

Preparatory Conference for Friends of Yemen in August 2012

The conference has been organized by the Humanitarian Forum - Yemen in cooperation with partners and has taken place on Tuesday and Wednesday 28th - 29th August, 2012 in the capital city of Sana'a. The conference aimed to review the economic challenges which face Yemen in light of the current conditions and to formulate a common vision for development and humanitarian work in the coming period. It aimed to discuss the role of civil society organizations and their influence on the Donors' Conference to be held in Riyadh.

Representatives from local organizations from different governorates and different sectors, international organizations, donors and the government discussed a strategy to determine the priorities and formulate suggestions and recommendations for the conference to be held in Riyadh. The following topics have been discussed:

- Presentation and review of the interim plan submitted by the government to the Donors' Conference. The points of view of civil society organizations will be discussed to ensure that the plan meets the needs of the organizations and of the current situation.
- Promoting the participation of civil society organizations by highlighting their priorities.
- Highlighting the capacity of local organizations in managing and implementing projects.
- Improving cooperation between humanitarian and development actors.
- Informing the media and decision makers about the risks of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.
- Follow-up and evaluation of projects financed by the donors, ensuring transparency and accountability in projects implementation.

Friends of Yemen Conference to be hosted in New York (end of September),

Ahead of the Friends of Yemen meeting held in September in New York, a preparatory conference for civil society organizations has been held under the auspices of His Excellency, Mr. Mohammed Salem Basendwah, the Prime Minister of Yemen.

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Humanitarian Forum Yemen plans to hold a series of Meetings at governorate level with local civil society organisations, looking at the creation of NGO networks nationally. The networks could feed into Humanitarian Forum Yemen and eventually be a link with INGOs and the private sector.

Friends of Yemen London March 2013, Chatham House

Chatham House hosted a panel discussion today in London ahead of the Friends of Yemen meeting to be held tomorrow. The event brought together representatives from the governments of the UK and Yemen, Yemeni civil society and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The panel discussion comprised of two sessions. The first session, chaired by Dr Hany El-Banna, Founder and President of The Humanitarian Forum, discussed the priorities of Yemeni civil society and perspectives of local NGOs. Speakers included Mr Mohamed Murad Mutahar, Founder of Hemmat Shabab Foundation; Mr Rafat Al-Akhali, Co-Founder and Chair of Resonate! Yemen; and Ms. Jamila Ali Rajaa, Founder and Manager of Consult-Yemen.

As part of his opening remarks, Dr El-Banna, said: "Without Yemen, there is no stability in the Middle East.

"According to consultations carried out in Yemen, 86% of local civil society organisations expressed a desire to engage with the government of Yemen to support the transition. The majority of organisations believed that the Friends of Yemen should consult with civil society before their conferences take place. This presents an excellent opportunity for the Friends of Yemen to integrate civil society organisations into their planning and actions."

Other topics that were discussed included the crucial role entrepreneurship plays in the creation of jobs and economic growth in Yemen, and mobilising youth segments in Yemen.

The second session was chaired by Dr Claire Spencer, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House, and highlighted the topics that will be presented in the Friends of Yemen meeting tomorrow. The speakers were His Excellency Dr Abu-Bakr Al-Qirbi, Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr Alistair Burt, Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and His Excellency Mr *Jamal Benomar*, the United Nations' Special Adviser on Yemen.

As part of his presentation, Mr Burt, said: "The humanitarian situation in Yemen does not get enough attention in the UK.

"The UK government strongly supports national dialogue and the integration of women into Yemeni society. The UK will fund a further £70 million over the next two years to provide humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people. We believe that Yemen presents a unique opportunity to demonstrate how we can all work together."

Dr Al-Qirbi said: "We hope that the Friends of Yemen meeting taking place tomorrow will offer concrete solutions to tackle the country's most dire issues. In particular, the Friends of Yemen should take real action to resolve the humanitarian crisis and put an end to poverty and food insecurity. The international community should get involved to address those challenges, especially since the Yemeni crisis poses a threat to the stability of the region as a whole."

The panel discussion, titled 'Friends of Yemen: Aid and Accountability', was organised by Chatham House, The Humanitarian Forum, Yemen Relief & Development Forum, Mercy Corps, Islamic Relief, International Medical Corps, CARE International and Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin).

Chatham House, in partnership with humanitarian agencies in the UK, will hold a panel discussion on 6 March ahead of the Friends of Yemen meeting, which will be held in London on 7 March.

The event will bring together representatives from Yemeni civil society and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to discuss the priorities of Yemeni civil society organisations and strengthen the country's partnership with the international community. Dr Abu-Bakr Al-Qirbi, Yemen's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr Alistair Burt, Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and Mr Jamal Benomar, the United Nations' Special Adviser on Yemen, will be speaking at the event.

The Friends of Yemen, comprised of Arab Gulf countries, Western governments and other donor organisations pledged \$7.9 billion (£5.25 bn) in September 2012 to support the government of Yemen in the transition. In February 2013, a further \$200 million (£133m) was pledged, bringing the total funding pledges to \$8.1 billion (£5.38 bn). However, according to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Yemen, only \$1.76 billion (£1.17 bn) has been delivered.

"Humanitarian needs in Yemen remain dire, and overcoming those needs means also focusing on Yemen's longer term recovery. Both the immediate humanitarian needs and the longer term recovery will hinge on the pledged funds actually being delivered," says Ali Tayeb, Country Director in Yemen at Mercy Corps.

To better understand the local issues facing Yemeni society, The Humanitarian Forum Yemen carried out consultations across Yemen. The consultations highlighted the need for national reconciliation and improved security as the key drivers for change in 2013. Other findings included the need for promoting national dialogue and encouraging full participation of all segments of Yemeni civil society, which will be discussed at the panel discussion and Friends of Yemen meeting.

"We need to ensure that the Yemeni voice is heard in London and across the globe for the benefit of Yemeni people. To accomplish this, we must work together with the international community and local humanitarian partners to meet the needs and hopes of local communities in Yemen," says Dr Hany El Banna, Founder and President of The Humanitarian Forum.

The panel discussion, titled 'Friends of Yemen: Aid and Accountability', is part of an ongoing effort to empower local civil society organisations, and encourage greater collaboration between donor organisations and NGOs from all over the world to effectively manage the delivery of aid to Yemen.