using ASYCUDAWorld. Work has also started towards the design and development of a Sudan National Electronic Single Window, with the participation of all the relevant government agencies to establish a single digital platform in line with provisions of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). He presented his appreciation to UNDP and UNCTAD in hosting the workshop and reiterated the necessity of strengthening regional cooperation.

Mr. Jos De La Haye, Deputy UNDP Resident Representative to Sudan, emphasized the need for prioritizing economic development, green economies, job creation and renewable energy to support Sudan in alleviating poverty. He also updated the participants on UNDP support to Sudan and other Arab countries to sustain inclusive growth and development.

Mr. Erik Willems, Regional Coordinator, ASYCUDA (UNCTAD), highlighted the contribution of the ASYCUDA programme to better performing customs administrations, coordinated border management and overall facilitation of trade services.

The 30+ experts in customs automation representing the Customs Authorities of Comoros, Chad, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine and Sudan engaged in productive discussions on



the benefits that will lie ahead with future ASYCUDAWorld releases. They were also exposed to the experiences of the development of the Jordanian and Lebanese Single Windows. Experiences of development of the Roadmaps of Egypt and Jordan National Single Windows were also presented by UNDP, as an example of the promotion of good governance and administration of cross-border trade in the region.

Participants exchanged views on the latest developments of ASYCUDA and participated in a field visit to the Customs Division at Khartoum Airport.

Representatives of eight Customs Administrations, UNCTAD and UNDP expressed their highest appreciation for the support provided by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to Arab Economic Integration and to the Sudan Customs Authority for hosting the workshop.

## The 6th Knowledge Summit sees the launch of the Future of Knowledge Foresight Report II and the 2019 Global Knowledge Index

*Dubai, 19 November 2019* –The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF) unveiled the 2019 results of the Global Knowledge Index (GKI), along with the launching of the second edition of the world's first Future of Knowledge Foresight Report, an innovative knowledge measurement tool to analyse big data and evaluate the awareness of skills and technology on a global level, during the sixth edition of the Knowledge Summit that took place in Dubai under the title “Knowledge: The Path to Sustainable Development.”

Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, the Summit tackled a wide range of topics, including the role of knowledge in achieving sustainable development goals and addressing global challenges such as poverty, hunger, inequality, and climate change, in addition to promoting innovation to ensure peace and prosperity for all people by 2030.

The Knowledge Summit seeks to offer a global knowledge platform bringing together experts and decision makers from around the world to exchange expertise and best practices and showcase solutions for addressing the challenges facing sustainable development. This year's edition saw more than 5,000 participants and 150 speakers.

“Investing in the creation, dissemination and above all the use of knowledge about development processes is fundamental for achieving sustainable development,” said UNDP Acting Associate Administrator and Regional Director for Arab States Mourad Wahba. “From the Arab States region to the World, the UNDP-MBRF Knowledge Project came to shape a new and innovative vision for the realization of the 2030 Agenda.”

The 2019 edition of the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) was released, expanding its coverage this year to 136 countries. The GKI is a roadmap for the sustainable development of societies. It helps countries formulate forward-thinking strategies to support knowledge and promote it as a main component in building a stronger knowledge economy while ensuring sustainable development.





According to the results of the GKI 2019, Switzerland and Finland retained their number-one and number-two ranks, followed by United States, Singapore, and Luxembourg. The United Arab Emirates retained its position in the world's top 20 countries, advancing seven positions in two years, ranking 18 on the global level and first among all the Arab states, while retaining its second place globally on the level of the economy for the third year.

In addition to the GKI 2019, UNDP and MBRF launched the results of the 2019 edition of the Future of Knowledge Foresight Report. The report presents the latest findings of the 'Future of Knowledge' series, which uses an innovative knowledge measurement tool to analyze big data and evaluate the awareness of skills and technology, expanding the scope this year to cover 40 countries.

This report cautions policymakers that, in the absence of comprehensive re/upskilling and training opportunities, economies will risk stagnation and potential decline in the near future. It assists country leaders in preparing their citizens for the future knowledge landscape and equipping them with adequate skillsets. The continued emergence of new technologies forces both employers and employees to continuously adapt to new systems and processes. By using real-time data to assess future fields of knowledge, political leaders and supporting stakeholders will be able to envision the future needs of their citizens in an objective and efficient manner.

*Visit the [Knowledge4All.org](https://Knowledge4All.org) portal for the full results of the Global Knowledge Index and the Future of Knowledge Foresight Report.*

## Trade in services to boost the economy of Morocco

*Casablanca, 21 October 2019* –The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, through the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy (MITGDE), requested the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with UNCTAD to provide assistance to undertake the review of trade policy (SPR) of three services sectors, including logistics services of pharmaceutical products, distribution services and legal services. The First Consultation with Moroccan stakeholders was held in Casablanca, on October 21 and 22, 2019.



The Director of International Trade Relations (MITGDE), Mme. El Bouabdellaoui Latifa, opened the Consultation by highlighting the importance of trade in services for the economy of Morocco and new developments in the country, and pointed to the need to improve services to support diversified exports, enhance competitiveness and identify new potential in the three services sectors.

Mr. Edward Christow, Resident Representative, UNDP Morocco, highlighted UNDP commitments to promote cooperation towards more inclusive and sustainable development. He emphasized that Morocco is the first Arab country to conduct the review of services policies in these sectors, which helped to consider how new policies could contribute to create more business opportunities for economic actors inside the country and beyond. He stated that to unleash this potential, strong partnerships between the Government and the private sector are necessary.

Mr. Khairedine Ramoul, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD, highlighted the goals of the SPR, namely: 1. to strengthen the contribution of the services sector to the Moroccan economy; 2. to

improve coherence in policymaking, and 3. to strengthen and improve institutional and regulatory frameworks in the services sector.

About 40 participants, including trade in services experts, government officials and representatives of the private sector actively participated to the Consultation and presented the status quo of trade in services in Morocco, the contribution of these sectors to the national economy, including the level of liberalization, challenges and new potential opportunities. The discussions focused on policies, strategies, regulations and institutions in Morocco concerning trade in services. The Consultation equipped participants with knowledge on the organization of SPR work.

The Government of Morocco, representatives of the private sector, UNDP and UNCTAD expressed high appreciation to the support provided by the Government of Sweden, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and for the collaboration on mainstreaming trade in services in trade policies in Morocco. Participants also acknowledge the contribution of UNDP and UNCTAD in making the Consultation a success.

## Strengthening Arab Connectivity through trade

*Casablanca, 24 October 2019* –The Arab Agreement on the liberalization of trade in services entered into force in October 2019 as a new pillar for the Arab Economic Integration. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy of Morocco (MITGDE) organized a two-day *regional workshop on transportation services sector and trade facilitation for Arab Connectivity* aiming to promote the accession of Arab countries to the agreement.



On behalf of Mr. Abdelouahed Rahal, Director General of Commerce of MITGDE of Morocco, Mr. AbdElmajid Nadiri, Head of Division, opened the Regional Workshop by highlighting new progress taking place in the Kingdom and commitments to facilitate Arab and global trade through bilateral and regional agreements. Mr. Jonatan Henriksson, Deputy Ambassador, representing the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Morocco, highlighted the importance of international trade for sustainable development, job creation, and poverty alleviation. He shared experiences of European countries in capitalizing on the potential of trade to support peace and stability.

Dr. Bahgat Abu El Nasr, Director General of the Arab Economic Integration Department of LAS emphasized new achievements in deepening economic integration. Mr. Quang Anh Le, UNDP Chief Technical Advisor echoed the importance of transportation services for the creation of new business opportunities, which in turn fosters women's empowerment by facilitating access to employment and value-added activities.

About 60 participants, including trade and transport experts, representatives of the private sector from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Kingdom of Morocco, Palestine, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Sudan, and Yemen actively discussed thirteen identified topics concerning transportation-related services and trade facilitation. The conference emphasized the important role to be played by businesses and industries and the new potential of applying new information technology such as block chain to this sector. The Regional Workshop adopted a series of conclusions and fourteen recommendations, touching upon public private partnership, women empowerment, trade

and transport facilitation towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These would be presented to trade and transport policy makers of Arab Governments for consideration to overcome challenges in fostering intra-Arab trade growth.

The Government of Morocco, representatives of Arab countries, the League of Arab States and UNDP expressed their high appreciation for the support provided by the Government of Sweden, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and for the collaboration on mainstreaming trade in services. Participants also acknowledged UNDP's contribution in pioneering the initiative in close collaboration with UNCTAD and LAS.

## Youth from the Arab region visualize their concerns on inequalities

*Beirut, October 14, 2019*—Visualize 2030 paved its way through success for the third year in a row!

Organized by the Arab Development Portal (ADP)—an initiative of the Coordination Group of Arab, National and Regional Development Institutions (CG), the Islamic Development Bank and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—the third edition of Visualize 2030 data-camp was held in Beirut from 10 to 14 October.



Visualize 2030, the first regional SDGs data camp, is a unique initiative that encourages the consumption of data by youth from the Arab region in support of advocacy campaigns and innovative thinking around development priorities. It is a space for youth to channel their enthusiasm and to visualize—through data—their desire to live in a better world by 2030.

Throughout four intense days and nights of work, 65 young participants from 14 Arab countries that were carefully selected among the 464 applications received, collected and analyzed data, linking them to the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) and crafted impactful audio/visual products that highlight their concerns and ambitions.

Technical experts worked hand in hand with youth to expand their graphical literacy, enhance their skills to transform raw data into a compelling narrative and meet the goals of the data-camp: communicating and visualizing a data-driven story.

Data is a mere collection of numbers until they are turned into a story. Without adding a narrative to the data, the content can be overwhelming to most of the audience. During the 4-day training camp, the visualizers worked hard to find innovative and out-of-the-box ways to narrate their stories through data. But finding data and knowledge resources on development issues in the Arab region is not easy. They are often outdated, unreliable, and fragmented across multiple international, regional and local sources, so the biggest challenge for the youth was finding a story that is supported with credible and timely data. Youth were accessing data on their countries on the Arab Development Portal. The portal, acting as a knowledge facilitator between data users and producers, offers a dynamic database of more than 7,000 indicators extracted from National Statistical Offices and international organizations and an SDGs Tracking Tool.

The 2019 theme of Visualize 2030 was addressing inequalities in the Arab region, covered by SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.

All youth agreed that inequalities represent a major obstacle to development in general and to youth empowerment in particular. The challenges tackled by the 24 teams covered a broad range of issues - reflecting inequalities in their countries and the region, from gender inequality to discrimination against migrant domestic workers, from inequalities in accessing education and health services to lost opportunities in conflict affected countries, and much more.

Over 100 people including youth, data scientists, experts and journalists attended the closing ceremony, which took place in the historic Beit Beirut, a building destroyed during the Lebanese war and now operating as a cultural center. A panel of experts carefully selected the winners of this data and innovation challenge based on evaluation criteria that include but are not limited to the richness of data, creativity and innovation. During the ceremony the three winning teams were announced, namely:

•**First prize goes to Harf from Yemen**

Shaimaa (23), Mohammed AbdIslam (24) and Aseel Ehab (23) produced a video which tells the story of two young Yemeni students that saw their education, future and dreams destroyed by conflict. Souad was obliged to abandon her studies because she is a girl, while Ahmad's school facility closed to host refugees like 48% of schools in Yemen. The video highlights a frightening figure where it is estimated that if war persists till 2030, global development in Yemen would be delayed by 39 years.

"In the five-day journey, we, *visualizers*, learned how to find, analyse and visualize data. Above all, Visualize 2030 was a life experience compressed into a data-camp, and surely inspired us to take a step further in helping our societies more and more..." - *Harf Team, Yemen*

•**Second prize to Entrepioneers 2030 from Syria**

Entrepioneer 2030 team addressed the effects of war on children in Syria, mainly children with special needs. The future of these children is a major concern for Mohamad Bassel (25), Farah (24) and Omar (27). The video recalls that children account for 25% of casualties and that 64% of children in Syria are in need of assistance.

"The data camp Visualize 2030 was the best experience we have ever had. The Arab Development Portal initiative promotes the use of data by young people in the Arab region, enabling creative thinking and stimulating constructive debate in the region..." - *Entrepioneer Team, Syria*

•**Third prize for Sanad from Sudan**

Duaa (28), Ahmed (29) and Abubaker (30) talked about homeless children in Sudan and the challenges they face for being without identification documents. "These children live in the sewers and they came out of what they call their home during the Sudanese Revolution", explained Duaa. The video reflects the shocking reality of one million children in Sudan, deprived of any access to basic services and without any proof of birth or identity of their parents.

"No words can describe how life changing the camp is. Visualize 2030 created and fostered a space for knowledge and capacities and exchange of ideas amongst us all. I recommend all youth in the region to apply to Visualize 2030." - *Sanad Team, Sudan*

The top three winners were offered cash prizes, but all 24 ambitious and self-driven teams went home with a life-changing experience!

All visual products are a tangible example of youth engagement and commitment to take an active

role and make a difference in the lives of the people of the region. Every year, Visualize 2030 highlights UNDP's commitment to empower youth in their journey towards a better, more sustainable future.

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