



**UNITED NATIONS**

**COMMON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT**

**REPUBLIC OF YEMEN**

**2011**

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## Abbreviations

Bbls	Barrels
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFC	Chloroflourocarbon
CSO	Central Statistics Organization
DPPR	Development Plan for Poverty Reduction
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (for the United Nations)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measurement
GNI	Gross National Income
GoY	Government of Yemen
GPC	General People’s Congress
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MD	Millennium Declaration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFW	Ministry of Fish Wealth
MOHR	Ministry of Human Rights
MOI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLA	Ministry of Local Administration
MOPHP	Ministry of Public Health and Population
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MOSAL	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
NDPPR	National Development Plan for Poverty Reduction
MSE	Micro Small Enterprises
NDS	National Decentralization Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPRHS	National Population and Reproductive Health Strategy
NRA	National Reform Agenda
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAPFAM	Pan Arab Project for Family Health
PDRY	People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen

PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRDU	Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (University of York)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
R & D	Research and Development
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WNC	Women's National Committee
YR	Yemeni Riyal
YSP	Yemen Socialist Party

## Executive Summary

This Common Country Assessment (CCA) analyses the development and humanitarian situation in Yemen in order to design the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2012 - 2015) as the collective and integrated response of the United Nation (UN) system to national priorities and needs within the framework of the Millennium Declaration (MD) and the associated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other declarations and programmes of action adopted through major UN conventions, conferences and summits.

The 2005 Yemen CCA examined prospects for the country's development through the lens of the MD and outlined a set of priority challenges, which have been addressed in UNDAF (2007 – 2011). These goals and targets retain relevance and this CCA identifies achievements in the areas of education (MDG 2) and combating diseases (MDG 6) amongst others, as well as the ongoing commitment by the Government of Yemen (GoY) to human rights obligations.

The mid-term review of the UNDAF 2010, indicated that most of the barriers to progress have persisted, or at a minimum, that the projected rates of change have been too ambitious. There has been disappointing progress in meeting the MDGs, with respect to poverty and hunger (MDG 1), gender equality (MDG 3), child mortality (MDG 4), maternal health (MDG 5), and environmental sustainability (MDG 7). Despite the GoY's commitment to upholding human rights, there has been weak implementation of human rights protection foreseen in national legislation and their implementation in letter and spirit.

Progress towards national priorities, outlined in the GoY's National Reform Agenda (NRA), has also been slow. These priorities include: achieving sustainable growth rates that would help reduce unemployment and poverty; improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the government body, enhancing transparency and accountability at the level of central and local authorities; broadening the opportunities for the political, economic and social participation of civil society organizations, including enhancing the role of local authorities to achieve rural development; and expanding development cooperation fields with international development partners.<sup>1</sup> Many of these priorities are crucial for achieving the MDGs.

Moreover, the last five years have seen slow progress in overall development as a consequence of interconnected processes and factors, that include social factors like limited educational and livelihood opportunities, especially for women and youth; high levels of social exclusion, deprivation of basic services, malnutrition, increasing drug abuse and spread of HIV and organized crime and trafficking, economic factors like economic and fiscal uncertainty, declining oil revenues, widespread and rising poverty and unemployment; the depletion of natural resources –oil and water , high levels of food insecurity, growing environmental concerns and natural disasters- floods, a fast-growing population with features like large rural share, a youth bulge; high level of conflict resulting from slow socio-economic development, weak governance and credible allegations of bureaucratic red tape resulting in widespread corruption.

The above developmental dimensions are exacerbated by socio-political factors such as: weak governance; deprivation of basic services; protracted violent conflict and high levels of social violence; pervasive gender inequality; population growth and its impact upon resource availability; limited law enforcement; and allegations of widespread corruption. These two sets of dynamics in tandem have led to a range of other contextual issues that include: forced displacement; high levels of food insecurity; malnutrition; increasing drug abuse and HIV; and organized crime and trafficking.

Five structural barriers are brought to the fore: 1) weak governance; 2) deprivation of basic services; 3) centralization of power in the central government/ ministries and the isolation of peripheral

governorates from the mainstream political process, with the comparative exclusion of the south and the far north; 4) weak rule of law; and 5) corruption.

The specific challenge for the international community in Yemen has been to maintain joint focus on development and humanitarian aid continuously, so as not to overlook development needs in times of emergency.

Towards greater clarity, this CCA identifies structural and programmatic barriers to progress. The five structural barriers centre on: state authority and legitimacy; cultural values and traditions; institutional capacities; human capacities; and the state's carrying capacity.

The four programmatic barriers consist of an increasing gap between funding and needs; inaccessibility to quality essential services; disjointed thinking and planning; and failing to contextualize standardized approaches. While there are inevitable overlaps between the structural and the programmatic barriers, it is asserted that the former are more deeply entrenched and unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future, and therefore, demand a longer-term approach and more consolidated efforts. By contrast, the programmatic barriers have emerged recently, and may be addressed more immediately and in a less integrated manner.

This report also reveals a set of opportunities within the Yemeni context that have facilitated and enabled progress so far. They centre on factors of growth within the formal and informal economies, the GoY's commitment to political reform, international coordination and growing awareness, stronger links within the region, new channels of human resources, and vibrant community relations. These opportunities have not only mitigated the impact of the crises, they also form the main catalysts of change and entry points for intervention. In this way, they are not only particularly relevant for the design of the UNDAF (2012 – 2015), but they are intended to be equally relevant to all other national policy frameworks and interventions.

Finally, with focus on the design of the forthcoming UNDAF and the comparative advantage of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), this CCA identifies the following four development priorities:

1. Inclusive and Diversified Economic Growth with a Social dividend;
2. Sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services to accelerate progress towards MDGs;
3. Women and youth empowerment; and
4. Good Governance and social cohesion;

# 1. Socio-Economic and Political Context Analysis

## 1.1. Introduction

Yemen's social, economic and political development is being hindered and the country should be a priority for international engagement based on a range of interconnected processes and factors, that includes social factors like limited opportunities, especially for women and youth in areas like education and livelihood; high levels of social exclusion, deprivation of basic services, malnutrition, increasing drug and Qat abuse, spread of HIV and organized crime and trafficking; and economic factors like economic and fiscal uncertainty, declining oil revenue, widespread and rising poverty and unemployment; the depletion of natural resources –oil and water, high levels of food insecurity, growing environmental concerns and natural disasters- floods, a fast-growing population with features like large rural share, a youth bulge; high level of conflict resulting from slow socio-economic development, weak governance, credible allegations of bureaucratic red tape resulting in widespread corruption.

In understanding the context and the barriers limiting progress, the analysis identifies and examines root and instrumental causes, and the points where needs and causes overlap. Reflecting the particular challenges posed by the violent conflicts, five causal factors are brought to the fore: weak governance; deprivation of basic services; centralization of power in the central provinces and the isolation of peripheral governorates from the mainstream political process, with the comparative exclusion of the south; weak rule of law; and corruption. These factors are exacerbated by an overall lack of all-inclusive participation in wider social, political and economic processes, particularly among women, youth and children.

## 1.2. Demographic Patterns

Yemen has a high level of population estimated at 23,154,000 in 2010, growing at a high rate of 3 per cent. It is estimated that 45.43 per cent of the total population is below the age of 15, which puts a considerable strain upon the country's limited basic resources such as health infrastructure, water and schools. While at the same time 23.17 per cent of the population is youth (15 and 24 years) a majority of which are unemployed due to limited economic activity. Around 28.79 per cent of the population lives in 3,642 urban centers compared to 72.21 per cent of the population in rural with more than 130 thousands villages and localities making it difficult to provide basic services.

Even though the GoY has worked to reduce the rate of population growth through educational and public information programs, the Ministry of Health and Population and National Population Council anticipates that the population will triple by 2035, peaking over 60 million if no direct interventions are carried out to slow down population growth in the near future. The large number of children in the family results from long-held traditional beliefs like strength is measured by the number of family members, strengthened because of factors like high infant and child mortality. Large number of pregnancies, births and children affect women disproportionately, as high fertility rates not only affect women's health, but also hinder their meaningful involvement in development, particularly in economic, social and political issues, as child bearing occupies their entire time. The problem gets aggravated since most women are married at an early age, which forces them out of education, associated social and economic independence, and also puts them at risk of health complications further limiting their access to resources.

## 1.3. Economic and Fiscal Situation

Oil exports account for a large share of Yemen's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which makes the economy highly sensitive to oil production, available exportable surplus and fluctuations in global oil

prices.<sup>1</sup> Despite some positive macro-level indicators, such as an increasing GDP growth rate and recently rebounding oil prices, Yemen's overall fiscal and monetary situation remains highly uncertain. The weak fiscal and monetary situation is further aggravated by gaps that persist between forecasts and achievements, which result from delays in implementing key projects like the one for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), built with Korean assistance and primarily for export. Moreover, the economy's dependence on oil entails that adopting the growth of GDP could present a distorted picture of economic success. Overall, growth of GDP has moderated in recent years, having peaked in 2008, when net oil income reached record highs of USD 7.5 billion, compared to its 2007 value of USD 4.8 billion and 2006 value of USD 5.4 billion. Due to the declining revenues, total public expenditure (revenue, capital and net lending) as a percentage of GDP decreased from 35.8 per cent in 2008, to 30.38 per cent in 2009, and was projected at 30.84 per cent in 2010.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, GDP growth was 4.68 per cent in 2007, 4.51 per cent in 2008, 4.70 per cent in 2009<sup>3</sup> and is projected to reach around 8 per cent in 2010.<sup>4</sup>

Since 2008, macroeconomic challenges have been compounded by the impact of the global financial and fuel crises. Oil production fell from 417,500 barrels (bbls) per day in 2005 to 320,600 in 2008,<sup>5</sup> and fell further to 274,000 bbls per day in the first quarter of 2010.<sup>6</sup> Declining production occurred concurrent with the global decline in oil prices due to decreased demand, declining oil reserves in maturing oil fields, and a slowdown in exploration. Government's net oil receipts dropped sharply causing macroeconomic imbalances and budgetary shortfalls. Government oil receipts in 2009 declined by 50 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

In juxtaposing macro and micro economic performances, it is important to emphasize that the increase in GDP does not contribute to a decline in poverty ratios (see Section 1.4. below). This demonstrates that the intended benefits of the liberal economic policy model pursued since the 1990s, with its emphasis on inward investment and macro-economic stability has yet to trickle down to the poor. For example, large-scale private fishing enterprises funded by foreign capital have experienced problems of hiring of non-Yemeni labourers, tax evasion, and low levels of contribution to government income that render the investment socially sub-optimal in developmental terms.<sup>8</sup> In particular, much of these enterprises bypass the rural areas where the majority of the population is located. Effective agricultural cooperatives are something of the past and much of the agriculture extension services can hardly support the salaries of its employees. Subsistence agriculture remains the norm and is highly vulnerable to climate change, floods, and droughts. Furthermore, given the nature of the recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic reform package and the anticipated increase in privatization of some of the state's current functions, job losses in the public sector stand to increase alongside heightened competition for existing jobs at the expense of the poor.

The combined impact of global crises in 'food, fuel, and financial' (3Fs), furthered hampered development in Yemen and pinpoints the interdependent nature of needs. Additionally, the fall in oil revenues led to declining government revenues and household incomes through a corresponding reduction in income levels and, therefore, an inability to purchase food staples and an intensification of food insecurity, which is exacerbated by the country's high dependency on food imports,

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<sup>1</sup> Breisinger *et al*, 2010. *Impacts of the Triple Global Crisis on Growth and Poverty in Yemen*.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Yemen, Ministry of Finance, *Bulletin on Government Finance Statistics*, Issue No. 40, Second Quarter, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), 2009. *The Mid Term Review of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Socio-Economic Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2006-2010*.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, 2010b. *Yemen Quarterly Economic Review*.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, page 8.

<sup>8</sup> Research Interview, Minister of Fish Wealth, 16 August 2010.

rendering Yemenis highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices. During the peak of the global food crisis in 2007 - 2008, the price of wheat—the main food staple, 90 per cent of which is imported— increased by 88 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Prices have marginally fallen since, but remain high, creating a significant burden on family budgets. It has been observed that the 3Fs crisis has “hit the poor doubly hard, especially rural households”.<sup>10</sup>

In the short-term, Yemen’s economic performance will remain dependent on the hydrocarbon sector, while its medium-term economic prospects will depend on a diversified economic base.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, the GoY aims to create a fast-track initiative for oil and gas exportation, which highlights the government's determination to continue to build upon this sector. Exploration and production of LNG from October 2009, the main factor behind a 51 per cent increase in hydrocarbon activity in 2010, is a significant development. The coming on-stream of LNG is forecast to have the impact of reducing Yemen’s current account deficit from 10.7 per cent of GDP in 2009.<sup>12</sup> Based on projected oil reserves, Yemen will continue to experience a decline in oil production and exportable surplus, and many commentators predict a cessation of oil-related economic activity by 2017. Even if LNG production continues as planned, it will only compensate partially for the loss of oil revenues.

In 2005, the GoY began to reduce its universal subsidies on a gradual basis in order to free up resources for poverty reduction programmes. In 2010, subsidies for oil derivatives were reduced, leading to increased prices for diesel, Liquefied Petroleum Gas, kerosene, and gasoline; however, prices remain approximately 50 per cent below international market rates and energy subsidies constituted 21.54 per cent of the public expenditure and 6.54 per cent of GDP.<sup>13</sup> In 2009, the GoY aimed to reduce energy subsidies without raising prices for more efficient energy utilization processes, a strategy through which the government will strive to promote efficient energy utilization, cutting the overall cost of energy production and use, while lowering the rate of subsidies for fuel consumption. The last round of price increase has been received without significant protests in the country. The government should provide compensatory relief to the vulnerable and poor sections who end up paying higher costs on account of the fuel price increases.

Despite substantial increases in budgetary allocations to health and education in nominal terms, their share in GDP remained unchanged over the period since 2000, and their share in total government expenditure actually declined. While combined expenditures on health and education accounted for 22 per cent of public expenditures in 2000, this fell to 19.48 per cent in 2009, with proportionately greater reduction in health than education.<sup>14</sup> The reduction in public expenditures on health and education has serious implications for the most vulnerable and represents a serious constraint to progress toward the MDGs in a country that is already struggling to meet these goals and targets.

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<sup>9</sup> World Food Programme (WFP), 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*, page 16.

<sup>10</sup> Breisinger *et al*, 2010. *Impacts of the Triple Global Crisis on Growth and Poverty in Yemen*, page 18.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank 2010b. *Yemen Quarterly Economic Review*, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, page 9.

<sup>13</sup> Based on calculations using data from Government of Yemen, Ministry of Finance, *Bulletin on Government Finance Statistics*, Issue No. 40, Second Quarter, 2010, page 72.

<sup>14</sup> Based on calculations using data from the Government of Yemen, Ministry of Finance, *Bulletin on Government Finance Statistics*, Issue No. 40, Second Quarter, 2010, page 83.

**Table 1. Yemen Main Economic Indicators<sup>15</sup>**

	2008	2009	2010
<b>Real GDP growth (in %):</b>	3.6	3.9	8
<i>1 – Growth of hydrocarbon sector</i>	-8.1	1.6	51
<i>2 – Growth of non-hydrocarbon sector</i>	4.8	4.1	4.4
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-4.6	-10.7	-4.9
Fiscal balance (% of GDP)	-3.2	-10.2	-5.4
Inflation (%)	19	3.7	9.8

The Government has attempted to create jobs and alleviate poverty through promoting Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the government's Development Plan for Poverty Reduction,<sup>16</sup> however, implementation, actual support, and promotion through "policy and practical improvements in various key aspects of the overall economic environment remain quite limited." Government efforts with a focus on poverty reduction ignore the enabling/ structural conditions such as the "legislative and administrative environment confronting SMEs."<sup>17</sup>

Medium term economic strategy, in addition to fiscal consolidation and broad structural reform, will require sector specific promotion and investment. Sectors with potential to drive a diversification strategy capable of creating a strong economic portfolio have been identified by GoY to include agriculture, fisheries, industry, and tourism.<sup>18</sup> Agriculture and fisheries (which account for 9.7 and 0.8 per cent of GDP respectively) employ over 50 per cent of the workforce. However, expansion of sub-sectors such as animal and plant husbandry has great potential for further job, income and wealth creation and poverty reduction in rural areas,<sup>19</sup> as has the potential for investing in food processing, and MSEs. In 2009, the GoY became committed to improving Yemen's global image and reputation in order to attract foreign investment and the tourist trade. In *Doing Business*, the World Bank noted that Yemen has made substantial efforts this year to improve the investment climate, though much work remains to be done.<sup>20</sup>

#### 1.4. Poverty, Social Exclusion and Unemployment

The trend of a fast-growing population and a youth bulge has been compounded by low growth of per capita incomes, a shrinking resource base that includes fertile land, water and oil, with scarcity exacerbated by climate change, *qat* production, and violent conflict. All of these factors have placed enormous pressure on Yemen's social and economic systems and contributed to increasing poverty.

Groups that are disproportionately affected by poverty include women, youth and children, small farmers, sharecroppers, landless people, nomadic herders and artisanal fishers. Poverty is more common in the highlands, the semi-desert in the east and north-east, in the sand dune strip and inter-wadi areas of the central Tihama plain, and in fishing villages on the Arabian Sea. Remote and marginalized areas have been neglected for a long time and have not received adequate budget resources and investment, which has contributed to their population slipping into poverty further. Most of the rural poor are concentrated in the six governorates of Sana'a, Taiz, Ibb, Hodeida,

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, 2010b. *Yemen Quarterly Economic Review*.

<sup>16</sup> International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2009. *National Employment Agenda for Yemen – Towards an employment Strategy Framework*.

<sup>17</sup> ILO with the Republic of Yemen, 2008. *Decent Work Country Program 2008-2010*, page 6.

<sup>18</sup> Research Interview, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 15 August 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence from FAO, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank, 2009. *Doing Business*.

Dhamar and Hadhramout, which also have the largest share of the total population.<sup>21</sup> Migrant communities, due to issues of protracted stay and legal status, are also at high risk of danger as a result of their limited access to lawful employment opportunities and essential services (like healthcare, education and social services).

Social exclusion is interwoven with poverty, as illustrated by the two main vulnerable groups: women and youth. Women continue to be excluded from economic, social and political systems as a result of various cultural, traditional and political norms. Accepted perception of women as vulnerable sections that must be protected within the family have limited women's participation in all walks of life, while also tying them down to a duty to service the family from age 7 onwards (a duty that often overrides schooling and other needs for young girls).<sup>22</sup> Yemen is a very traditional society with a strong tribal system that often takes precedence over government control, especially in areas that are difficult to access for state institutions. Legislation that is developed in the centre (capital Sana'a) for the protection of women is often unsupported by strong political will and is rarely enforced or considered enforceable in the peripheries (Governorates and tribal areas, including areas close to the capital Sana'a). Such protective mechanisms, which are usually funded by international donors, are also sometimes seen as attempts of imposition of foreign cultures upon Yemen's moral fabric. They are, therefore, frequently rejected by communities on the ground, and are discredited by both men and women. Many of these mechanisms are also inadequate, as a lack of awareness at an institutional level of the specific protection needs of women has resulted in poor policies that do not adequately reflect those needs. Gender Based Violence (GBV), for example, continues to be overlooked by protection mechanisms, since the issue is not widely recognized to its full significance by policy makers and is often left to the discretion of family units.<sup>23</sup>

The neglect of women is reflected in the *World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index*, where Yemen has consistently ranked last in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 despite the addition of new countries to the index.<sup>24</sup> Table 3 below demonstrates a decline in all but one human right indicator for women (economic rights and equal opportunity) from 2004 to 2009. The situation is exacerbated by the steady increase in the population, the result of high rates of fertility, as detailed in the analysis presented in the analysis of health in Chapter Two. As competition for resources in Yemen has increased, women have fallen behind in terms of resource distribution, healthcare, education and social protection. They are exploited for free labour and are increasingly victimized in society through pervasive inequality, domestic abuse and social violence.

**Table 2. Ratings of Women's Rights in Yemen (2004 – 2009)<sup>25</sup>**

<b>Human Right</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>
Non-discrimination and Access to Justice	1.9	1.9
Autonomy, Security, and Freedom of the Person	2.0	1.9
Economic Rights and Equal Opportunity	1.8	1.9
Political Rights and Civic Voice	2.1	2.0
Social and Cultural Rights	2.1	2.0

<sup>21</sup> International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), 2010. *Rural Poverty in Yemen*.

<sup>22</sup> Alsharki, Raufa Hassan, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2008. *Final Evaluation on the GBV project: period 2008-2010, Yemen*.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> The index measures rates of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, political empowerment, among other factors.

<sup>25</sup> Country ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the lowest and 5 the highest level of freedom women have to exercise their rights (Freedom House, 2010. *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*).

In terms of building the capabilities of women, the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) measures achievements in the same dimensions of the HDI and using the same indicators, but the GDI also captures inequalities in achievement between women and men. Yemen's GDI value, for 2008, is 0.853 and should be compared to its HDI value of 0.439<sup>26</sup>. Its GDI value is 194 per cent of its HDI value.<sup>27</sup> Out of the 138 countries with both HDI and GDI values, 132 countries have a better ratio than Yemen's.<sup>28</sup>

The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women, the percentage of female legislators, senior officials and managers, female professional and technical workers, and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. Differing from the GDI, the GEM exposes inequality in opportunities in selected areas. When comparing GEM rates, Yemen with a value of 0.135, ranks last in a list of 109 countries.

Women are vastly underrepresented in the judiciary; estimates range from a low of 4 to a high of 32 total women judges, compared with 1,200 male judges, and more than 7 per cent of the licensed attorneys.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the attempts by some tribal sheikhs to 'clean up' the perceived deterioration in values in Yemen, particularly in relation to the emancipation of women through the *Muttawah* (Vice and Virtue Police) form a significant risk in terms of protecting progress to date and towards future achievements in gender, even though they have not yet been successful in establishing such a police force.<sup>30</sup>

Social exclusion of youth is another significant problem, with high levels of youth unemployment, which result from and act as obstacles to economic development. Low levels of engagement of youth also acts as an obstacle to conflict resolution. Existence of large numbers of un-engaged and jobless young people, foster grievances and intensifies the potential of conflict. Although it should be qualified that no study in Yemen has established causality in the relation between unemployment and poverty,<sup>31</sup> or between conflict and unemployment, persistent unemployment deskills youth, lowers expectations, and depletes the social cohesion vital to a long-term and sustainable project of national development. Furthermore, youth disengagement in society leaves them vulnerable to radicalization and mobilization in militia type activities, as revealed later in the analysis of the internal conflicts.

Beyond young people and women, other socially excluded groups include: the *Akhdam* ('the marginalized'), refugees, the disabled and people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/ AIDS). While the majority of the population in Yemen is comprised of ethnic Arabs, minority groups include Afro-Arabs, South Asians and Europeans. Most Yemenis are practicing Muslims, but there are divisions between Shaf'i Sunnis and Zaydi Shias, in addition to members of very small minority faiths that include Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism, which together comprise less than 4000 Yemenis.

At the same time, there have been important changes in the composition and relations among populations at the local level that have had a disintegrative effect. This includes changes among the main tribes as a result of violent conflict detailed below. Linked to this, tensions between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and host communities have become a recent and worrying trend.

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<sup>26</sup> UNDP, 2010, *Human Development Report 2010*, page 158.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The greater the gender disparity in basic human development, the lower is a country's GDI relative to its HDI.

<sup>29</sup> El-Mikawy, 2005. *Mission Report for UNDP: Judicial Reform in Yemen*, pages 8-9.

<sup>30</sup> Khalil and MacDonald, 2009. *Report of the Assessment towards 'a whole of EU' Approach to State Building in Yemen*, page 24.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank, 2007. *Poverty Assessment in Yemen*, page 44.

Social structures and cultural norms, often based on or held together by tradition and religion, have generated socio-political forms of exclusion. Accordingly, there are two main dimensions to exclusion: inter-group and intra-group. In the inter-group, some groups are excluded from formal (state-based) processes of decision-making, economic opportunities and participation in public life, as a consequence of social or tribal formations. For the latter, individuals and sub-groups are excluded within their tribal group, for instance, because their status as a private individual, especially for women and young people, is not recognized or accepted.

Unemployment rates have increased as labour force has grown more rapidly than the rate of job creation. The high rates of unemployment become even more profound when considering the variations across groups. Urban unemployment is estimated to be much higher than in rural areas.<sup>32</sup> Educated Yemenis have the highest unemployment rates: 44 per cent among those with intermediate level of education and 54 per cent among university graduates.<sup>33</sup> Unemployment amongst youth is roughly twice the national average. Despite low participation of women in the labour market unemployment among female participants in the workforce was estimated to be 40.2 per cent in 2009.<sup>34</sup>

The type of economic activity is also revealing, with an estimate that the informal sector, understood by ILO<sup>35</sup> to mean 'outside of formal regulatory provisions', accounted for 43 per cent of economic activity in 2009.<sup>36</sup> Informal economic activity points to the diverse coping strategies of large sections of the population, as well as the problem of underemployment and the attendant lack of skilled training and social protection. The labour market suffers from a lack of accessible and reliable information, hampering both job seekers and employers 'identification of institutions supplying skilled labour'.<sup>37</sup>

To meet the demands of the large annual number of new entrants into the labour force, a comprehensive and radical program of enterprise creation is necessary.<sup>38</sup> The GoY is now actively seeking to develop non-oil sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, industries and tourism. However, the challenge remains to ensure that those sectors provide local employment and directly decrease poverty, particularly when considering the lack of government capacity and institutional weaknesses (including corruption and low tax base) to guarantee that benefits are shared. Such a strategy is necessary to respond to the current lack of pro-poor policies as well as investment that promotes pro-poor employment and job creation.

### 1.5. Natural Hazards and Depletion of Natural Resources

When assessing Yemen's natural resources, a recurring theme emerges: scarcity. Yemen possesses limited natural resources beyond oil and natural gas reserves, which are dwindling. There are some minor mineral and precious metals deposits in the country, whose potential has not yet been fully exploited. While a large majority of Yemen's mostly rural population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, less than 3 per cent of the country is arable land and that a small fraction is being rapidly depleted due to over-use, land erosion, and human expansion, which place additional pressure on already impoverished and vulnerable communities. The effects of global warming threaten Yemen's coastal and marine resources. The fishing industry is considered to be highly vulnerable to over-fishing, rising water temperatures, coral bleaching, agricultural run-off, and amplified coastal

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<sup>32</sup> UNICEF, 2010. *Child Poverty and Disparity Study*.

<sup>33</sup> ILO with the Republic of Yemen, 2008. *Decent Work Country Program 2008-2010*, page 5.

<sup>34</sup> Women's National Commission (WNC), 2008. *Report on the Status of Women*.

<sup>35</sup> ILO, 2008. *Decent Work Country Programme*.

<sup>36</sup> MOPIC, 2009. *The Mid Term Review of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Socio-Economic Development Plan for Poverty Reduction 2006-2010*.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, 2010. *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Variability on the Water and Agriculture Sectors, and the Policy Implications*, page 4.

<sup>38</sup> ILO, 2008. *Decent Work Country Programme*.

storms.<sup>39</sup> Thus, increased resource scarcity—particularly among oil, water, and fertile land—is an important dynamic that impacts Yemen’s economic, ecological, and social systems and threatens both national and human security.

Whilst the country has a low natural hazard threat, Yemen’s exposure to the effects of human-induced environmental hazards and climate change is very high. Much of the country’s vulnerability is due to water, or rather, the lack of it. Yemen has always been an extremely dry country with the lowest water availability in the world. During the past decades, water scarcity has become the country’s largest environmental concern because of the increased demand on its already-limited fresh water supply due largely to population growth and urban migration. In addition, recent extended drought has increased demand for the mining of aquifers and water security experts have predicted that, by 2017, Sana’a will be the world’s first capital city to exhaust its supply of economically viable water. The primary cause of water depletion seems to be the lack of a proper country-wide water management: traditional water harvesting techniques continue to dominate, leading to a lack of utilisation of rain water (an estimated 80 per cent of which is lost to seas and deserts). A lack of recognition of alternative water collection and utilisation techniques means that water extraction has become unsustainable in Yemen. However, the GoY in 2009 and 2010 is committed to finding solutions to the country’s water problems in accordance with national water plans. This will involve a modernization of water extraction legislation, and has already emerged in 2010 as an investigation into the cost and logistics of sea-water desalination projects. Yemen’s first desalination project was launched in July 2010.<sup>40</sup>

Continued unsustainable drilling of the underground aquifers, overproduction of *qat*—a crop, which consumes 40 per cent of the country’s irrigated water—and inefficient irrigation techniques are the human factors that deplete Yemen’s already limited water sources. These factors also limit the maximization of scarce water resources that are also dwindling due to structural aspects, such as population growth and climate change. Experts have recommended that the government implement a plan to harvest rainwater throughout the country in an effort to augment the rapidly diminishing water supply, although, to date, little has been done to implement the proposed measures which would ensure that 70 per cent of the capital’s rainwater would be collected by 2010 and 100 per cent by 2020. The prospect of a severe water crisis threatens to have serious consequences on many activities and sectors, including agriculture, industry, livelihoods, health, and sanitation.

Water also poses a threat to Yemen in the form of torrential rains leading to flash floods and mudslides. Floods in 2008 required the evacuation of 20,000 people, and Yemen was furthermore hit by the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 which affected Socotra and the Al Mahra coastline. In May 2010, Sana’a experienced record rainfall which caused the worst flooding in a decade, killing at least seven people, whilst additional flooding in western Yemen in August and September 2010 killed 56 people. Expected climate trends due to global warming indicate that, in the future, there is a high probability that the country will experience an increase in water-related weather events and natural disasters, such as drought, floods, and landslides. The country is also extremely vulnerable to rising sea levels associated with climate change, with Aden ranked the 6<sup>th</sup> most at-risk city in the world and several of the country’s small islands already in danger of submersion. In order to mitigate the threats posed to the population by these types of frequent natural disasters and threats due to climate change, emergency and disaster-preparedness should be integrated into UN and GoY programs as a cross-cutting theme. Some such programs, like the Socotra Conservation and Development Project, have already been initiated. Recent years have shown in particular Yemen’s dedication to the preservation of its biodiversity<sup>41</sup> through the expansion of protected areas.

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<sup>39</sup> Research Interview, Minister of Fish Wealth, 16 August 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Research Interview, Ministry of Water and Environment, 17 August 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Yemen hosts 2,500 documented species of plants, 85 species of mammals, 370 species of birds (acting as an important migratory route for them) and more than 115 species of amphibians and reptiles.

## 1.6. Elections and Weak Governance

Notwithstanding regular parliamentary and presidential elections since 1993, the democratization process has struggled to develop a culture of political participation beyond periodic elections. The ruling party single-handedly retains control over policy and state resources. Its dominance over political processes is strengthened by a strong system of patronage. There is a fear that excessive concern with anti-terrorist operations might lead to worsening of democratic freedom, including a vibrant press and civil society.

Indeed, weak governance may be the single most important driver of conflict and marginalization in Yemen today, fuelling a sense of exclusion and political and socio-economic marginalization. This sense of deprivation has contributed to the escalation of the conflict in both the north and the south. Although the conflict started from a narrow religious platform of Zaidi anger over growing Wahhabi influence and was triggered by rejection of the government's cooperation with the US in the 'war on terror', the central government's response catalyzed growing frustration at the socio-economic deprivation of the northern and southern regions. The incursion by security forces into traditionally autonomous tribal territory and the increasingly violent military campaigns against the Houthis has also deepened the sense of a centre-periphery divide, increasing resistance to the government and fuelling a sense of injustice at the destruction and loss of human life.

Efforts to reform governance in alignment with the principles of good governance are ongoing but exhibit more intent than action. GoY officials report that they are aligned, in principle, with the strategic documents on national reform and development, but that their work faces barriers in the implementation stages.

## 1.7. Deprivation of Basic Services

In recent years, there is growing disillusion with the failure to provide basic services and development investment, with the exception of the capital and a few resource rich districts. Basic education has made progress in a number of areas such as female enrolment levels, but continues to be characterised by significant shortfalls in service provision. Uneven access to education across governorates, high dropout rates, gender imbalances, low literacy levels, shortage of critical infrastructure, shortages of schools and teachers, and persistent child labour are all contextual factors that indicate a need to support the educational system.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, higher education is under-developed and requires massive investment to generate a system capable of producing skilled workers that can drive Yemen's economic growth and transformation. Other areas of service provision are also lacking, with 52 per cent of the population in 2008 still without access to an improved water source according to the MDG Report, 2010; countless children remaining without birth certificates and other records that are essential to access basic services. Many governorates remain virtually inaccessible for governmental and non-governmental organisations for the provision of basic services such as sewage.

Despite some progress on efforts to improve the health system including the expansion of health coverage, services remain uneven, with some conflict-affected areas having very limited health infrastructure and no access to humanitarian relief for most acute health problems. Overall, quality health services are critically absent. High levels of child and maternal mortality and poor health indicators are driven by hunger, poverty, unemployment, and the failure of other services including water and sanitation facilities. Primary reproductive healthcare has been identified as a significant gap in public spending, and governmental reluctance to invest in maternal health has been linked to pervasive levels of gender inequality in Yemen. Furthermore, many areas affected by man-made and natural disasters are in need of serious reconstruction services, aimed at rebuilding roads, homes

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<sup>42</sup> These factors are analyzed further in Chapter 2.

and public buildings, compounding Yemen’s multiple displacement crises and increasing general feeling of dissatisfaction among communities.

Failure of provision of basic services and their uneven distribution have compounded the grievances described above and constitute a major contributing factor to the conflicts described in the next section.

### 1.8. Internal Conflicts

Due to the combination of lack of access and low levels of contact with conflict-affected areas, much understanding of conflict dynamics, actors, and structures in Yemen is based on impressions and perceptions. There is, therefore, an urgent need for an impartial and proper assessment of conflict in the country that can suggest strategic responses to the requirements of conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction.

According to the *Peace Index*, one of the best sources of comparable quantitative data on peace, security and stability, Yemen has slid 34 places since 2007, now ranking 129<sup>th</sup> out of 149 countries (see Table 5 below). The *Peace Index* measures 23 primary indicators such as number of deaths from conflict, political instability, the level of violent crime, and the strength of internal security and its analysis of Yemen paints a picture of a country with a relatively low level of annual conflict-related deaths, but a high potential for terrorist acts and a high likelihood of violent demonstrations.

**Table 3. Peace Index Rankings 2010**

Country	Rank
New Zealand	1st
Yemen	129th
Israel	144th
Afghanistan	147th
Somalia	148th
Iraq	149th

Yemen displays many of the characteristics of a classic protracted social conflict where political authority is monopolized by dominant groups or a coalition of hegemonic groups that control the military and bureaucracy and use the state to maximize their interest at the expense of others. State building strategies that might reconcile the demands of ordinary people for basic services, employment and economic opportunities have been largely neglected in favor of short-term patronage which has resulted in irregular service delivery throughout the country, a dynamic reflected in Yemen’s high score of 8.6 for uneven development in the *Failed States Index 2010* and a growing crisis of legitimacy for the government. In both the north-west and the south, the state’s failure to meet the needs of its constituents has resulted in their disengagement; increasing reliance on past forms of governance, as witnessed in the south by the reappearance of the national flag of the People’s Democratic Republic; the strengthening of tribal leadership in the north; and - critically - the emergence or re-emergence of separatist agendas.

The country’s uneven development, while being a cause for conflict, is also affected by it. As the current UNDAF planning process began, Yemen faced a range of security threats which have diverted government attention and resources from critical development priorities. These threats have displaced hundreds of thousands of people and rendered a widening area of the country insecure and increasingly inaccessible for development and humanitarian actors. The following factors, should they escalate or overlap, have the potential to pose an existential threat to the state:

- A Zaydi-Shia rebellion in the northeast corner of the country remained relatively localized since it began in 2004, but escalated in its impact and viciousness through six phases until the current ceasefire was announced in February 2010.
- A resurgent Al-Qaeda, largely defeated in Yemen by 2003, re-established itself in 2009 as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and escalated attacks throughout the country in 2010 to a level that is classified as 'active insurgency'.
- A secessionist movement in the south of the country resurfaced in 2007 as a largely peaceful public protest over pension payments and political and socio-economic marginalization, but became increasingly violent during 2010 in response to a harsh military crackdown and is now threatening to spill over into a full-scale insurgency.<sup>43</sup>
- The decision of the opposition parties like JMP to boycott the proposed elections.

The victims of these conflicts are not limited to those immediately involved in the fighting, but, like every violent conflict, extend to the civilian populations in the conflict area. The conduct of both the state security forces and the Houthi rebels towards the civilian population and those deemed *hors de combat* has become a matter of growing concern following a vicious sixth phase of fighting. Reports of indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling of civilian populations, widespread destruction of life and property, summary executions, arbitrary detention of civilians suspected of being sympathetic towards the rebels, hostage taking, and denial of access to civilians affected by the conflict are all tactics which both violate International Humanitarian Law and are likely to fuel a seventh round of fighting. *Human Rights Watch* reported that there had been no perceptible efforts to monitor and press for the parties' adherence to International Humanitarian Law and to urge more effective protection of the civilian population.<sup>44</sup> In September 2009, the UN called for a government investigation into airstrikes that had reportedly killed over 80 civilians, many of whom were women and children.<sup>45</sup>

The increased level of conflict within the country can be linked to several structural factors including widespread social and economic deprivation, rapid population growth, a declining resource base, and shrinking political capacity linked to a legacy of weak participatory institutions and a hierarchical tradition of imposed bureaucratic rule from the northern centre. Conflict and threats to internal security are also exacerbating a series of structural and economic challenges, including a fiscal crisis caused by declining oil reserves and revenues, a minimal tax base, a crippling regime of subsidies, widespread poverty, water shortages and a rapidly growing population. Conditions have been further aggravated by the global financial crisis and sharp increases in the price of wheat, and by the negative effects of climate change on weather patterns in the country. Public revenue, which could be used to alleviate the impact of the economic downturn and to provide quality basic services to the poorest and most vulnerable, has been diverted to fund the rising cost of a major counterinsurgency operation against the Houthis and security operations in the south.

Each of these factors has increased overall levels of violence in Yemeni society, including social violence. In areas where direct conflict is ongoing, women and children are at particularly high risk of harm, with gender-based violence emerging as a key weapon of war. Women and children from displaced communities are not safe from harm once they have fled the conflict-affected area, as high levels of stress, lack of stability, inadequate protection mechanisms and the break-up of family units place these vulnerable groups at high risk of abuse both within the family and from outside. However, conflict in Yemen has impact on all members of communities, particularly because of displacement due, in part, to the large-scale destruction of property as was seen in northern Yemen, particularly after the involvement of Saudi Arabia in the latest round of conflict. This consequence of

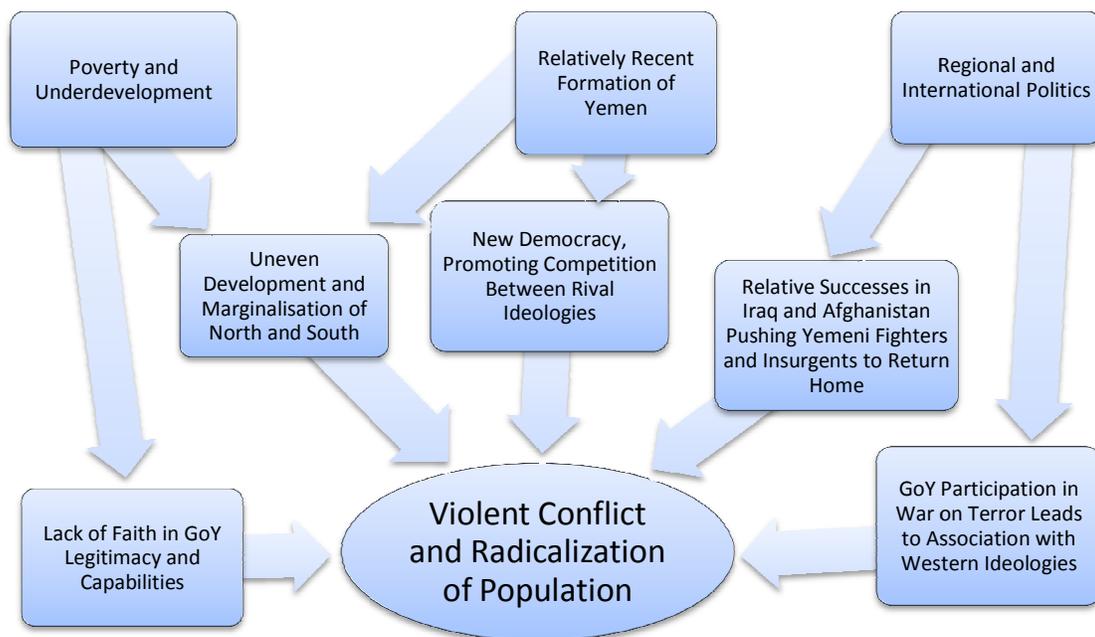
<sup>43</sup> Please see Annex 2 for further information on each of these violent conflicts.

<sup>44</sup> Wilcke and Bouckaert. 2010. *The Problems of Partnering with Yemen*, 'Foreign Policy in Focus'.

<sup>45</sup> Human Rights Watch, 2010. 'Yemen: Investigate Laws-of-War Violations'.

the conflict rendered many people in the region homeless, in need of protection, and exposed them to physical and psychological effects of prolonged displacement.

Resultantly, more than half a million of people have been affected - directly or indirectly - by these conflicts and their impact on security, access and confidence in an already depressed investment and tourism environment, and a reduced governmental ability to invest in social services due to the redirecting of funds for defence spending. Conflict is also linked to environmental scarcity and shortage of water as a cause for internal instability has increased with a growing risk of conflict between farmers and nomadic tribes over declining water resources. Furthermore, conflict has triggered an immense humanitarian crisis, requiring the diversion of resources and attention away from long-term developmental problems.



**Figure 1. Root and Proximate Causes of Violent Conflict**

### 1.9. Forced Displacement

In Sa'ada, displacement, destruction and damage to homes, property, health facilities, productive assets and religious sites associated with the Zaydis, including mosques and Hashemite tombs, has increased with each phase of the conflict. Initially concentrated in Sa'ada and the area associated with the Houthi family and their supporters, fighting spread to the adjoining governorates of Amran, Al-Jawf, Hajja and even extended to Sana'a. In June 2010, OCHA estimated that 342,019 people were displaced by the fighting, and that in the Sa'ada governorate alone, there were an estimated 110,000 IDPs, majority of whom were living in host communities, increasing the burden on a local population already suffering from lack of access to basic services and emergency relief assistance. Suffering of the displaced population was compounded by harsh weather in the northern mountainous regions where extreme temperatures have increased the incidence of respiratory infections, especially among children. Women have also become particularly vulnerable with displacement compounding

existing forms of exclusion and disparities.<sup>46</sup> While the conflict in the north of Yemen has attracted the bulk of media attention, however, displacement as a consequence of natural disaster continues to affect the rest of the country. This is borne out by the attention on the flash floods in 2008 in Hadhramout, a southern governorate which displaced between 20,000 and 25,000 people. Some of these IDPs came from very poor communities and have yet to be compensated for the damage incurred by their homes. Several hundred families have also been displaced by slow on-setting disasters such as growing water scarcity. It has been reported that discontent and resentment is rising among Yemeni IDP populations, who frequently compare their situation with that of Somali refugees and request that they are provided with equal access to assistance.<sup>47</sup> The implication of these remarks seems to be that the Yemeni state is bound by international law to deliver a certain duty of care to refugees that it has not been able to offer to its own people in times of displacement. There is also evidence that some assistance has been unsuitable for IDPs, for example, and one senior GoY representative recalled that beans had been distributed which require an excessively long time to boil which forced women to spend most of their time and energy searching for firewood.<sup>48</sup> This error could either reflect a need to provide different food staples to IDPs or to educate households in the proper utilisation of available resources.

The GoY and civil society have mobilised to respond to the needs of IDPs and have supplemented international assistance, particularly with the supply of food and water.<sup>49</sup> The UN has also played an important role in responding and working with the government, donors and NGOs to launch an emergency appeal seeking USD 187 million to assist those affected by the conflict and acute food insecurity, and coordinating efforts to seek access, assess needs and deliver humanitarian response in proportion to need. Nevertheless, humanitarian access for IDPs remains a significant obstacle and is not guaranteed despite passing of several months. Linked to this, those IDPs who are unable to return face a situation of protracted reliance on relief and uncertain futures.

#### 1.10. Enforcement of Rule of Law and Corruption

Ineffective enforcement of the rule of law is an important aspect of weak governance, which contributes to conflict in Yemen today. Beyond the urban centers, access to justice is limited and there is no sense that the law is applied systematically, impartially, or equally.<sup>50</sup> Those who have power can imprison, and the formal justice system is absent in many parts of the country.<sup>51</sup> In practice, aggrieved rights-holders, particularly women, have almost no avenues to institute proceedings for appropriate redress before a competent court or other adjudicator in accordance with the rules and procedures provided by law, despite significant improvements in the judicial system. These difficulties are largely tied to issues of weak capacity: in rural areas particularly, knowledge of the law is weak among both enforcers and the population at large, limiting the ability and willingness of law enforcement operatives like the police to implement the law. Accusations of corruption against police officers in rural areas are also rampant, and it has long been argued across the world that specific crimes like trafficking (which prevail in Yemen) require a certain degree of institutional cooperation to function and thrive.

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<sup>46</sup> OCHA, Humanitarian Update, July 2010, Issue 8, 14 June.

<sup>47</sup> Research Interview, Ministry of Parliamentary and Shura Council Affairs, 16 August 2010.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> In particular, *Human Rights Watch* has noted a prevalence of arbitrary arrests conducted in the north of Yemen where the conflict is ongoing, leading to the disappearance of suspected Houthi rebels (*Human Rights Watch*, 2008. 'Disappearances and Arbitrary Arrests in Armed Conflict with Houthi Rebels in Yemen').

<sup>51</sup> Al-Hilaly, Khaled, 2010. 'Parliament responds to hunger strikes'. Numerous reports have been made by the Yemeni media, calling attention to certain powerful individuals within Yemeni society who seem to possess absolute power of detention and prosecution within their communities. These individuals are not acting members of any formal justice system and have been accused of countless human rights violations.

In its efforts to build a functioning legal system, the Ministry of Justice has made considerable progress in a number of areas.<sup>52</sup> Courts have been established in 288 of Yemen's 333 districts, up from 275 in 2005, and the High Judicial Council, the High Institute for training judges, various courts and the Ministry of Justice, have all been restructured since 2006. Nine specialized youth courts have also been established and the Supreme Judicial Council is no longer presided over by the president.<sup>53</sup> Reforms have been undertaken to reduce the time needed to process cases and to improve the quality of training for judges. A massive investment would be required, however, to fund the establishment of proper court facilities in all of the districts (82 percent of district courts work from rented offices), expand the information technology system linking the courts, and facilitate the effective management of cases related to land issues, which account for over 75 percent of all cases.

Since its formation, the state has sought to graft elements of a modern political system on to a society whose traditional, tribal and religious character varies according to region, urban or rural setting, geographical remoteness, age-group and education. Large parts of Yemen remain a traditional tribal society, and co-option has become the main vehicle for the central state to assert its influence in a society where its authority is often perceived as secondary to local tribal and religious institutions.<sup>54</sup> This co-option has diverted public funds – mainly from Yemen's oil wealth – which might have gone towards the provision of basic services and infrastructure to sustain a web of patronage networks linking the political leadership, the armed forces, tribal sheikhs, key officials and prominent business families. This arrangement is viewed, on the one hand, as essential to the government/ country's stability as Yemen navigated from one crisis to another since unification. The crisis emanated from low economic performance, oil dominated lop-sided economy with widespread deprivation of the population of basic services; manifesting in conflicts like the civil war, the Houthi conflict and the southern unrest; at times aggravated by external factors like the return of 850,000 migrant workers after the Gulf War, the global financial crisis and increase in global food prices. On the other hand, the diversion of public funds to finance a parallel state is seen as circumventing the real work of state building, postponing a 'day of reckoning' which will arrive with the depletion of the country's oil reserves. Ultimately, the conflict that most threatens the stability and sustainability of the state is between reformers, who take a long term view of Yemen's needs, wish to build sustainable governance structures and root out corrupt practices, and an elite web of tribal, military and business actors who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Very few of the GoY actions in implementing the NRA, which is aimed at driving economic growth and stemming corruption have been successful. These include launching a national anti-corruption campaign; adopting an anti-corruption law; obtaining presidential approval of the Financial Disclosure Law; launching a procurement manual and establishing formal standardized bidding documents; launching a public campaign aimed at emphasizing the administrative independence of the Central Organization for Control and Audit; adopting the Public Finance Management Reform Strategy in 2006; and securing an agreement to abide by international reviews, as headed by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Furthermore, in 2009 the GoY made a priority of enforcing government authority by promoting the rule of law, resolving high-profile cases, building upon capabilities and adopting a zero-tolerance attitude towards kidnapping and other serious offences.<sup>55</sup> However, weak government capacities continue to inhibit effective implementation of reform measures.

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<sup>52</sup> UNDP, 2005. *Mission Report: Judicial Reform in Yemen*.

<sup>53</sup> Research Interview, Ministry of Justice, 17 August 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Zwaini, Laila, 2006. *State and Non-State Justice in Yemen*.

<sup>55</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2010. *Progress in Public Management in Arab Countries*; GoY, 2009. *National Reform Agenda*, 4.

### 1.11. Organized Crime and Trafficking

The long, isolated and harsh terrain of land borders between Yemen and its neighbours Saudi Arabia and Oman, coupled with Yemen's extended coastline and strategic location between the Horn of Africa and the Gulf States makes the country vulnerable to trafficking and organized crime. Unaccompanied child migrants are at a particularly elevated risk of falling victim to these crimes. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the fact that governorates have high security concerns and political ties to Somalia. Piracy is a growing phenomenon in the Gulf of Aden, and seems closely linked to organized networks for migrant smuggling and trafficking in a range of illicit goods including persons, liquor, drugs and firearms.

The international community has found that the enforcement techniques endorsed in the 1988 UN Convention (to which Yemen is a party) are necessary to the successful identification and prosecution of high-level traffickers and trafficking organisations. The use of these special techniques to investigate major traffickers is dependent upon reliable information concerning their activities and availability of assets shared between jurisdictions and countries. Unfortunately, Yemen has yet to develop a national counter-trafficking law, resulting in lack of enforcement capacities for such trafficking. Systems designed to identify traffickers, their organisations and assets, and to share this information with relevant agencies have not been fully developed. Cooperation and the exchange of information occurs rarely and often only after the event.

The drug and crime control problem in Yemen is the result of an inadequate national coordination and international cooperation system in border areas. There is a need for better cooperation along frontiers, where drugs and other commodities of organized crime are exchanged. Agencies on both sides of the border must strengthen their professional competence and improve their capacity to work together. They must create an environment favouring effective cross-border collaboration and assistance. Border agencies must trust each other and individual officers must be committed to their tasks.

The US State Department's 2010 annual report on *Trafficking in Persons* identified Yemen as one of six governments involved in recruitment and use of child soldiers. Yemeni children are also trafficked out of the country, often to oil-rich Gulf States, to work as street beggars, domestic help, or camel jockeys. Yemeni law prohibits trafficking in persons, and the government in 2003 prosecuted two child traffickers. Large numbers of economic migrants are smuggled from Ethiopia and Somalia into Yemen; among this group, a small number of women and girls may fall victim to domestic servitude or forced commercial sexual exploitation. Migrants are often forced by traffickers to swim ashore through shark-infested waters in the Gulf of Aden, and some die in the process.

Yemen is a major destination country for migrants with different profiles and refugees. Most of the refugees are from Somalia and others originate from Iraq and Ethiopia. Yemen, which ratified the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, grants Somali citizens prima facie refugee status and others go through asylum procedures handled by the UNHCR in close cooperation with Yemeni authorities.

GoY has made commendable efforts to combat human trafficking and deal effectively with the influx of refugees. Shortfalls in this area are largely due to lack of capacities that would enable the bridging of the implementation gap between declared policy and action. To redress this shortcoming, greater international technical and financial assistance is required, particularly in strengthening criminal justice mechanisms capable of responding to migrant smuggling from the Horn of Africa.

### 1.12. Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is at the level of a humanitarian crisis, requiring immediate response, along with a long-term focus on health and nutrition. The humanitarian crisis in the north is accompanied by an

overall significant deterioration in food security, which affects more than 31 per cent of the country's population. Sharp rises in the prices of many food staples over the past three years has significantly increased the number of Yemenis who are affected by food insecurity and poverty.

In a recent study, some 6.8 million people, or 32 percent of the population, were found to be food-insecure, of which 2.5 million people, or 11.8 percent, were assessed to be severely food-insecure.<sup>56</sup> More than a quarter of the population in 13 of 19 governorates in Yemen is affected by food insecurity, and five governorates account for two-thirds of people who are assessed as food-insecure or severely food-insecure. The severely food-insecure population is concentrated in Al-Daleh, Amran, Ibb and Rayma, with more than one-fifth of the population in each governorate affected. High levels of morbidity and mortality among women and children in Yemen are closely associated with malnutrition. More than 30 per cent of children are born under-weight, indicating serious malnutrition among mothers, and greatly increasing the risk of serious health problems among mothers and infants. Micronutrient deficiencies are acute among the general population. Vitamin A deficiency and Iodine Deficiency Disorders are prevalent nationwide, given that fewer than 30 per cent of households consume food rich in iodine or adequate amounts of iodized salt.

This humanitarian crisis is not only a direct result of the lack of investment in agriculture, but also in transport infrastructure, education, health and employment generation.

- Failure to develop the agriculture sector results from continuation of low production levels resulting from absence of improvement in inputs and practices, diversion of land and resources to the cultivation of *qat*; continued over-reliance on inefficient irrigation techniques, poor harvesting, handling, packaging, storage and transport systems. Water scarcity is acutely compounded by the production of *qat*, diverts 40 per cent of Yemen's water resources, leaving increasingly insufficient quantities for food crops and drinking water.
- Transport Infrastructure: inadequate food production is compounded in rural areas by poor transport access to markets - the main source of food for almost the entire population. Geographical adversity and underinvestment in transport infrastructure make it significantly more difficult for the poor to access markets in rural areas.
- Education: a study by the WFP in 2010 found a strong correlation between education level and household food security status. The head of household was found to be illiterate in more than half of all food-insecure households, compared with one in three food-secure households. A direct correlation was found between the educational level of mothers and child malnutrition. Food-insecure households were also found to be less inclined to send their girls to school.
- Health: less than half the population living in rural areas has access to safe drinking water, another important cause of malnutrition in Yemen. Access to health facilities – a key determinant of both household food security status and the nutritional well-being of its women and children - is also greatly limited in rural areas.<sup>57</sup>

### 1.13. Malnutrition

The nutrition situation in Yemen is critical. Acute child malnutrition has increased from 12.9 per cent in 1997 to 15.7 per cent in 2010, while chronic child malnutrition has increased from 51.7 per cent in 1997 to 57.9 per cent in 2010.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, 25 per cent of all Yemeni females aged 16 to 59 were

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<sup>56</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*. Yemen is second only to Afghanistan for stunting and third after India and Bangladesh for underweight children. Global acute malnutrition is a chronic problem and ranges from 12.4 per cent (PAPFAM, 2003) to 15 per cent (Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2006) while severe acute malnutrition hovers around 3 per cent. This equates to roughly 600,000 children under five suffering from moderate acute malnutrition and 129,000 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (Correspondence from UNICEF, 12 September 2010).

found to be acutely malnourished.<sup>59</sup> Maternal malnutrition and maternal mortality are both high and this has negative consequences for child nutrition and mortality.

Refugees are a vulnerable population that has experienced recent rising levels of malnutrition.<sup>60</sup> Rural women and children are particularly exposed to acute malnutrition.<sup>61</sup> Persistent acute malnutrition is due to underlying structural causes which include food insecurity, poverty, poor water and sanitation, and low levels of female education.<sup>62</sup> While malnutrition is explained partly by these factors and overall food inaccessibility, traditional practices are also a significant contributor, with dietary practices such as tea consumption negatively affecting nutritional intake.

#### 1.14. Qat, Drug Abuse and HIV

Approximately 40 per cent of the available water (World Bank estimates that 93 per cent of the available surface and ground water in Yemen is currently used for agriculture) for agriculture is consumed for irrigating *qat*. Cultivation of *qat* occupies a large and growing percentage of arable land, leads to exhaustion of soil nutrients, and consumes energy, as fuel is required to pump water into the fields, thus, *qat* farming is one of the agricultural sectors greatly benefiting from the governmental fuel subsidies.

The above necessitates agricultural reform to reduce *qat* production and alleviate its negative economic, social, health, and environmental consequences. However, *qat* has long been identified as a developmental issue and its use is spreading despite efforts to control it. Control of production by elites that have benefited from fuel subsidies has been an obstacle to reducing *qat* farming. Reduction in *qat* supply may lead to increased use of other substances and, given the limited amount of research into other substance abuse, an integrated management system and drug monitoring system should be developed.

It is also worth noting that the number of reported HIV cases in Yemen increased from 874 (in 2000) to 2,882 cases (in 2009)<sup>63</sup>. This reported figure is not considered to be an accurate reflection of the total number of people living with HIV in Yemen. These statistics on increasing HIV prevalence, combined with severe levels of overcrowding and poor prison conditions as highlighted by Yemeni prison authorities, indicates the importance of establishing specific HIV prevention programs in prison settings. Another group that are increasingly overlooked by Yemeni policies in this area are youth, who, as a result of Yemen's growing bulge, are at a disproportionately high risk of contracting the disease. Though awareness of HIV/AIDS in schools has increased dramatically in recent years, associated reproductive health education programs remain rare outside the capital.

#### 1.15. Conclusions

The contextual dynamics introduced in the above analysis together constitute a complex situation with many overlaps. Key dynamics include: rising population; natural resource depletion; the threat of climate change; economic uncertainty; increasing poverty; high levels of social exclusion, especially of women, youth and children in social, economic and political processes; gender inequality; potentially destabilising unemployment rates; and poor provision of basic services. These factors are compounded by political frailties such as weak governance, protracted violent conflict and high levels of social violence, corruption, and an underdeveloped criminal justice system. In combination, these broad socio-economic factors and political dynamics have given rise to a number of humanitarian and developmental needs, with food insecurity and forced displacement as the most acute.

<sup>59</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*.

<sup>60</sup> UNHCR, 2010. *Analysis of Gaps in the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*.

<sup>61</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, Table 6.1, page 37.

Many of these trends have worsened over the past five years and require immediate attention and an increased and coordinated response by international organisations, donor agencies, the GoY and civil society. Furthermore, parts of the country have become mired in 'protracted relief', that is, neither 'emergency' nor 'developmental', which has major implications for national and international policy frameworks and operational responses, as explored further in Chapters Three and Four. Contextual factors must be taken into consideration during the design of appropriate and tailor-made responses in order to assess the potential impact of international engagement and enable the identification of opportunities for promoting just and sustainable development, political reform, conflict transformation, economic growth, and post-conflict reconstruction.

In supporting this analysis, the following chapter explores Yemen's development context through the framework of the MDGs and investigates further the emerging dynamics and issues that impact on the country's ability to meet its MDG targets.

## 2. Human Development Situation

### 2.1. Introduction

In order to assess the progress made towards the developmental priorities of the GoY and the UN during the period 2005 – 2010 and to strengthen the socio-economic and political analysis, this CCA also looks at the Yemini context through a human development lens and a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA). Two main frameworks are used:

- The MD and MDGs; and
- The Human rights obligations.

Overall, there has been disappointing progress in meeting the MDGs, with respect to poverty and hunger (MDG 1), gender equality (MDG 3), child mortality (MDG 4), maternal health (MDG 5), and environmental sustainability (MDG 7). Furthermore, projections suggest fluctuating trends in development between 2010 and 2015. Although these trends have been affected in recent years by the conflict and economic crisis, they have maintained the low trend in the past decade of Yemen's development, indicating a lack of clear political will and capacity on the part of the GoY to implement their commitments under the MD. In addition, wide disparities remain across urban and rural areas, across central and peripheral governorates, and across gender, when it comes to access to quality services, employment opportunities, food and water.

Nevertheless, there has been relative progress in education (MDG 2), combating diseases (MDG 6), and the development of a global partnership (MDG 8) through improved regional relations. While these broad assertions are valid, the analysis emphasizes the need to appreciate the complexity and nuances of the trends within each of the MDGs.

Last, the GoY has demonstrated its commitment to upholding human rights through its ratification of key international treaties and conventions but the previous chapter has demonstrated how the government has been slow to ensure actual protection of human rights standards through national legislation. Given the limited advancement made on this issue, this CCA calls for international support and assistance to continue in this respect and to identify the opportunities for substantive practical change.

### 2.2. Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs continue to represent the priorities of the international development agenda, supported and complemented by the protection of human rights for all people of the world. The achievement and long term sustainability of the MDGs was a central aim of the UN mission in Yemen in 2005 and remains so to this day, as reflected in the 2007 - 2011 UNDAF.

Progress towards these goals throughout this period has, however, been slower than originally anticipated, largely due to the emergence of the new set of developmental challenges within the country that can be attributed to the escalation of violent conflict and the shocks to the economy. Some of the targets set for 2005, such as those set under MDG 3 for instance, have not been met at all.

As Table 6 illustrates below, Yemen's HDI value has risen gradually since 1990, with a 0.093 increase between 2002 and 2007.<sup>64</sup> This increase has been largely due to the increase in GDP per capita, which stems from higher international oil prices. GDP per capita was subsequently affected by the recent global financial crisis, which has not yet been integrated into the HDI trends. The full impact

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<sup>64</sup> UNDP, 2009. *Yemen Human Development Report: the Human Development Index*.

of global financial crisis, coupled with decreased oil production and reduced exportable surplus in Yemen has not thus far been accounted for and it has the potential to create fluctuating trends in the period of 2010 - 2015.

**Table 4. Yemen Human Development Index Trend (1990 - 2010)<sup>65</sup>**

Year	HDI Value	HDI Rank
1990	0.392	149
1995	0.435	149
2002	0.482	149
2007	0.575	140
2010	0.439	133

Looking beyond the HDI value, reveals that many of Yemen's developmental challenges continue to persist in 2010. Among the factors presented in Table 7 below, life expectancy at birth remains at 62.5 years, with a 15.6 per cent probability of not surviving past the age of 40. It is also important to note the persistent, acute variations in development indicators across rural and urban settlements and across the governorates, due to historical neglect of peripheral and predominantly rural areas.

**Table 5. Indicators of Social Development in Yemen (2010)<sup>66</sup>**

Life Expectancy at Birth	Adult Literacy Rate	Combined Gross Enrolment Ratio	GDP Per Capita
63.9 years	60.9 per cent ages 15 and above	65.6 per cent	1,160 US\$

The *Second National Millennium Development Goals Report, 2010* confirms that Yemen is unlikely to meet its MDG targets, with the possible exceptions of MDG 2 and MDG 3, where tangible progress is being made in strengthening the Yemeni basic educational institutions. The following analysis identifies, by individual MDG, the areas in which progress has not occurred and identifies the reasons for the lack of improvement.

#### **MDG 1. Eradicate Poverty and Hunger**

In 2010, Yemen is a long way from achieving the three targets within MDG 1, with little hope of meeting them prior to 2015, as demonstrated by the indicators in Chapter One.<sup>67</sup> Although limited improvements have been made to standards of living in the country, progress has been delayed as a result of chronic poverty, limited resources, a growing economic crisis and deteriorating security. Food security in Yemen has now been termed an ongoing 'silent crisis'. Approximately 32 per cent of the population are classified as food-insecure, and 11.8 per cent of this total are categorised as severely food-insecure. In worldwide terms, Yemen's rates of malnutrition are alarmingly high; of children between the ages of 6 and 59 months, 13.2 per cent are classed as wasted and 55.7 per cent

<sup>65</sup> UNDP, 2010. Human Development Report.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> 1) To halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 per day; 2) to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and 3) to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

as stunted.<sup>68</sup> Despite modest improvement in the 2009 *Global Hunger Index*, moving from 80<sup>th</sup> to 74<sup>th</sup> position, the situation of food security has worsened with a growing dependence on food imports.<sup>69</sup>

The causes of food-insecurity are poverty, exposure to market price volatilities, limited sustainable investments in rural infrastructure and livelihoods, limited investment in human development especially for women, high population growth rate and a high number of dependants at the family level, and the health environment.<sup>70</sup> Other important factors affecting the levels of food-insecurity include the availability of arable land; unsustainable land management practices leading to loss of marginal lands; and the natural aridity of Yemen, leading (through poor water management) to insufficient water available for agriculture. Currency devaluation without corresponding increases in wages has also contributed to higher food prices, further aggravating the crisis.

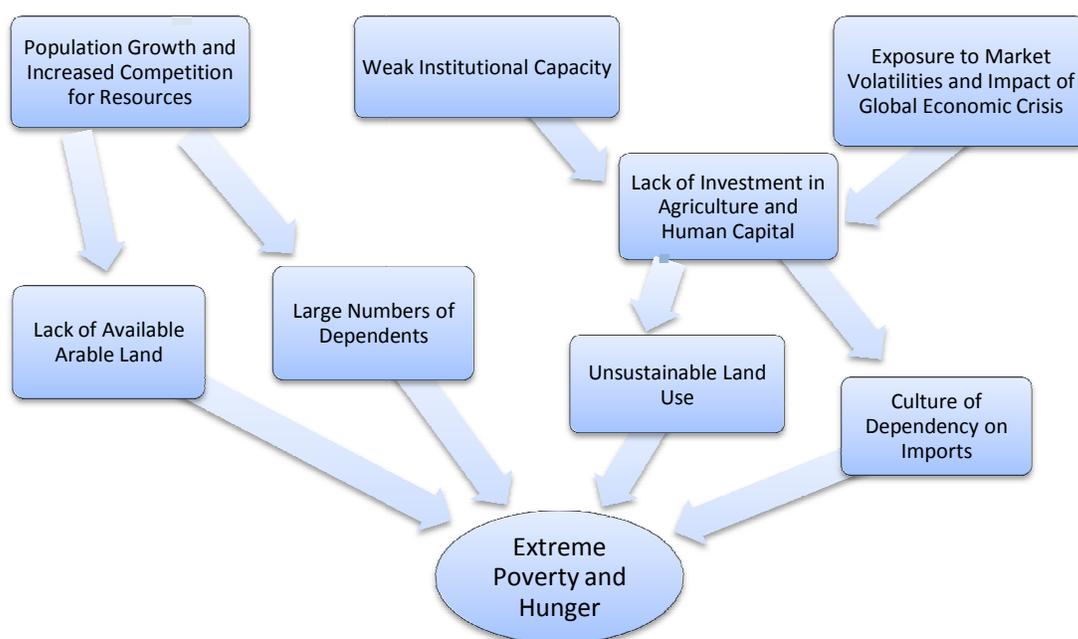


Figure 1. Root and Proximate Causes of Extreme Poverty and Hunger

In terms of the relationship between national food production and food security, Yemen's food availability has, from the 1980s onwards, depended mainly upon commercial imports, with a majority of local farmers growing cash crops like *qat* instead of food products.<sup>71</sup> The government has recently doubled its efforts to encourage farmers to grow coffee, grapes and other exportable commodities in order to develop the agricultural sector and to boost the country's economy. There has been limited success in the government efforts and food insecurity remains a priority in the daily struggles of millions of poor people.

The food crisis is aggravated by growing unemployment levels. According to the ILO,<sup>72</sup> access to stable employment in rural areas is further limited by poor infrastructure, low skill levels, and lack of

<sup>68</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*, 14.

<sup>69</sup> World Bank, 2010b. *Yemen Quarterly Economic Review*, 13.

<sup>70</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*, 17.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> ILO, 2008. *Decent Work Country Program 2008-2010*.

access to microfinance and business development services, especially for the employment-intensive sectors such as agriculture and community services.

46.6 per cent of the population live on less than US\$2 per day, with significant disparities between rural and urban areas caused by the relative underdevelopment of rural areas, some of which are at a higher risk of natural disasters, are deeply affected by changes in rainfall patterns and are frequently exposed to political unrest. In fact, rural areas were found to have double the level of food-insecurity prevalent in urban areas.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, variation in food poverty levels between governorates is relatively wide, with 38.3 per cent incidence in Al-Baida and only 12.1 per cent in Aden. Most households depend upon fathers and sons for financial support. Those few women who secure employment opportunities outside of the home frequently stop working as soon as they get married and have children. Raising an average of six children each, it is not feasible for women to continue to work in the formal sector after they become mothers, not to mention the fact that women are largely marginalized from the employment sector. Many rural women resort to performing unpaid labour in their family fields. Far from merely keeping women out of work, high fertility rates have also been blamed for the burgeoning youth population and, at present, there are far more young people entering the labour market than the country can support, which necessitates exploring employment opportunities outside Yemen. This can be achieved through a clear and urgent program of capacity building, employment generation and skills training. International labour mobility (particularly to Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC)) has already been identified as one possible solution to this crisis, acting as a key to alleviating domestic employment pressure whilst promoting Yemen's socio-economic development. Meanwhile, internal mobility, specifically in relation to displacement, has only contributed to the problem. Yemen's uprooted communities are particularly vulnerable to poverty and hunger, with increases in levels of malnutrition and anaemia reported in IDP camps. The growing number of IDPs and refugees, combined with a mounting food crisis, places these populations at increasing risk.<sup>74</sup> IDPs and refugees are often excluded from local social processes and employment opportunities, leading organisations like the UNHCR to create special vocational training centres for them in order to make them more employable.

Women are often the first to suffer during food shortages in Yemen, due to high levels of gender inequality, especially in the poorer areas of the country. Meanwhile, extreme poverty places both women and children under an increased risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, discrimination and marginalization. The marginalization of children who are victims of violence and abuse decreases the likelihood that they will be able to escape poverty in the future. An added burden results from the fact that many children from poor backgrounds are not registered at birth and without birth registration documents, children and families often cannot access health, education and other social services, leading to even greater marginalization. Moreover, the lack of accurate estimates of births affects the ability of government authorities to plan appropriate poverty alleviation and social service programs.

The ongoing poverty and food crisis has furthermore resulted in growing incidents of child labour, which has become widely prevalent and constitutes approximately 10 per cent of the total labour force. Children in Yemen may also be involved in more than one type of work. The Household Survey reported that just over one-fifth of children ages 5 to 14 were involved in one form of child labour, with no large variation across sexes.<sup>75</sup> This damages a child's health, threatens education, leads to further exploitation and abuse, and reinforces the cycle of poverty. Such abuses include human trafficking, which affects men, women and children equally and dominates in areas of higher poverty.<sup>76</sup> Exact data on human trafficking is not available, but reports have shown that over half of

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<sup>73</sup> WFP, 2010. *Yemen: Comprehensive Food Security Survey*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR, 2010. *Evaluation of Self-Reliance Interventions for Refugees*, 38.

<sup>75</sup> MICS, 2006.

<sup>76</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2009. *Assessment of Border Management in Yemen*.

the instances of child trafficking or smuggling in the country originated from the Yemeni districts with major border crossings with Saudi Arabia, where conflict has dominated for half a decade. Meanwhile, human trafficking itself is yet to be made a crime under Yemeni law.

The GoY is striving to respond to these problems and many others relating to poverty by developing promising sectors through the *Promotion of Productive Activities* in order to achieve productive and decent employment for all. Areas that are targeted are agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and industry. **These sectors hold the key to generating employment and allowing the Yemeni people to lift them out of poverty.** However, armed conflict, under-investment and lack of capacity continue to inhibit development strategies and deplete physical, economic and human resources. There is an **urgent need to promote sustainable food security through community-based livelihoods development with an agro-industries focus.**

## **MDG 2. Achieving Universal Primary Education**

Substantial progress has been made towards MDG 2 in Yemen, which strives to ensure that girls and boys everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary education by 2015. Multiple organisations, including UNDP, have noted that there is a strong and consistent understanding among the poor that primary education offers an important investment for the future of their children.<sup>77</sup> Despite relatively high rates of access, the quality of education remains poor, and the GoY has been unable to attract skilled professionals into the education profession. Large discrepancies remain as girls and children in rural areas continue to fall behind in school attendance and registration levels. There is also a demand for a clear policy to reach out-of-school children.<sup>78</sup>

Since 2006<sup>79</sup> the GoY has made considerable progress on a number of key indicators in the education sector, moving relatively quickly towards its MDG target.<sup>80</sup> However, there is still much distance to be covered. The net enrolment rate increased from 52.7 per cent in 1990 to 62.5 per cent in 2004, with a further increase to 75.3 per cent in 2008.<sup>81</sup> This increase reflects externalities of parallel development projects; for example water projects have allowed more girls to attend school by reducing one major burden in their lives. Consequently, the female to male ratio in basic education increased from 44.6 per cent in 1990 to 70.6 per cent in 2004, and 74.8 per cent in 2008 according to the Yemen MDG Report 2010, an evidence of increasing community awareness and acceptance of the importance of girls' primary education among traditional communities. These rising levels of acceptance are also largely the product of a 2006 decree that eliminated user fees for girls in grades 1 - 6 and for boys in grades 1 - 3 in order to reduce the gender gap within the country. However, gender-specific education needs continue to be neglected so that health education and reproductive health education have been sidelined in schools, reflecting a discrepancy between policy and gender-based needs in Yemen.

Despite these positive strides made in girls' education, females remain under-represented within the education system as a whole. In global terms, Yemen has a poor level of female literacy in the 15 - 24 age groups. Structural obstacles to girls' participation in education include lack of segregated schools, poor sanitation, and parental preference for boys' education.<sup>82</sup> As above, gender imbalance is overlaid by geographic distribution; illiteracy among females in rural areas was 71.7 per cent in 2004 and 36 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, in 2007, distribution across governorates of basic education enrolment was uneven with 92 per cent in Sana'a City and 36 per cent in Al-Jawf. Uneven

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<sup>77</sup> MOPIC and UNDP, 2010. *Yemen 2010 MDGs Report*, 10.

<sup>78</sup> Correspondence with UNICEF, 6 September 2010.

<sup>79</sup> In 2006, no evidence of progress was reported, however later documents suggest that enrolment ratios have since improved. See Ministry of Public Health and Population and UNICEF, 2008. *Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*

<sup>80</sup> USAID, 2008. *Yemen Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment*, 45.

<sup>81</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 12.

<sup>82</sup> USAID, 2008: 29.

attendance levels have been explained by imperatives of economic survival, and the lack of teachers (and specifically in the case of girls' education – the lack of female teachers)<sup>83</sup> and transportation. They have also been compounded by growing levels of insecurity in the north of the country and the widespread closure of facilities. In 2009, children represented 10 per cent of the known labour force in Yemen, with 12 per cent aged between 6 and 14.<sup>84</sup> They are also kept out of school by social obstacles, such as broken families and domestic violence.

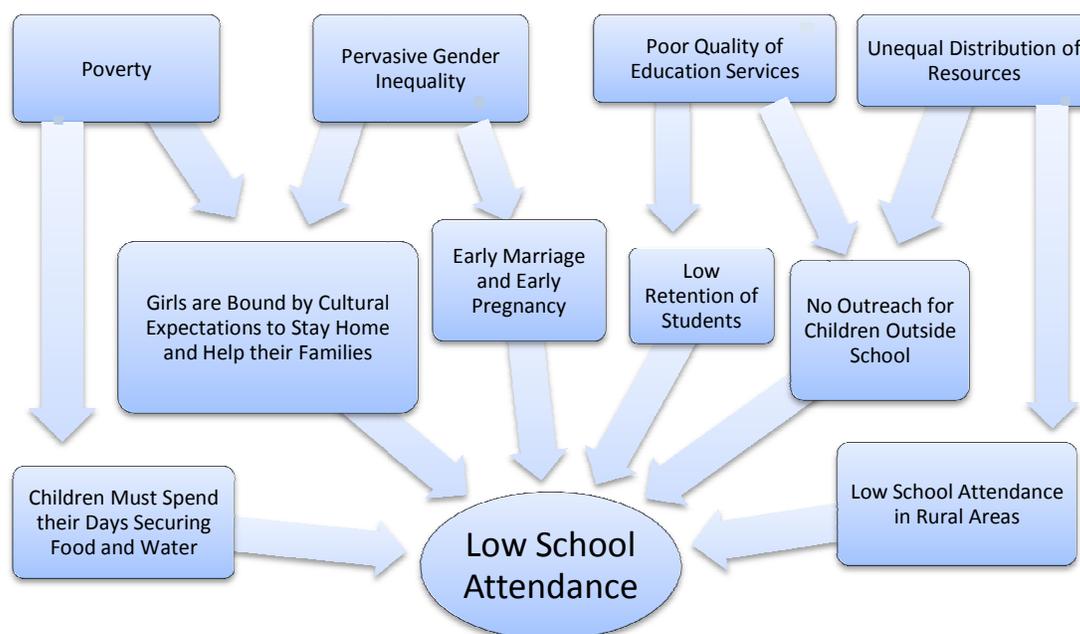


Figure 2. Root and Proximate Causes of Low School Attendance

There are serious qualitative shortfalls in primary education. Of all children who start school, only 60 per cent complete the basic education cycle.<sup>85</sup> This elevated drop-out rate has been blamed on social factors like extreme poverty, the need to seek out employment or to assist parents at home; but it can also be attributed to the overall poor quality of the Yemeni education system, which leads to an illiteracy rate of 21.6 per cent in young people between the age of 15 and 24, and a total population illiteracy rate of 45.3 per cent.<sup>86</sup> At present, the education sector is struggling to cater to children in schools and has no clear strategy for reaching children outside of formal education structures. Many children are highly under-served by the educational sector, especially orphans, children with disabilities, those who are affected by HIV/AIDS, children from minority and migrant families, and those who are trafficked, used in armed conflict or live in institutions. **Ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling cannot be achieved without eliminating the barriers that keep children out of school such as poverty, hunger, and illness. The school environment needs to be safe, protective and free of violence if children are to be encouraged to attend and remain in school.**

### MDG 3. Promoting Gender Equality

<sup>83</sup> Alsharki, Raufa Hassan, UNFPA, 2008. *Final Evaluation on the GBV project: period 2008-2010, Yemen.*

<sup>84</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> USAID, 2008. *Yemen Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment*, 45.

<sup>86</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 13-4.

Under MDG 3, the UN and the GoY are working to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. While there has been a steady improvement in the rate of female enrolment in primary and secondary education since 2005, much work remains to be done. Once again, as noted in the previous section, massive discrepancies between rural and urban areas can be found, with a markedly lower rate of female educational enrolment in rural areas (particularly in the north where tribal structures are stronger than government control mechanisms). The drop-out rate from primary and secondary education is also considerably higher for women than it is for men, with financial needs and early marriages for girls highlighted as contributing factors for this development.

There is currently no legal minimum age for marriage - the law only stipulates that girls should not marry unless they have reached sexual maturity, yet, even then, there is no punishment for those families who allow their daughters to marry before this time. The 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Yemen showed that 14 per cent of women aged 15 - 49 married before the age of 15 and 32 per cent of women aged 20 - 24 married before age 18.<sup>87</sup> These rates of early marriage, and, more importantly, early childbirth, have far-reaching consequences for children's health, gender equality, women's access to education and female participation in society. Many young mothers are overwhelmed by their child-raising responsibilities and sidetrack their intellectual development as a result. Early marriage and disproportionate representation are only two aspects of the broad social inequalities that women face in Yemen, inequalities that are not reflected within the MDG 3 targets. Women continue to be under-represented in government, the justice service and in employment in general. Figure 7 below attempts to trace the causal factors of gender inequality.

MDG 3 and the GoY's commitment to its implementation function as an acknowledgement of the fact that education has clear linkages with other developmental needs. Girls' education is strongly connected with economic empowerment, reproductive health, and poverty reduction. Supply for the labour market, dependent on educational investment and long-term economic development, in particular, requires investment in higher education in order to provide skilled workers for the knowledge economy. Yemeni universities are lagging behind, creating a situation in which youth, by and large, are ill-prepared for limited employment available.<sup>88</sup> Recent trends in higher education, therefore, include the expansion of the private university system and the introduction of parallel programmes. Yet, with rising levels of graduate unemployment in the country, many young people, regardless of gender, do not see secondary and higher education as a means of improving their social or financial status. Resultantly, what is not viewed as a priority for male development is often frequently overlooked as a priority for female development. It is hoped that the opening of GCC countries to Yemeni labour migrants might begin to reverse this trend by raising awareness among Yemeni youth of the level of competition for positions in regional and global employment markets.

Conversely, progress in girls' primary enrolment has been matched by progress in secondary education, where the female-to-male ratio increased from 13.7 per cent in 1990 to 58.8 per cent in 2008. However, the discrepancy between male and female enrolment continues to be quite large and overall female illiteracy remains high. It is also worth noting that many girls, who are not within the target age group of 6 - 14 year olds, are still in need of basic education. Furthermore, it is difficult to discuss the enrolment of women in secondary education when many of them have not completed primary studies; however, some governmental literacy and vocational programs are currently working to close this learning gap. This problem is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where 71.7 per cent of women were illiterate in 2004.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Public Health and Population and UNICEF, 2008. *Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006*.

<sup>88</sup> USAID, 2008. *Yemen Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment*, 47.

<sup>89</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 17.

Clearly, promoting gender equality goes beyond the MDG target of developing specific educational initiatives to cover all types of social interactions and access to all types of services. Women are highly under-represented in the employment sector and in government, so that they are not actively involved in influencing policy. Neither are services across multiple sectors targeted specifically at them or made universally available to them in all governorates. Some of these aspects will be discussed in later sections, including the analysis of maternal health (MDG 5). It is important to note that women's rights remain a highly sensitive issue in Yemen that is often met with hostility from both sexes. This suggests that **any effective strategy for gender equality in the country would have to be framed within a culturally sensitive vocabulary in order to avoid being sidestepped by important stakeholders. It is also important that any such initiatives are understood as government-led and government-funded in order to avoid rejection by communities.** Women represent half the working-age population of Yemen; therefore, efforts to improve their skill base and education levels or to integrate them into the employment sector have potential to yield significant benefits for the Yemeni economy and, accordingly, the country's progress towards the MDGs. For instance, the empowerment of women, particularly with regard to decision-making over reproductive health and birth spacing, could significantly contribute to the decline of population growth, reducing pressure for resources and positively impacting all aspects of the country's development.

However, the situation of pervasive gender inequality on all levels of society should not be overlooked. Many related issues regarding the fundamental rights of women have been side-streamed in this section in order to give sufficient attention to the relevant MDG targets, but across Yemen today, women continue to be excluded from decision-making processes (both at home and outside), and to suffer without a recourse when their specific needs are overlooked.<sup>90</sup> Their participation in the political process remains minimal, their access to employment has actually declined, their general health and well-being is comparatively low for the region and their level of control and influence over their own lives is frequently insufficient. **The addressing of these needs and many others goes beyond the scope of MDG 3's targets and ought to be considered holistically as part of all future intervention packages.**

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<sup>90</sup> GBV, for instance, continues to be a huge problem, whereby women have no recourse either institutionally and locally to escape brutality at home.

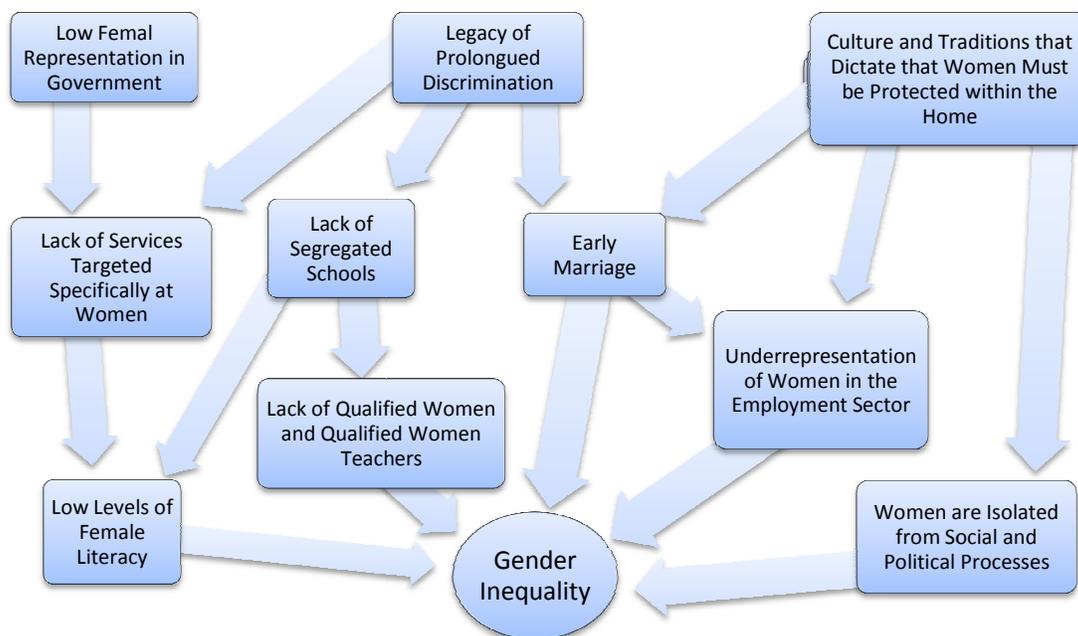


Figure 3. Root and Proximate Causes of Gender Inequality

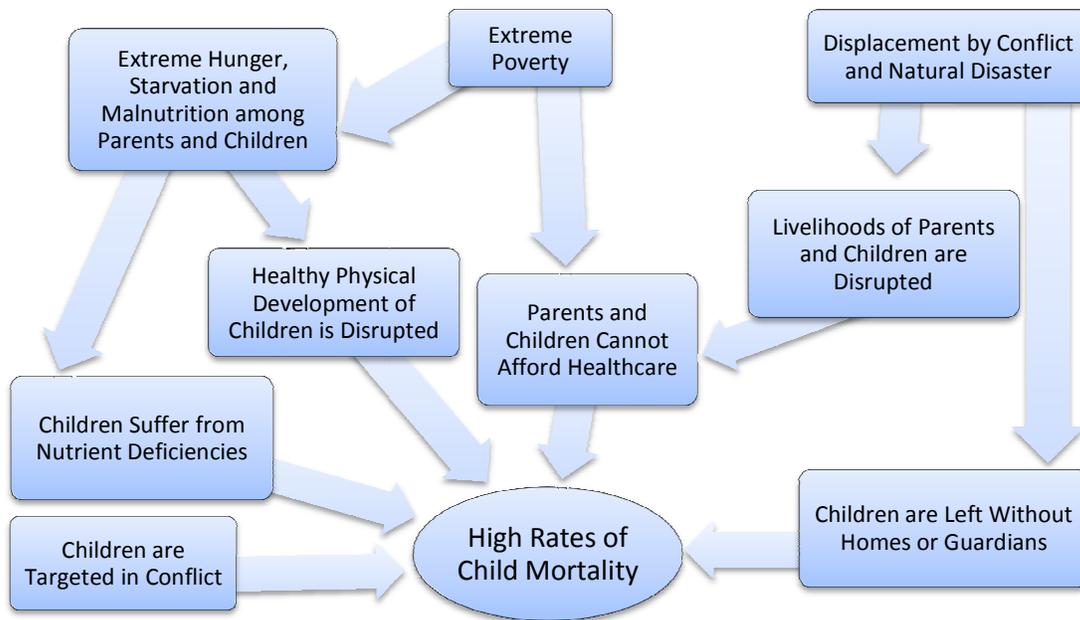
#### MDG 4. Reducing Child Mortality

In 2010, children continue to experience severe health risk in Yemen. While mortality rates amongst children under the age of 5 decreased from 122 cases per 1,000 live births in 1992 to 78.2 in 2006 (and infant mortality rates decreased from 83 cases per 1,000 live births in 1992 to 69 cases in 2006); the rate of reduction slowed considerably from 2006 onwards so that Yemen is not currently on track to achieve its MDG targets by 2015.<sup>91</sup> The infant mortality rate in 2009 stood at 69 per 1,000 live births, or 65 for females and 72 for males.<sup>92</sup> As mapped out in Figure 8 below, these high rates of mortality largely reflect high rates of poverty, hunger and homelessness, while they are also aggravated by Yemen's strained carrying capacity, lack of water resources, growing conflict and natural disaster-based internal displacement crises.<sup>93</sup> Malnutrition is the leading cause of death, severe hunger often starting in the womb, whereby maternal hunger often results in children being born under-weight and with a higher risk of premature mortality. Early age of motherhood is also a factor, as children born to very young mothers are more vulnerable to diseases and hunger in the early stages of life. Adequate food consumption has dropped from 76 per cent in 2006 to 40 per cent in 2008, with inadequate food consumption increasing from 9 to 24 per cent. Child mortality in poorer families remains significantly higher than the national average, highlighting the strong link between poverty and mortality. Children from poor families are more likely to have to seek employment outside the home, placing them at greater risk of social harm and social violence, while the high stress of chronic unemployment and hunger within families makes them more vulnerable to neglect and domestic violence or abuse.

<sup>91</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

<sup>92</sup> UNICEF, 2009. *Mid Term Review Report: 2007-2011 Programme of Cooperation*, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Though it is acknowledged that the threat of natural disasters in Yemen is low, their impact on children is high, with limited government capacities to end protracted displacement crises through effective reconstruction and repatriation programs.



**Figure 4. Root and Proximate Causes of Child Mortality**

The primary target of this MDG, which is the reduction by two thirds, of the under-five mortality rate between 1990 and 2015, is therefore unlikely to be met within the allocated time frame. However, substantial progress has been made towards this MDG through the rapid development of the health sector. Between 2004 and 2008, health service coverage increased from 54 per cent to 67 per cent of the population, with significant improvements in basic services and outreach activities. As a result of expanded health care services, the national coverage rate of vaccines against serious illnesses for children reached approximately 87 per cent in 2008, with new vaccines against streptococcus pneumonia and retroviruses to be added in 2010 and 2011.<sup>94</sup> Yet shortfalls remain. Facilities for the treatment of acute malnutrition were reportedly still charging poor families for their services in 2008, while malnutrition itself was not covered in nursing and medical curricula. This has resulted in otherwise avoidable high rates of child mortality, where families either cannot afford, or do not have faith in, timely life-saving medical interventions. The GoY is currently striving to reverse these trends by investing in the *National Protocol for Nutrition* and by modernising University of Sana's Faculty of Medicine, along with its curriculum. While some international programs, including the provision of high protein biscuits to IDP families, helped to contain the impact of the hunger crisis on children after 2005, many of these programs, and others like them, have since been cut due to lack of donor funding.

Certain groups of children are particularly vulnerable in Yemen, including those that are living in rural areas with high rates of poverty, those that have been displaced by conflict or natural disaster, those who are refugees from other countries, members of minority groups and other traditionally marginalized demographic groups. Female infants are also at greater risk of mortality because of the persistence of harmful practices like female genital mutilation or cutting. This practice, which is implemented on 97 per cent of female babies in their first year of life in Hodeidah and on 45 per cent in Sana'a, sometimes results in the death of the child and frequently leads to a lifetime of complications for women. Progress has been made to halt this practice at a recent conference for religious leaders, where a consensus was reached to develop a ban on female genital mutilation. However, many older women continue to cling to the tradition and formal legislation has yet to be

<sup>94</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

passed on the subject. This issue is problematic because 62.5 per cent of decision-makers in individual cases of female genital mutilation are the mothers and grandmothers of the children.<sup>95</sup>

## **MDG 5. Improving Maternal Health**

As a result of measures taken by the Government with support from the UN system, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is expected to have declined from 365 per 100,000 live births revealed by the DHS in 2003, to 210 per 100,000 live births in 2008 based on recent estimates from WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank. However, as this figure was based on statistical modelling, no sound conclusion can be made regarding the situation of maternal health until results of the the next demographic survey planned in 2011 are available. The rate is expected to have remained unacceptably high as a direct result of the severe deficiency in antenatal health care provided to women, as well as the lack of targeted medical services designed specifically for women and reproductive health services in general. Despite some significant improvements in the health sector, it is not currently meeting the needs of Yemen's rapidly expanding population. At present, 77.2 per cent of deliveries take place at home, placing both mother and child at serious risk (though in 2006, deliveries by qualified professionals increased from a total 16 per cent in 1992 to 36 per cent).<sup>96</sup> In rural areas, only 4 out of every 10 women receive medical care during pregnancy, and only three during delivery,<sup>97</sup> disproportionately increasing mortality rates among them. To reverse this high mortality rates, efforts that have included the free provision of contraceptives to the general population<sup>98</sup> have been made to reduce the mean fertility rate, and, according to the *Global Gender Gap Index*, the child dependency ratio has actually decreased from 111.8 in 1990 to 79.8 in 2010. However, a more urgently needed intervention would prioritise the training of midwives across the country, to reach those women who are unable to access mainstream services.

GoY and the international community have undertaken massive efforts to modernise reproductive healthcare in the country through the *National Population and Reproductive Health Strategy*, with a large increase in the number of facilities providing reproductive healthcare services.<sup>99</sup> However, overall maternal health is low, particularly in rural areas where few people budget for, or make full use of, available healthcare facilities. The dispersion of health centres is extremely limited across Yemen, making access to them very difficult for women, in times of pregnancy, when only 47 per cent of women as a whole receive medical attention.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, restrictions on the social mobility of women make it increasingly difficult for them to access necessary welfare and medical services, either due to communal marginalization or to social exclusion at such facilities, as supported by strong traditions and cultural norms of social interaction. Specific sub-groups among women, comprised of IDPs, refugees, labour migrants, and many others, face added challenges in this regard. The GoY is striving to mitigate such marginalization at health facilities by raising the percentage of female staff therein, succeeding in raising women's representation in the health sector from 26 per cent in 2004 to 36 per cent in 2008, thereby contributing to a less hostile environment for female patients.<sup>101</sup> However, much work remains to be done. Social exclusion from health facilities and lack of social mobility as well as the rigidity of gender roles has meant that women in Yemen are more prone to suffer from rheumatism, blood pressure, kidney disease and ulcers than men, severely deteriorating their health.<sup>102</sup> They have further been found to be more

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<sup>95</sup> Professor Yahia Ahmed Raja'a et al, 2009. *Knowledge Attitude and Practices on Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Aden*, 8.

<sup>96</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

<sup>97</sup> WNC 2008. *Report on the Status of Women*, p. 26.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.* Between 2003 and 2006, the use of modern contraceptives was reported to have increased from 13.4 to 19 per cent.

<sup>99</sup> Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive healthcare.

<sup>100</sup> WNC 2008. *Report on the Status of Women*, p. 26.

<sup>101</sup> Women's National Committee, 2009. *Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Plan of Action +15*, p. 15.

<sup>102</sup> WNC 2008. *Report on the Status of Women*, p. 23.

prone to infections and diseases, with elevated incidents of tuberculosis (affecting 248 women for every 100 men).<sup>103</sup> Lack of social mobility has a particularly serious impact upon women who suffer from cancer, where early detection by the medical profession can mean the difference between life and death. Other aspects of pervasive gender inequality play an equally important role in women's health. There is a need for better reproductive health education programs for women across Yemen as recent studies have positively correlated low levels of education with high rates of maternal mortality, and illiterate women were found to be at higher risk of morbidity.<sup>104</sup>

As indicated in the previous section, maternal health also decreases by the practice of genital mutilation or cutting, which can result in significant complications during child birth and sometimes in the death of the baby, raising the likelihood of death between 15 and 55 per cent, depending on the level of mutilation. The mother, too, is prone to suffer life-long consequences from genital mutilation that include cysts, infections and bleeding, all of which can raise the likelihood of mortality when combined with pregnancy. Early age of marriage is also a contributing factor in maternal mortality. The mortality rate among mothers aged less than 20 years old represents one-third of total maternal deaths, indicating a serious risk associated with early pregnancy. One positive indicator is that the reproduction rate of women under 20 is currently at 52 per cent, representing a marked decrease from its 1994 rate of 66 per cent.<sup>105</sup>

The chewing of *qat* has also been known to affect maternal health. The plant's high vitamin C level and use in traditional remedies are used as a justification for its use in order to mask its negative impacts in Yemeni society. Chewing *qat* reduces the appetite and, therefore, places mothers at an increased risk of malnutrition with unknown consequences for the foetus. *Qat* consumption utilises a large portion of family budgets, leaving less money available for quality food products that are essential for maintaining maternal health, especially during pregnancy.<sup>106</sup> Chewing *qat* also has a number of other social consequences that can affect mothers indirectly: withdrawals from *qat* can be emotionally draining, resulting in chronic fatigue that can lead to *qat* users being made redundant at work, placing them at increased risk of poverty. Withdrawal can furthermore lead to aggression, increasing the likelihood of domestic violence against vulnerable members of society, like women and children. GBV is very frequent in Yemen, where it is largely dealt with as a family matter, that is not sufficiently regulated by the state and women have little recourse to safe houses, mediation and other protective services, which, where they do exist, are often culturally and socially stigmatised. Thus far, women's shelters have only been established in Sana'a and Aden. Awareness of the frequency and severity of gender based violence among state officials in Yemen is low, so that the issue is frequently overlooked at the policy level and legislation on the matter is poor.<sup>107</sup>

Beyond these issues, however, women's health and maternal health are affected by any number of broader social challenges, such as malnutrition and extreme poverty, as detailed below in Figure 9. Lack of access to clean drinking water, particularly in more isolated rural areas, leads to the spread of associated diseases and infections. Furthermore, lack of potable water has serious implications for hygiene, particularly during delivery. Where clean drinking water is available, it is not necessarily affordable for families, who frequently sacrifice their hygiene needs as a result of their limited finances. Meanwhile, hunger often impacts expectant mothers more severely than others, as essential nutrients are bypassed to the growing foetus in order to produce healthier offspring, weakening women and placing them at increased risk of other avoidable illnesses. Social factors are also important in determining maternal well-being, as many issues relating to reproductive healthcare are often stigmatised and left unreported to healthcare professionals. Furthermore,

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 26.

<sup>106</sup> Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation with the FAO, 2008. *Qat Production in Yemen: Water Use, Competitiveness and Possible Policy Options for Change*, 7.

<sup>107</sup> Alsharki, Raufa Hassan, 2008. *Final Evaluation on the GBV project: period 2008-2010, Yemen*.

reproductive health is often overlooked by families as a worthwhile expenditure, so that women's health problems are often left untreated.<sup>108</sup>

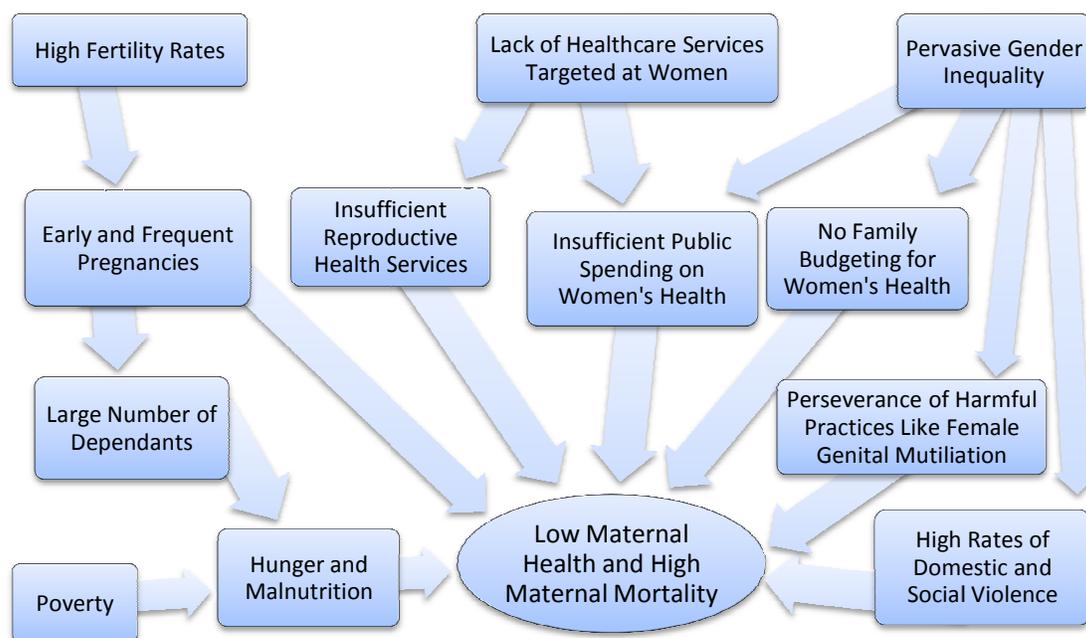


Figure 5. Root and Proximate Causes of Low Maternal Health and High Maternal Mortality

## MDG 6. Combating Diseases

There have been some notable successes in combating diseases in Yemen.<sup>109</sup> Measles have been transformed from a significant cause of death in 2000 to a disease with no recorded fatalities between 2006 and 2009. There has also been evidence of a marked decrease in new tuberculosis cases, which have fallen from 41 new positive cases per 100,000 people in 2000 to roughly 3 cases in 2009. Additionally, malaria cases have declined from 1,263 cases per 100,000 (or 35 per cent of the population) people in 1990 to 600 cases per 100,000 people (or 26 per cent of the population) in 2009. In addition, mortality rates associated with malaria decreased to 5.9 deaths per 100,000 people in 2009 as a result of the malaria combating activities in endemic areas.<sup>110</sup> The implementation of a national strategy for combating malaria by the GoY has been a significant factor towards these positive results (though 68 per cent of the population are still estimated to be at risk of contracting the disease<sup>111</sup>). Under this approach, 283,825 houses in high-risk areas have been sprayed with long lasting pesticides, protecting approximately three million people in 2009. Additionally, 990,000 long-lasting saturated bed nets were distributed between 2004 and 2009, with a supplementary three million to be distributed in the near future. 259,295 anti-malarial doses were also distributed to priority healthcare facilities, so that in 2010, Yemen is on track for meeting its malaria targets under MDG 6, though malaria remains a serious health risk in the country today.<sup>112</sup> The future of health in Yemen, however, will be strongly connected to issues of water availability and

<sup>108</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

<sup>109</sup> Target 3 is to have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidences of malaria and other major diseases.

<sup>110</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

<sup>111</sup> Research Interview, World Health Organisation, 15 August 2010.

<sup>112</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*.

sanitation, as many diseases, such as schistosomiasis (which now affects over 3.5 million people in Yemen), have been linked to water transmission.<sup>113</sup>

In other areas, however, the sixth MDG has progressed quite slowly between 2005 and 2010.<sup>114</sup> Reported HIV infections have increased from 874 in 2000 to 2,882 cases in 2009. This rate of change is perhaps a reflection of better diagnostic capacities within the health sector; however, these reported cases may only represent the surface of a much deeper problem. The reported level for HIV/AIDS may appear lower than it actually is within the region because, for every case of HIV/AIDS reported, countless more could escape detection.<sup>115</sup> This dynamic can be explained, in part, by the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in Yemen. The country, being largely founded upon an Islamic belief system which influences every aspect of social life, stigmatises many sexually transmitted diseases. The proportion of means of transmission of HIV/AIDS are: through heterosexual activity (which constituted 77.3 per cent of infections), followed by homosexual activity (16 per cent), blood products (6.8 per cent), and remaining by injected drug users.<sup>116</sup> These means of transmission have impacted on the rate of reporting of the disease, with extramarital sex extremely frowned upon in Yemeni culture and homosexual intercourse completely discredited by many prominent state and religious leaders. Particularly vulnerable groups include women, children and young people, sex workers, migrant labourer, fishermen, prisoners and persons already exposed to sexually transmitted diseases.

A new HIV/AIDS law, was developed and brought into force in 2009 with the assistance of UNDP, to secure and improve the rights of people living with the condition and dictates evidence-based strategies for prevention (including the specialised training of religious leaders). The treatment of HIV/AIDS in Yemen is also improving with the building of new governmental healthcare centres where those infected may seek treatment free of charge.<sup>117</sup> So far, these clinics have only been established in the centre and south of the country, leaving the north very much under-served. Awareness of HIV/AIDS is also improving, with new programs targeting schools as mechanisms for disease education. Over the 2005 - 2010 period, knowledge of the methods of HIV/AIDS transmission has grown stronger among children and young people, inspiring hope for the future. However, despite some progress, many areas of HIV/AIDS reduction planning have been overlooked and Yemen is unlikely to meet targets set by MDG6. **There remains a strong need, for instance, to launch targeted programs in prisons, aimed at improving general healthcare conditions and at reducing the spread of the virus.**

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<sup>113</sup> Research Interview, Minister of Health and Population, 15 August 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Target 1 is to have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

<sup>115</sup> WNC 2008. *Report on the Status of Women*, 24.

<sup>116</sup> SOUL, 2009. *HIV/AIDS Follow-Up Assessment*, 41.

<sup>117</sup> Target 2 is to achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment of HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.

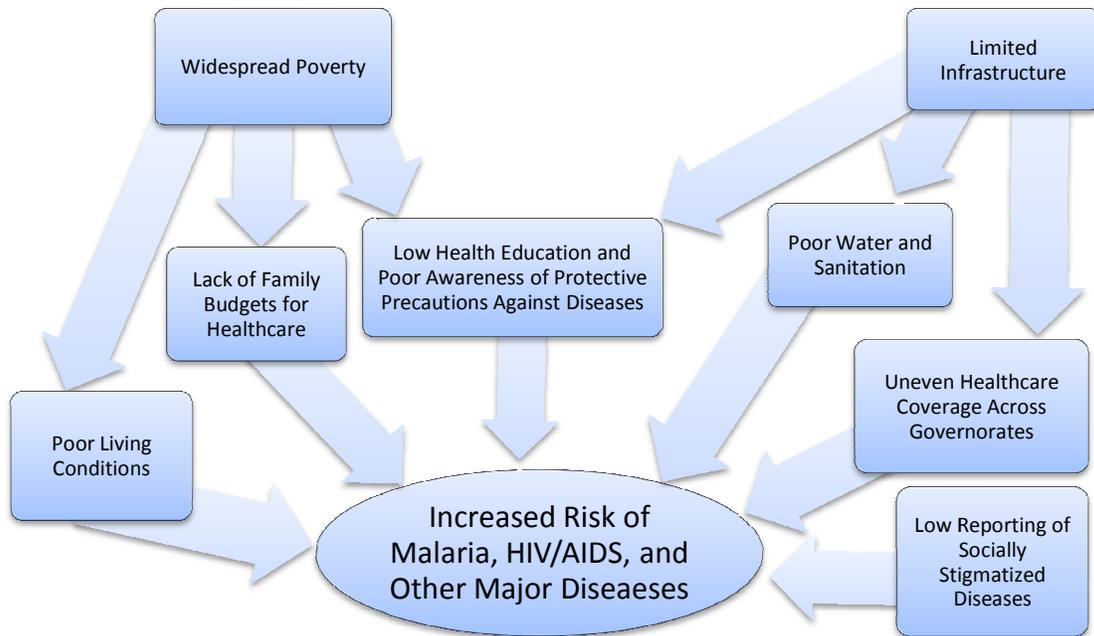


Figure 6. Root and Proximate Causes of Malaria, HIV/AIDS, and Other Major Diseases

### MDG 7. Ensuring environmental sustainability

This MDG is of critical importance to Yemen, where climate change is anticipated to be a very real and pressing issue in the years to come. Since water shortages have proven to be a fundamental challenge to Yemen's development,<sup>118</sup> anticipated changes in rainfall and temperatures will have particularly strong repercussions for the agricultural sector and cause countless developmental challenges across other sectors as well.<sup>119</sup> Yemen is also highly vulnerable to natural disasters, situated as it is upon an area of elevated tectonic movement, whose ecosystems remain vulnerable to degradation.<sup>120</sup> Though earthquakes are infrequent, they have a devastating impact when they do occur, as seen most recently on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010, when an earthquake hit Ibb, displacing 50 families. Economic development has pushed Yemen's ecosystems to breaking point and constant protective measures are required to maintain their balance. Thanks to these protective measures, protected areas have remained steady between 1996 and 2009, representing 3,625km<sup>2</sup> or 0.69 per cent of Yemen's land. Active efforts are under way to increase these areas, in an effort to protect Yemen's biodiversity. Though forest cover has also remained steady at 1 per cent between 1990 and 1995, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita have doubled between 1991 and 2007, reaching 0.9868 metric tons, with 247.7 metric tons of ozone depleting Chloroflourocarbons (CFCs) consumed.<sup>121</sup>

Beyond climate change, Yemen's delicate ecosystems, including its mountain ranges, are threatened by natural disasters, including earthquakes, sandstorms, insect infestations and sporadic rainfall patterns that result in either drought or flooding. Recent examples of natural disasters include the eruption of the Jabal al-Tair volcano in 2007 (which resulted in minimal casualties), and widespread

<sup>118</sup> Target 3 is to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

<sup>119</sup> World Bank, 2010. *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Variability on the Water and Agriculture Sectors, and the Policy Implications*.

<sup>120</sup> Yemeni Environmental Protection Council, 2001. *Initial National Communication Under United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change*.

<sup>121</sup> United Nations Data, 2010.

flooding. In 2007 and 2008, flooding affected 2,000 and 25,000 people respectively, illustrating that cities remain ill equipped to handle heavy rainfall. Therefore, raising the resilience of communities in Yemen to climate change and natural disasters has been a priority for many international organisations, especially UN agencies, between 2005 and 2010, but with little progress. Yemen's water table meanwhile is rapidly depleting and, as of 2009, was reportedly shrinking at a rate of 8 metres per year.<sup>122</sup> Surface water is largely seasonal and often unreliable, forcing Yemenis to rely upon drilling for underground reservoirs in order to meet their needs. Recently, the over-use of ground water reserves has led to structural collapses underground that have, in turn, begun to contaminate water supplies. The extraction of ground water is extremely under-regulated, and the World Bank anticipates that most of the ground water will be exhausted within another two to three decades.<sup>123</sup> Improper waste disposal systems will also hamper Yemen's future, with high rates of littering across the countryside and the contamination of drinking water reservoirs. The over farming and overuse of agricultural land, as well as an increase in fishing, is likely to lead to a reduction in biodiversity across the country as a whole. Finally, inefficient energy use in both rural and urban areas of Yemen has led to increased energy consumption and evidence of widespread pollution is visible everywhere.

Imminent water shortages could severely hamper Yemen's future. Increased droughts, higher temperatures, desertification and changes in precipitation patterns are forecasted and anticipated to have a negative and degrading impact upon agricultural lands. Estimates suggest that 93 per cent of available surface and ground water is currently used in agriculture.<sup>124</sup> A large portion of that water goes into irrigating *qat*, whose productivity is linked to the amount of water given, leading to enormous expenditures of available water resources on the crop. Because of the strong tendency among farmers to over-irrigate their fields while growing *qat*, soil is degraded and soil nutrients are being exhausted. *Qat* farming is one of the sectors that greatly benefits from government fuel subsidies, as fuel is required to pump water into the fields. Another issue for concern is the anticipated impact of climate change upon global fisheries, where there are strong indications that the interactions between the effects of fishing and climate change will reduce the age, size, and geographical diversity of sea populations and the biodiversity of marine ecosystems.<sup>125</sup> Currently, it is virtually impossible to predict the full impact of climate change on fisheries, a sector that Yemen is now rapidly trying to develop. Yemen, therefore, needs to begin to undertake serious adaptation measures in order to anticipate future changes to its ecology and climate.<sup>126</sup>

Water demand has now exceeded supply in Yemen and threatens humanitarian needs, sustainable development, and conflict dynamics. National water provision services are limited in their coverage of the population; by one estimate almost 50 per cent of the poor are not served by any government water projects and must rely on alternative sources such as water wells and wadis or private projects.<sup>127</sup> In terms of MDG targets related to the improvement of water and sanitation access, 59 per cent of the national population have improved drinking water sources and 52 per cent have access to improved sanitation facilities. However, a mere 5 per cent of the population has access to water treatment<sup>128</sup> and access to water and sanitation is strongly correlated with geographical

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<sup>122</sup> Oxford Analytica, 2009. *Yemen Country Report*, 16.

<sup>123</sup> World Bank, 2010. *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Variability on the Water and Agriculture Sectors, and the Policy Implications*. This is particularly relevant to Target 2 - to reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.

<sup>124</sup> World Bank, 2010. *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Variability on the Water and Agriculture Sectors, and the Policy Implications*, xii.

<sup>125</sup> World Bank, 2007. *Poverty Assessment in Yemen*, 1.

<sup>126</sup> World Bank, 2010. *Assessing the Impact of Climate Change and Variability on the Water and Agriculture Sectors, and the Policy Implications*, xv.

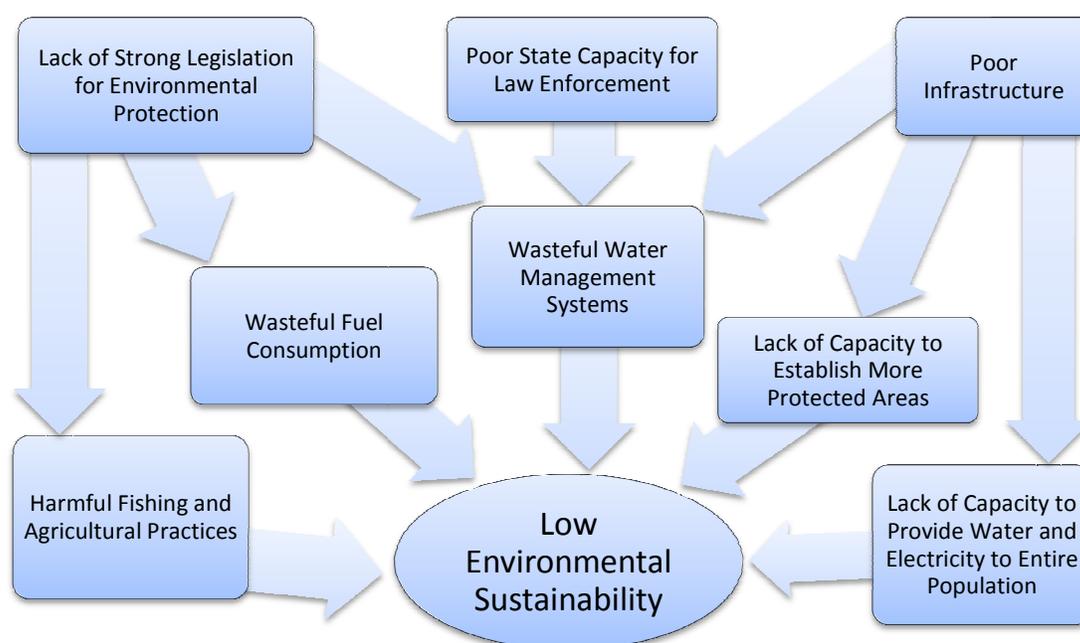
<sup>127</sup> MOPIC and UNDP, 2010. *Yemen 2010 MDGs Report*, 9.

<sup>128</sup> UNICEF, 2008. *Situation Analysis on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Yemen* 3.

location. Urban areas in Yemen have the world's fourth lowest access to improved water sources.<sup>129</sup> Rural populations are relatively deprived in terms of sanitation, with 33.6 per cent with improved sanitary means of excreta disposal compared to 92.3 per cent in urban areas.<sup>130</sup> In the long-term, rural populations will be more negatively affected by increasing water scarcity as it impedes agricultural activity, upon which a majority depend for their survival.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to the disparity seen between rural and urban communities, socio-economic status has been found to be the largest determinant of access to water and sanitation. The gap in access to improved sources of both drinking water and sanitary means of excreta disposal ranges from 1.7 per cent for the poorest households to 77.1 per cent for those living in the richest.<sup>132</sup> Poor people, therefore, must allocate a large proportion of their income to secure sufficient supplies of water.<sup>133</sup> In addition to a financial burden, it has been estimated that, excluding those households with water on the premises, the average time to a drinking water source is approximately 64 minutes.

The water crisis is largely caused by rising domestic consumption that is a product of population growth, poor water management and wasteful irrigation techniques, absence of adequate resource governance and widespread corruption.<sup>134</sup> **To prevent catastrophic consequences, an integrated and comprehensive strategy should be adopted, joining all relevant stakeholders in a network of water governance.**<sup>135</sup>



**Figure 7. Root and Proximate Causes of Low Environmental Sustainability**

<sup>129</sup> UNHCR, 2010. *Analysis of Gaps in the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers*, 38.

<sup>130</sup> UNICEF, 2008. *Situation Analysis on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Yemen*, 40.

<sup>131</sup> Target 4 is by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers across the world.

<sup>132</sup> UNICEF, 2008. *Situation Analysis on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) in Yemen*, 41.

<sup>133</sup> MOPIC and UNDP, 2010. *Yemen 2010 MDGs Report*, 9.

<sup>134</sup> Boucek, 2009. *Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral*, 6.

<sup>135</sup> Target 1 is to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

## MDG 8. Developing a Global Partnership

One of the GoY's development priorities has been to join the GCC, an economic union of Gulf countries with a regional common market and a defence planning council based on common ideologies and Islamic principles. Yemen had been excluded from this council since its formation due to the country's failure to denounce the Iraqi accession of Kuwait in 1990. At that point, all Yemeni migrant labourers working in the Gulf were sent back to Yemen. Since then, Yemen has strived to restore its diplomatic ties within the region in order to allow its people to work in the Gulf, developing capacities, raising remittances and opening up the Yemeni market. Today, it has partially succeeded in that goal: Yemeni job applicants are actually granted priority of employment in GCC countries, if their skills and levels of education match those of other candidates. Unfortunately, with huge limitations in Yemen's human capacity, this is rarely the case. However, Yemen's acceptance into the GCC goes a long way towards materialising MDG 8, and multiple organisations are now working to increase the competitiveness of Yemeni migrants through targeted training programs. Trade between Yemen and the GCC countries, has grown from US\$3.5bn to US\$5.1bn between 2005 and 2008. With the upcoming establishment of three joint free zones and a wealth of multiparty investment projects, this partnership is expected to grow further.<sup>136</sup>

Other regional and international networks for cooperation and development include the Friends of Yemen. Established in January 2010, the Friends of Yemen consists of 22 states and international organizations, which set up two working groups that deal with "economy and governance" and "justice and the rule of law". While the establishment of this network is evidence of a growing regional and global acknowledgement of the urgency of Yemen's developmental and humanitarian crises, the success of the global efforts is dependent upon the government of Yemen implementing the recommendations of the two groups in letter and spirit.<sup>137</sup> Successful implementation of recommendations of the two groups shall facilitate donors to fulfil their aid commitments made in the past and also make additional commitments.

Yemen has also made efforts to improve its global reputation and investment climate by reforming its business laws and investing in institutional development.<sup>138</sup> It has secured the financial and administrative independence of its judiciary under the demands of good governance and has begun attempts to modernise its civil service. The GoY has also worked to improve relations with the donor community, so that they might be based on principles of transparency and credibility. At the same time, Yemen has made a significant effort to mainstream its signed international treaties into local legislation, in order to improve relations with non-regional countries. Twenty eight states and parties currently provide financial assistance to Yemen and almost 30 international and regional organisations are now present in the country.<sup>139</sup> Though faith in Yemen's leadership is still lacking, so many donors work through international organisations to provide aid to the country, the government is making efforts to limit internal corruption.

Many of Yemen's needs remain outstanding, however, with a priority to computerise government services and to improve access and awareness of IT services in all sectors. Yet with limited access to

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<sup>136</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 44. Target 5 is to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications in cooperation with the private sector

<sup>137</sup> Target 2 is to address the special needs of the least developed countries. Target 4 is to provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries, in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies.

<sup>138</sup> Target 1 is to develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. This includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – both nationally and internationally.

<sup>139</sup> UNDP with the Republic of Yemen, 2010. *Yemen Report 2010: Millennium Development Goals*, 43, 45. Target 3 is to deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

electricity across the country, serious efforts need to be put into this sector if these and other such dreams are to be realised. Other priorities that include the provision of essential drugs to the poor, the boosting of international trade and the implementation of country's debt management system, still require further support from Yemen's immediate neighbours and allies the world over.

### 2.3. Human Rights Obligations

Yemen has a strong record of ratifying international human rights conventions, as shown in Annex 3. In principle and in terms of legal obligations, Yemen supports equal treatment for women and the protection of children. It is against all forms of racial discrimination and condemns torture and slavery. One area that is largely missing from its commitments relates to the protection of certain groups, including the protection of non-Somali refugees and the protection of migrant workers and their families; however, in this area, Yemen is not an exception, as many other regional powers have also refused to ratify conventions seeking to protect refugees as well as to grant equal employment rights to legal migrants. On the other hand, Yemen is exploring the possibility of drafting national refugee legislation, building on the recent establishment of a new Bureau for Refugees. Unfortunately, GOY efforts toward implementation of ratified international labour standards have been crippled by absence of political will, poor capacity and lack of resources to implement policy decisions of consequence to labour and employment, particularly related to workers' rights and collective bargaining.

Despite its formal commitment, progress towards the full execution of Yemen's legal obligations has been slow. A closer examination of Yemen's international commitments suggests two obvious conclusions.

The first is that Yemen still has a long way to go towards implementing the conventions to which it is a party, most of which are not integrated into national legislation. Children's rights are an example of this lack of full implementation. While the government has made efforts to strengthen the justice system for children, the national legislation contravenes the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*, notably in three areas: definition of child, personal status law, and administration of juvenile justice. There is a critical need for the endorsement and adoption of the amendments of the Yemeni Child Law currently under revision by parliament with regards to protection of children, including: amendments to the minimum age of criminal responsibilities (from 7 to 10 years old) and the upper age of juvenile (from 15 to 18); provisions to ban traditional harmful practices, specifically female genital mutilation and child marriage; measures to protect child victims/witnesses of crime; and the complete ban of the death penalty against children. There is also a need for the establishment of child-friendly policies, procedures and referrals for children, offenders, witnesses and victims of crimes, and development of programs that promote prevention and social reintegration of children in contact with the law.

Opposition from traditional systems and practices is an important factor in this disconnect between international law and national legislation. Yemen is dominated by a network of tribal systems where beliefs often directly contradict the content of human rights treaties to which the country is party. Awareness of the treaties and their contents is not only limited among the general population but among legal practitioners as well. Informal structures are very strong in Yemen and many tribes and communities administer themselves with little contact with the central authority. They simply will not integrate human rights treaties in their jurisdictions of which they either have no knowledge of or faith in. Beyond this, it is currently not possible for Yemen to uphold universally the human rights treaties, as a number of developmental challenges undermine the rights of its citizens to food, water, safety and employment daily.

The second conclusion, which goes a long way towards validating the first, is that many of the international agreements lack legitimacy in the country because they were signed and ratified prior

to the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1990. It is difficult to assess whether treaties are consulted in the drafting of legislation that does not directly concern them, and many parliamentarians remain hostile to international treaties as a whole.<sup>140</sup> The integration of human rights conventions into legal education remains limited, so that many trainee lawyers and judges continue to be taught that these conventions are not the highest level of law within the country.<sup>141</sup>

Nevertheless, as a positive sign for future implementation, the current Yemeni leadership has reaffirmed their support for the international convention system by most recently signing the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in 2009, and the GoY's has maintained its submission of human rights reports. A more practical indicator has been Yemen's relatively constructive and welcoming attitude towards Somali refugees, who are automatically granted asylum upon arrival in the country. Although, while it is true that Yemen is a signatory to many human rights instruments, the main problem is that Yemen is not demonstrating its commitment to implement these instruments through activities that may actualize their commitments.

#### 2.4. Conclusions

Although there have been important achievements – in education (MDG 2), combating diseases (MDG 6), and the development of a global partnership (MDG 8) through improved regional relations, - this chapter has demonstrated that overall progress during 2005 - 2010 has been slow in meeting the developmental needs and targets agreed by the UN and GoY in the MD and MDGs, and the international human rights treaties. Important efforts have been made but the evidence confirms that Yemen is not in a position to meet its MDG targets, having already failed to meet those targets set for 2010. Furthermore, although human rights treaties have been signed, there has been disappointing progress towards the full implementation of its legal commitments in national legislation. Last, according to the analysis of the HDI, the period 2010 – 2015 may be shaped by fluctuating trends in development.

Failure to meet the MDGs runs parallel to the lack of implementation and enforcement of human rights treaties, as many of the individual MDG targets will not show any sign of improvement unless Yemen's development is addressed holistically from an HRBA standpoint. The dedicated protection of vulnerable demographic groups like women and children through human rights legislation that recognizes and enforces their equal status is a necessary beginning for opening up their social mobility and therefore their access to essential services. Likewise, other social groups like IDPs and refugees require the guarantee of equal employment rights if they are to lift themselves out of poverty and deprivation. While the UN continues to hold the HRBA at its core, new pathways of non-aggressive communication and dialogue need to be followed if the full cooperation of the GoY is to be enlisted in its projects. In particular, human rights must be presented not as an attack on Yemen's culture and traditions but as the key to securing the welfare and future of the Yemeni people. Finding a correct balance between human rights, development and cooperation will emerge as a priority challenge of the next decade of the UN's operations.

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<sup>140</sup> Elobaid, 2010. *A Study Prepared for the Project on Strengthening National Capacity in Human Rights*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> Elobaid, 2010. *A Study Prepared for the Project on Strengthening National Capacity in Human Rights*.

### 3. Development Opportunities and Barriers

This CCA identifies nine obstacles to explain why there has been less progress than expected in meeting socio-economic and human development targets, including those set by the MD as well as those that are needed in order to ensure broader human rights coverage of the population in Yemen. The obstacles are loosely categorized according to two main types of barriers which require serious attention: the structural (underlying), and the programmatic (immediate).

There are five structural barriers. They relate to operational conditions in Yemen and centre on: state authority and legitimacy; cultural values and traditions; institutional capacities; human capacities; and the state's carrying capacity. In addition, four programmatic barriers have been identified, which relate to programming limitations that have impeded the ability of UN agencies on the ground to meet their operational targets. They consist of: an increasing gap between funding and needs (which results from a lack of absorption capacity in Yemen); inaccessibility to quality essential services; disjointed thinking and planning; and failing to contextualize standardized approaches.

While there are inevitable overlaps between the structural and the programmatic barriers, it is asserted that the former are more deeply entrenched and unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future, and therefore, demand a longer-term approach and more consolidated effort if Yemen is to advance towards the MDGs and its own national development priorities. By contrast, the programmatic barriers have emerged recently, and may be addressed more immediately and in a less integrated manner.

Before a comprehensive examination of these barriers, the following analysis begins by identifying the main opportunities that have, or may have in the future, facilitated and enabled progress towards operational priorities identified within the first two chapters that fall within the broad framework of stability, reform, recovery and development. The discussion focuses on the formal and informal economy, political reform, international coordination, the region, human resources, and community relations, as ways that also help to explain why greater humanitarian crises have been prevented. Finally, the opportunities will also form the main catalysts of change and entry points for intervention. In this way, they are not only particularly relevant for the forthcoming design of the UNDAF (2012 – 2015), but they are intended to be equally relevant to all other national policy frameworks and interventions.

#### 3.1. Opportunities

##### 3.1.1. The Economy

The macro economy in Yemen has faced a number of shocks since 2005, as detailed in Chapters One and Two, and these shocks have seriously impeded progress towards the MDGs (as reflected in the recent decline in public spending on healthcare, rising levels of poverty and unemployment, low retention rates of children in education, political instability and a number of other crises affecting the country). Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that there has been a relatively positive GDP growth rate, decreases in external debt and short-term moderation of increase in food prices. In addition, the potential for LNG and mining exports are significant opportunities. The agriculture, fishing, industry and tourism sector industries have not been utilized to their full overall potential and although there has been prioritization recently and gains in the investment conditions, there is untapped potential for further development that would help Yemen to move towards MD targets set for the achievement of decent work for all.

The high rates of poverty and its intergenerational nature demonstrate overwhelmingly the need for pro-poor growth policies. The detailed understanding of the trends based on better data sets is, in itself, an opportunity for growth because it enables better targeting of policies and interventions.

### **3.1.2. Increased Regional Relevance and Cooperation**

Given its location in the region, Yemen will continue to deal with the effects of the crisis in the Horn of Africa and, to that end, it has one of the most welcoming refugee policies, which unfortunately creates additional strain on its economy and welfare services. On the other hand, regional relations between the Gulf States have been difficult over the last two decades and previous substantial aid pledges have been slow to materialize, disrupting the GoY's ability to budget effectively for incoming funds. GCC donors have also been associated with lax monitoring and evaluation processes, so that their funds are more vulnerable to corruption and exploitation. At the same time, Yemen's ongoing political crisis and deteriorating security situation has led to the withdrawal of many local, regional and international businesses and investors from its markets, aggravating its economic challenges.

It is for these reasons that Yemen's regional relevance and cooperation will play a vital role in its development in the coming years, and new allegiances within the GCC could hold tremendous possibilities for turning around its economic fragility. It is important to recognize that, in moving towards the targets set by MDG 8 and in reaching for the priorities enshrined by the NRA, the GoY has taken substantial steps to heal the rift between Yemen and the Gulf states with limited successes that have included increased communication and promises of future assistance. With that comes the potential for attracting investment and opening its own labour market to foreign businesses, as well as foreign labour markets to Yemeni migrants. The GCC is also committed to playing a greater role in developmental assistance, with Qatar, in particular, becoming a facilitator of long-term solutions to the Sa'ada conflict. It is important to seize upon these regional partnerships in order to develop Yemen's network of global cooperation.

### **3.1.3. Enhancing Government Authority and Legitimacy**

Despite slow and patchy reforms, the analysis has demonstrated the willingness of the GoY to initiate and lead democratic reforms in order to enhance its own authority and legitimacy, as illustrated, among other positive indicators, by its:

- Series of national development plans;
- Consecutive poverty reduction strategies;
- Signature to the majority of human rights standards;
- Recognition of the need for national dialogue;
- Participation in peace processes (internal and disputes with neighbouring Oman) and ceasefires to address the violent conflicts;
- Recent achievements in judicial reform; and
- Commitment to finding durable solutions to natural resource depletion and environmental management, among other positive indicators.

While this willingness is clearly recognized overall by donors, international agencies and indigenous organizations, the need for international support to remain ongoing and the development of innovative approaches should be emphasized if these commitments are to interface with human rights and MDG priorities. Furthermore, there is a need for the government to support these initiatives with an active legislative and oversight mechanism to offer and follow up on the implementation of measures to improve governance and reduce inequalities. Enhancing government authority and legitimacy will likely prove to be a case of state building, enhancing the very infrastructure of which the GoY is comprised while pushing for more responsive, inclusive and accountable governance in the process. At present, efforts to initiate such change are significantly undercut by the system of patronage which is pervasive in Yemen. Any true change within the

system of government would have to spring from a deliberate distancing of the GoY from traditional networks of patronage, giving greater priority to addressing broad development challenges that include redressing the political, legal, economic and social exclusion of certain demographic groups, like women. To this end, donor coordination in local governance assistance needs to integrate a conflict-sensitive analysis and conflict-sensitive priorities, within a vision to redress the patronage-based political economy. The dialogue that has already started between the Regional Coordinator, the UNCT and donors is one positive initiative in this regard.

#### **3.1.4. International Willingness to Coordinate**

The international willingness to coordinate humanitarian and developmental assistance has proved crucial with regard to generating funding in the pursuit of MDGs 1 through 7 and in setting the foundations for the achievement of MDG 8. It is also important to recognize the attempts by donors to innovate in this sense, as proven by the formation and recent contributions of the Friends of Yemen.

As demonstrated throughout the analysis, the UNCT has a technical role in coordination, with particular emphasis on partnering with the GoY in order to build capacities and in specifically developing a national disaster response system.

However, more can be done to increase the coordination and integration of development. One example is the use of education services as a vehicle for and multiplier of broader local development reforms by linking schools to health clinics, employing more livelihood projects, and implementing more participatory and accountable forms of local governance.

#### **3.1.5. Harnessing the Informal Economy**

The analysis above has highlighted the extensive range of complex national and global trends that have created the current economic crisis. At the same time, this assessment also reveals that the informal economy has grown. This trend demonstrates significant coping mechanisms among local populations, which are untapped opportunities for poverty reduction and economic growth. For example, the *zakat* funds are typically an important social welfare mechanism across the region that could be harnessed for great potential in Yemen.

Given the nature of the wider economic crises and the particularly high rates of poverty and unemployment, it is essential for interventions to understand how informal economic activities have been sustained, and the potential that external support can create, and to address how the informal economy can deliver more equitable and greater public value at the local levels.

#### **3.1.6. Emerging Human Resources**

Similarly, in closely reviewing the trends, the youth bulge can easily be utilized as an opportunity for stability and long-term development. Many Yemeni youth have aspirations for sustainable employment and better opportunities, and there is a need to utilise these aspirations before they turn to dissatisfaction and political unrest. The fulfilment of these aspirations is an essential target of MDG1 and will generate a significant reduction in poverty and hunger.

Other specific sub-groups that possess the potential to effect constructive change include the educated Yemenis who experience a high rate of unemployment; the skilled migrant workers who have returned from the Gulf States; and women. Inward and outward flows of people place capacity under strain, and there are clear interconnections between population growth, migration, climate change, resources, educational levels, and economic livelihoods. With low skill levels due to the poor educational infrastructure, Yemen's expanding population is prevented from being a positive factor that could drive economic growth; rather, it is an additional burden on already strained ecological, social and economic systems. Combined with the threat of climate change, greater human

displacement, environmental destruction and depleted natural resources, a deeper humanitarian and developmental crisis has the potential to occur. A comprehensive and holistic development strategy that builds institutional and human capacity and addresses population growth and resource vulnerability is required. Refugees and IDPs should not be neglected by such a strategy, since they have tremendous potential to contribute to the Yemeni economy, they must not be allowed to fall behind in the development of their skills base or education as a result of their displacement.

More broadly, the Yemeni diaspora could make a significant contribution to the country's socio-economic development if properly engaged. To this end, there is a need to galvanize and coordinate support for the GoY in order to advance the priorities delineated in its national '10 Point Plan'. This plan lists ten strategies to promote Yemen's long-term growth and stability, including a national program for the return of qualified Yemeni expatriates. In this respect, the potential benefit of Yemeni migration is finally gaining due recognition. The GoY has also recently reiterated an appeal to key destination countries to increase Yemeni access to employment abroad in line with the requirements of MDGs 1 and 8, with some significant success. Yemen should therefore look to strengthen the link between migration and development by encouraging productive remittance use and encouraging investment of financial, social and human capital associated with migrants' return. Remittances remain a very important source of income for the Yemeni economy, which can be linked to various sustainable and inclusive growth opportunities.

In its most basic sense, the relative improvement in the availability and reach of field data creates unique and far-reaching opportunities for more targeted programming and interventions which ought now to speed up the pursuit of the MDGs and other development plans, as well as the potential for reforming and developing dormant and untapped sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, industry and tourism.

#### **3.1.7. Strong Community Relations**

Yemen's strong tribal relations and system of patronage have been identified as a principle source of corruption, human rights violations, failed government programs, lack of national unity, conflict and many other developmental challenges. Therefore, it is not surprising that the intricate network of communal relations that spawned these allegiances is frequently overlooked as a positive force in Yemeni culture and society. As the last opportunity, the ability of Yemen's population to cope and survive a series of humanitarian crises and protracted underdevelopment reveals strong networks and kinship values at the individual, familial and societal levels. It is also important to recognize the ability of communities to adjust to change as detailed in Chapters One and Two. Specific indicators include the adoption of a more reform-oriented approach to democratization and towards single issues such as underage marriage, which is a consequence of important leadership by civil society and religious leaders (although the issue itself remains a phenomenal challenge in Yemen today). Furthermore, there are signs that Yemenis would be willing to return to villages that have been cut off by unexploded ordinance and an absence of state infrastructure, if reconstruction began in those areas and safety levels were to increase.

### **3.2. Structural Barriers**

The following five structural barriers attempt to consolidate the analysis of the socio-economic, political and developmental situation to determine why progress towards MDG targets and national priorities has been slow.

#### **3.2.1. State Authority and Legitimacy**

As a multi-party democracy, the GoY has prioritized political reform and the country has embarked on an initiative to promote national dialogue. Nevertheless, it remains a multilayered tribal society that is easily exposed to political divisions. Three tensions within governance remain particularly

prominent and are especially visible at the local governance level and in decentralization projects. These are: a tension between national and local legitimacy, as well as between national and local authority which impedes the establishment of nation-wide programs in Yemen; a tension between the improvement of government operations and the improvement of governance relations between the GoY and Yemeni society, which confuses the issue of state legitimacy with operational efficiency; and, a tension between reactive and proactive programming that prioritizes “quick win” projects over developmental ones in order to boost popular opinion. These tensions have contributed to a crisis of authority and legitimacy that has been exacerbated by ongoing developmental challenges. Since 2005, there has been evidence of greater fragmentation as a consequence of poverty, increased unemployment, and the failure to create tangible development gains at the local level. Disparities across governorates, a disenfranchised youth, tensions between the centre and the periphery and unresolved north and south issues have come to the fore. Since the UN partners with the government in all its initiatives, it has become extremely difficult to reach all sectors of society to build towards the MDG targets. Furthermore, capacity building of the state has presented equal challenges.

First, there has been local resistance to the attempts to introduce new forms and more formal processes of governance. Examples include the failed attempts to integrate human rights legislation and the strengthening of women’s participation in the political process. Second, many governorates retain substantial administrative independence, leading to a clash between national and local priorities. Third, it is argued that, “the state does not exercise either control over the entire national territory or a monopoly of the means of coercion”.<sup>142</sup> Decentralization has been offered as one solution to separatist demands, but it is not now possible to determine the long-term effects of such a strategy, particularly in a country where state control over the governorates is limited. Support for separatist ideologies has reportedly grown in the country alongside concerns that the probability of a break-up of the state is on the rise.<sup>143</sup> Fears for the country’s political stability have centered on the issue of national elections, which have been pushed back to 2011 due to requests by opposition parties that the electoral system be reformed. Large parties have historically boycotted such elections, leading to widespread dissatisfaction with the democratic process among their supporters. The coming election could ignite political conflicts as diverse and contradictory ideologies are pitted against each other in a fight for control over Yemen’s future. It has been argued that the nature of the political system inhibits popular legitimacy and a clear division of powers. Civil society and government overlap and the “space for political competition is circumscribed by the regime’s need for stability.” The same source alleges that the General People’s Congress (GPC) is compromised by the decision-making powers that have been granted to individuals outside the party. Furthermore, the ability of the state “to divide sheikhs from their tribes and cultivate some sheikhs’ personal dependence on the regime means that “[p]olitical relationships are essentially personal and private rather than public and institutional” while “[p]atron-client relationships and widespread corruption have overridden some of the norms by which tribesmen used to operate”.<sup>144</sup> Accordingly, the regime is concerned only with:

...maintaining its stability through patronage and cooption, and preventing the emergence of any significant locus of threat to its central power. This imperative enforces a short-term tactical focus and inhibits the development of a state building project capable of addressing long-term strategic challenges. And such challenges are real and growing.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Khalil and MacDonald, 2009. *Report of the Assessment towards 'a whole of EU' Approach to State Building in Yemen*, 21.

<sup>143</sup> Oxford Analytica, 2009. *Yemen Country Report*; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010. *Country Report Yemen*.

<sup>144</sup> Khalil and MacDonald, 2009. *Report of the Assessment towards 'a whole of EU' Approach to State Building in Yemen*, 18-19.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid*: 20

The rule of law has also been perennially weak in terms of upward accountability among state institutions, compounded by an ineffective formal judicial system.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, other sources emphasize that the latter has progressed and that it was introduced only 30 years ago.<sup>147</sup> The outcome of a weak judiciary appears to be the increased risk of crime in the country, “especially crimes of violence”.<sup>148</sup> Burglaries (which tend to dominate most of the world’s crime rates) and other crimes that generally have a much lower frequency such as assault, battery and murder all seem to share a relatively high incidence rate, a common trend in many countries recovering from conflict. Despite the high prevalence of violent crime, the rate of reporting on these crimes is very strong, with 64 per cent of respondents in one study having reported crimes committed against them to the police.<sup>149</sup> This is an incredibly positive indicator for the rule of law, as the more informed the police services are of the security situation in the country, the more likely it is that building their law enforcement capacities might actually improve the situation.

Less direct threats to the rule of law include corruption among police and judicial services, and Yemen has regrettably fallen in the *Corruption Perceptions Index* to 146<sup>th</sup> place in 2010 from its 141<sup>st</sup> place in 2008 and its 131<sup>st</sup> place in 2007. However, since 2005, the GoY has taken active steps to ensure the independence of the judiciary in order to limit external political influences upon its judges.

Last, the authority and legitimacy of the state is further undermined by border crime, smuggling, piracy and violent crime.<sup>150</sup>

### 3.2.2. Cultural Values and Traditions

As the analysis demonstrates, despite the acceptance of change and the emergence of reform-minded leadership, local cultural values and traditions pose complex barriers to development. In particular, this CCA reveals a mismatch between local beliefs and practices and international expectations and standards for development. Specific examples relate to: population growth, gender equality, access to health and education, and the response to HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the analysis also highlights divisions among informal groups regarding these factors, and future responses will therefore need to consider the nuances of opposition.

Above all, this challenge stresses the need to ensure that development policies actually reach the communities they are intended to target and benefit.

### 3.2.3. Institutional Capacity

It needs to be emphasized that the state apparatus is absent or weak in some areas of the country and this has been a long-standing trend. Second, this CCA finds that the state staff lacks adequate capacities, a problem aggravated because of brain drain. A third cause is the attempt to rush decentralization before ensuring that the central administration is able to advocate and manage the process. Fourth, during the research interviews, it was argued that international-led training tended to be regulated by what the donors could do (short training courses) rather than what is required.

Consequently, the state has weak capacity to enforce law, to formulate and implement policies and to promote inclusiveness. In particular, there has been an inherent inability by the GoY to deliver on actionable plans, to implement such plans effectively, and to ensure desired results. This is, in part, due to the country’s reputation for corruption and the lack of timely delivery of international and

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid*: 24.

<sup>147</sup> El-Mikawy, 2005. *Mission Report for UNDP: Judicial Reform in Yemen*.

<sup>148</sup> Kenney, 2008. *Public Perceptions of the Police in Yemen: Nationwide Surveys of Residents and Police*, 10.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid*: 12.

<sup>150</sup> Boucek, 2010. *Yemen on the Brink*.

regional developmental pledges,<sup>151</sup> making effective budgeting virtually impossible for the government. Even where funds arrive on schedule and according to existing contracts, delayed financial approval processes and bureaucratic inter-ministerial constraints frequently push projects past their operational deadlines.

More broadly, the literature review and the research interviews reveal that weak capacity appeared to challenge each of the development ministries but more extensive primary research is required to provide an in-depth analysis to identify those ministries most at risk.

#### **3.2.4. Human Capacity**

As a result of weak state capacities, violent conflict and poverty, individual capacities in Yemen are chronically weak and there is a specific lack of qualified people. All the other trends and findings in this report suggest that capacities will continue to deteriorate. The main causes of weak human capacity include:

- Poor quality of basic and higher education;
- Gender inequality and disempowerment;
- Privatization of key services,<sup>152</sup> and
- Inability to retain national capacity.

These factors are exacerbated by harsh living conditions in Yemen, which push many children out of school in favour of helping their families to cope with the effects of extreme poverty and food insecurity. Girls in particular experience high levels of social pressure to leave education in order to help their parents or husbands at home. Early marriage is a strong contributing factor in such cases. Furthermore, despite improvements in the registration of students, the ability of schools to retain students remains low, with significant decreases occurring throughout secondary and higher education facilities. These issues are linked both to the poor quality of teaching staff and to the fact that students do not seem to associate prolonged education with future career aspirations.

#### **3.2.5. The State's Carrying Capacity**

When considered together, the youth bulge, the overall population growth, the concentration in rural areas, the increase in urbanization, and the recent increase in immigration flows – despite several policies and attempts to manage the population - all place increased pressure on the country's agricultural, environmental, economic and institutional carrying capacity, placing particular additional strain on the country's resources and the capacity of the state, which, in turn, contributes directly to increased poverty. While women are particularly vulnerable, it is perhaps young people who face a more significant risk of falling into patterns of poverty, unemployment and conflict, all which carry profound implications for Yemeni society.

### **3.3. Programmatic Barriers**

Focusing on the operational level, the following barriers will most likely continue to shape the effectiveness of field operations.

#### **3.3.1. Increasing Gap between Funding and Needs**

After 2005, it has been reported that international donor funding for humanitarian assistance and development has remained the same, which clashes with the trend in increased and more acute

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<sup>151</sup> This lack of timely delivery has been linked by donors to Yemen's lack of implementation capacity. In other words, they are reluctant to distribute more funds if those that they have already sent have not been fully utilized. However, this lack of communication between donors and recipients only frustrates budgeting for the GoY and therefore undermines their implementation capacity further.

<sup>152</sup> Research Interview, Ministry of Education, 17 August 2010.

needs, Yemen remaining one of the lowest recipients of overseas development assistance, despite being one of the world's least developed countries.<sup>153</sup> The latter refers in particular to security, stability, conflict recovery and crisis mitigation, especially for forcibly displaced populations, and poverty reduction. Despite positive commitments (for example at the Consultative Group meeting in London), the actual disbursement of funding has been much less, and is in part attributable to Yemen's extremely poor absorptive capacity.<sup>154</sup> This increasing gap between funding availability and needs has further limited progress towards the MDGs, by limiting operational budgets in the field for all concerned stakeholders.

In addition, as examined above, the heightened conflict dynamics have led the GoY to shift spending from the development of government ministries and infrastructure to the Ministry of Defense, decreasing public spending on health and welfare among other sectors at a time of increased need. Also, as explored above, the GoY has less funding available for assistance due to the economic crisis, further decreasing the operational budgets of all ministries. Some ministers complain that the vast majority of their funds are used simply to cover the salaries of their staff, leaving no further budget to exert positive change in line with the national priorities expressed in the NRA.<sup>155</sup>

Given the simultaneous humanitarian and developmental nature of needs and the barriers, many agencies and NGOs are reported to be performing a dual function, with UNICEF and WFP as specific examples. During research interviews in Sana'a, the difficulties of managing and responding to competing human rights priorities emerged as a particular challenge.

### 3.3.2. Inaccessibility to Quality Essential Services

Throughout the consultation period that led to the production of the CCA, many members of the UNCT and other humanitarian and developmental organizations have reported their frustration throughout the 2005 - 2010 period as a result of limited access to many peripheral regions of Yemen. Due to increased insecurity and the deterioration of the political situation in the north and south of the country, many international organizations have not been able to obtain approval for operations in Sa'ada (with particular focus on Al-Jawf) and elsewhere, exacerbating the needs of local populations that are falling further behind in their progress towards the MDGs and in the achievement of their human rights.

As a result, the full implications of the 2005 - 2010 development period are still unknown. Lack of access has meant a lack of effective data gathering. The casualties of Yemen's internal conflict, for instance, have not been estimated, thus the full extent of the humanitarian crisis in the peripheral provinces is difficult to determine. The true nature of the displacement crisis cannot be quantified and many persons/ families displaced by floods in 2008 and 2009 are still to be assisted. Furthermore, the extent of human rights violations in these areas has not been documented. These gaps in contextual understanding have generated corresponding gaps in operational planning. After all, how can the international community effectively plan for a crisis, the dimensions of which are not known?

The limits on access and data gathering have evolved into a strong need for inter-organizational sharing of information, between international organizations themselves, and between international organizations, donors, civil society organizations, local NGOs and the GoY. A central statistical database to coordinate knowledge, expertise and projects remains an unfulfilled need in 2010. In the meantime, the UN agencies, IOM and NGOs are currently striving to improve access through the employment and deployment of local staff in the field.

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<sup>153</sup> Research Interview, MOPIC, 15 August 2010

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> This was confirmed in all government research interviews.

Given the weaknesses in capacity throughout the 2005 to 2010 period, the state has struggled to allocate and distribute services and resources necessary to meeting both immediate humanitarian and long-term developmental needs. The weak capacity accompanied with widespread corruption has worsened to delivery of services and resources. Given these constraints, the GoY now lacks the capacity to execute projects across multiple sectors and geographic locations at the same time. As a result, the government has not succeeded in effecting significant economic growth within the country.

In rural areas, poverty is considered to be the result of lack of access to basic resources such as land and water and to services such as healthcare, social protection and education, all of which form part of the development priorities enshrined in the MD. Gender inequality is also rampant among service providers, particularly in rural areas, where women are frequently marginalized and met with hostility. The remoteness and isolation of rural areas is a key factor but inequitable distribution is also critical.<sup>156</sup>

Healthcare is an important example of the link between poverty and access. Health spending as a percentage of total government expenditure for 2009 was 5.6 per cent, and Yemen ranks 140<sup>th</sup> in the HDI table for health indicators.<sup>157</sup> Also, national coverage of health services increased from 54 per cent in 2004 to 68 per cent in 2010. However, healthcare is unevenly distributed across gender and geographical axes with a severe lack of programmes for women in rural communities.<sup>158</sup> Also in rural areas, health units' facilities suffer capacity deficits in terms of qualified personnel, medicine, and other resources that prevent them from performing basic health service functions.<sup>159</sup> One consequence, highlighted under MDG 5, is that the majority of babies have been delivered in the home which places mothers and newborns at risk of complications and long-term health problems. Furthermore, some governorates receive a much lower level of health services than others. For example, in Sa'ada a blockade and protracted conflict have prevented humanitarian access and reduced flows of vital supplies.<sup>160</sup> The interconnections of threats to health require a holistic and comprehensive strategy to revitalize and expand health services, while health risks are linked to the blockage of other essential services like water provision. With large portions of the population left without safe drinking water, water based transmission of disease and lack of proper hygiene are significant contributors to health complications in Yemen. Likewise, the ongoing food crisis and resulting high levels of malnutrition have led to starvation, immune system deficiencies and many other avoidable disorders.

Energy represents another priority weakness and has been described as a "political time bomb".<sup>161</sup> In 2009, Yemen was identified by *Energy Solve International* as being the least electrified country in the Middle East and North Africa, with only a reported 40 per cent of the entire population having access to electricity and 80 - 85 per cent lacking electricity in rural areas. What little electricity is available is said to be highly unreliable and inefficiently utilized by government installations and households. The low availability of electricity in the country implies that an estimated 30 per cent of total electricity consumption is powered through the use of home generators.

Overall, the examples of weak service delivery point to poverty and the large sections of the population who have not benefited from the previous economic growth at the macro-level. Given these barriers and comparing international policy paradigms in other similar conflict-affected and

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<sup>156</sup> The national road network is poorly maintained. Yemen has more than 60,000 km of dirt tracks and trails, most of them suitable only for powerful four-wheel drive vehicles; and transport is costly and time-consuming, which compounds the cost of goods, obstructs efficient administration and restricts social and economic opportunities.

<sup>157</sup> UNDP, 2009. *Yemen Human Development Report: the Human Development Index*.

<sup>158</sup> MOPIC and UNDP, 2010. *Yemen 2010 MDGs Report*.

<sup>159</sup> *ibid*

<sup>160</sup> Research and Development (RAND), 2010: 247. *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Houthi Phenomenon*.

<sup>161</sup> Khalil and MacDonald, 2009. *Report of the Assessment towards 'a whole of EU' Approach to State Building in Yemen*, 24.

fragile states, it is highly likely that there will be increased reliance on community-driven responses to development. At the same time, it ought to be appreciated that humanitarian and development programmes can be different when it comes to access. Humanitarian assistance may require more imaginative delivery methods and flexibility in delivery due to the geographic location and local dynamics of the various conflicts. In contrast, development programs can suffer more due to their longer-term nature and the need for on-site expertise, as has been demonstrated in the 2005 - 2010 period by the clear lack of progress made towards the MDG targets.

### **3.3.3. Lack of Interconnected Thinking and Planning**

There exists an obvious lack of interconnected thinking and planning that brings together the priorities of donors, UN Agencies and the GoY to form one coherent vision of development in the country. Given the overlaps between needs and the interrelated nature of the barriers, there is an urgent demand for more interconnected thinking and planning, as well as stronger collaboration among stakeholders. The ongoing conflicts, broader forms of social violence (including domestic violence), strong tribal structures and weakened government capacities mean that the UNCT has struggled to gain access to all areas of Yemen, while it has also yet to find strong effective counterparts within the state through which to launch large-scale initiatives. Meanwhile, as the fragmentation of the Yemeni state continues to pose a looming threat over the horizon, the prioritization of international efforts has increasingly begun to shift towards efforts relating to combating terrorism, which translates into the sidetracking of humanitarian and developmental needs.<sup>162</sup> News reports which once focused upon poverty and natural disaster in Yemen have increasingly begun to make reference to Al Qaeda instead, and the US has now begun to send unmanned drones into the country to assist the GoY in its peace-keeping function, while reconstruction in affected governorates is not yet underway and the humanitarian and development needs of the country overall remain great. Consequently, the international response seems to lack a consolidated vision of development that would bring together MD and national priorities within a human rights framework, an issue that needs to be resolved during the 2010 - 2015 period, and that must actively engage civil society and social development partners in the country.

There have been important advances in the (good) governance reform agenda but obstacles persist, including the participation of women in the political system, tensions between new and traditional institutions and forms of governance, and weak rule of law. These tensions are particularly strong when issues relating to the implementation of the UN's HRBA are brought to the fore. The growing influence of the secessionist movement in the south of the country is also increasingly perceived as a direct threat to the integrity of the state, posing an added threat to progress made thus far.

Towards a global partnership in development (MDG 8), this assessment emphasizes the value to be gained from closer collaboration, especially between the UN and the GoY in order to align and support policy frameworks and to combine strengths in monitoring, addressing and responding to humanitarian crises and development.

The recent application of the cluster approach may have led to more integrated and coordinated humanitarian assistance, but, generally since 2005, policy and planning among and between multilateral, governmental and non-governmental organizations has struggled, given the greater barriers and crises affecting most of the country.

### **3.3.4. Failing to Contextualize Standardized Approaches**

This assessment reveals that importing internationally-driven policy frameworks and approaches has not proven conducive to development. Policies that are not adapted to the context can appear threatening and prove counterproductive. For example, it is asserted that some previous plans were

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<sup>162</sup> These points have been supported by numerous Research Interviews with both GoY representatives and UN agencies.

practically unrealistic and not contextualized (for instance, the MDG costing exercise with an implementation rate of 8.5 per cent only). Additionally, the analysis and policy objectives in some national policy documents are not relevant or sensitive to national priorities.<sup>163</sup>

This challenge calls for a more careful contextualization and adaptation of policy and language that acknowledges the fundamental barriers that confront the GoY, and that takes advantage of the opportunities created at this juncture in Yemen's history. The HRBA, in particular, continues to pose great operational difficulties for organizations while remaining at the core of the UN's operating procedures. Opening programming meetings with references to human rights obligations under international law seems to place many key national and local stakeholders on the defensive and leads to more conflict than cooperation. Programming efficiency would therefore likely increase if the planning vocabulary were maintained within culturally sensitive parameters, framing the issues of gender empowerment, for instance, within an Islamic-conscious narrative, while maintaining the values enshrined within human rights legislation.<sup>164</sup>

A more far-reaching approach is to have more government participation in the planning and implementation of projects. One agency proposes the evaluation of previous plans and programmes based on a three-step process that starts by assessing relevance, followed by coherence of the set of interventions/policies, and finally addresses issues of efficiency.<sup>165</sup>

### 3.4. Conclusions

This chapter has examined the main structural and programmatic barriers to development and progress towards the MDGs and national priorities. Within the context, there is an acute tension between a growing population and the depletion of natural resources. At the same time, the analysis points to a distinct lack of competency in the state's allocation and management of resources and basic services. Therefore, it is not surprising, especially given the high rates of poverty and the political instability, that there is also a crisis in the state's authority and legitimacy and the need for more participatory and accountable forms of governance, with particular focus on the roles to be played by young people and women.

Moreover, the barriers together demonstrate that Yemen has become caught in a cycle of humanitarian crises. It not only faces rapidly unfolding humanitarian needs, primarily as a result of the spread of violent conflict across several governorates, its inability to meet current developmental priorities risks the emergence of more intractable and widespread humanitarian problems in the future.

In drawing together the barriers and the opportunities, this CCA now turns to identifying the development priorities.

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<sup>163</sup> Correspondence with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 1 September 2010.

<sup>164</sup> For example, and linked to the previous section, ESCWA representatives note that during the last multi-disciplinary mission to Yemen, the request to rely more on Arabic-speaking UN staff and consultants was frequently raised by various national interlocutors (ESCWA correspondence, 1 September 2010).

<sup>165</sup> ESCWA correspondence, 1 September 2010.

## 4. Development Priorities

### 4.1. Introduction

Based on the barriers and opportunities for development in Yemen discussed in previous chapters, it is important to outline the relevant policy directions and frameworks for the UNCT. In preparation for the UNDAF (2012 – 2015), this CCA identifies a total of four development priorities that aim to address the barriers and capitalize upon the opportunities in a targeted manner that recognizes the comparative advantage of the UNCT in Yemen.

The four priorities set out to focus attention and consolidate efforts on the demands for: Inclusive and diversified economic growth with a social dividend; Sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services to accelerate progress towards MDGs; Women and youth empowerment; and Good governance and social cohesion.

### 4.2. Inclusive and Diversified Economic Growth with a Social dividend

The analysis in the CCA and the comparative advantage of the UN system mandates that the UNCT support the government to transform the priority of '*inclusive and diversified economic growth with a social dividend*'. The UN specifically includes the concept of social dividend to imply that the benefits of economic diversification and growth will be allocated and enjoyed by a wider cross section of society, including the poor and marginalized groups who may benefit from increased employment opportunities, improved access to social services and greater social protection.

### 4.3. Sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services to accelerate progress towards MDGs

The earlier analysis noted that the indicators for under-five mortality and maternal mortality were not likely to be achieved, while HIV infections actually increased from 874 in 2000 to 2,882 cases in 2009. At present, 77.2 percent of deliveries take place at home, thus placing mothers and infants at serious risk. In addition, only 4 out of every 10 women in rural areas receive medical care during pregnancy, and only 3 in 10 during delivery. The analysis further noted that there is a high correlation between infant and maternal mortality on one hand, and poverty and malnutrition among mothers and children under 5 years on the other. Adequate food consumption dropped from 76 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2008; and malnutrition was reported as the leading cause of death among children under-five years as well as pregnant and lactating women. Over the last few years, the prevalence of under 5 malnutrition is displaying increasing trends especially in the northern governorates affected by the Sa'ada conflict.

The government continues to maintain Human Resource Development as one of its national development priorities for the DPPR 2011- 2015 focusing more specifically on the two sectors of education and health. In the education sector, the government priorities are to increase the combined basic and secondary enrolment, and reduce enrolment disparities between men and women, and rural/urban areas. In the health sector, the government priorities are to expand the primary health care service coverage.

According to the MDG Report 2010, Yemen has not made much progress towards achieving the MDGs, particularly those related to basic social services in the health sector. In education, while the net enrolment ratio (NER) increased from 62.5 percent in 2004 to 75.3 percent in 2008, the enrolment was unevenly distributed among governorates (92 per cent in Sana'a and 36 per cent in Al-Jawf, for example).

The state of poor basic services and low level of achievement of indicators of MDGs mandates the CCA to have 'Sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services to accelerate progress towards MDGs' as one of the priorities.

#### 4.4. Women and youth empowerment

Women represent half the working age population and more than 67 percent of the population is below the age of 25 years. Improving the status of women and youth, particularly with regards to decision-making and integrating them into the mainstream economy has the potential to yield significant benefits and progress towards MDGs. For example, empowerment of women with regard to decisions over reproductive health issues could significantly contribute to the decline in population growth and attendant pressures around scarcity of resources.

The UN is of the view that more should be done to empower women at the individual, family and community level in order to enhance their status at political and economic levels. As illustrated in the MDG Report 2010, many of the indicators with a gender dimension, including female enrolment in education, maternal mortality and access to reproductive health services are all unlikely to be achieved by 2010. These outcomes therefore contribute directly to MDG 3 and indirectly to the other MDGs. It is also aligned to the national priority on human resource development

In the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index, Yemen has consistently ranked last in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Over the last decade, the growth of the labour force has outpaced the growth of jobs, resulting in increasing unemployment that has disproportionately affected women and youth. In the Poverty Assessment<sup>[165]</sup> (2007), youth unemployment was reported to be double that of adults (18.7% compared to 8.4% in 1999; and estimated at 32.6% in 2005). Unemployment among women was estimated at 40.2 percent in 2006 compared to the national average of 14.6 percent. Moreover, social spending (excluding petroleum subsidies) declined from 8.6 percent of GDP in 2003 to 7 percent in 2006. The MTR of the UNDAF 2007-11 noted "*the combination of high unemployment in a context where majority of population is less than 25 years exposes Yemen to high risk of conflict and extremist ideology*". The CCA analysis also found that women and youth are excluded from economic, social and political processes due to various cultural and traditional norms. This mandates that the UN support the process of 'Women and youth empowerment'.

#### 4.5 Good governance and social cohesion

The CCA analysis has found that Yemen is a multi-layered tribal society that is prone to a variety of tensions between the traditional and modern forms of government. There are reported cases of resistance to new forms and formal processes of governance; for example, the failed attempts to integrate human rights legislation and strengthening of women's participation in political processes and serious dialogue with the private sector and civil society on issues pertaining to economic policy and business environment reforms. The CCA also concluded that the rule of law and government accountability were weak, and further compounded by an ineffective formal judicial system; and perceptions of corruption in the police and judicial services. There is also an urgent need for the current justice system to become child friendly in its handling of juvenile offenders, which includes more optimal application of non-custodial measures and banning the death sentence for minors, all of which are consistent with Yemen's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and related optional protocols. Yemen's ranking in the Corruption Perception Index has consistently declined in recent years, from 131 in 2007 to 141 in 2008 and 154 in 2009 to 146 in 2010. As a result of the country's reputation for corruption at the level of programme implementation, there has been inherent inability by the government to plan, implement and ensure sustainable development. Further, the MTR of UNDAF 2007-11 also noted the need to strengthen local government and civil society capacities to plan, implement and monitor home-grown initiatives for local development.

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165. Government of Yemen, UNDP and World Bank (November 2007); Poverty Assessment in Yemen.

The MTR of UNDAF 2007-11 identified that Yemen has experienced an increase in social tension and violence in the last three years. While there have been some tangible steps to reverse this trend, strengthening social cohesion and ensuring that existing UN programming does not further exacerbate existing tensions is critical for efforts to support the Government's achievement of the MDGs.

The Government of Yemen recognises that one of the central pillars encumbering its national development priorities is ensuring good governance, transparency and accountability. In the National Agenda for Reform 2007-2009, the government identified five main pillars for reform as shown in this figure. The main government priorities for these reforms were to establish judicial autonomy and separation of powers; transparency, accountability and anti-corruption; protection of human rights; enhancing civic participation; and enhancing central and local government implementation capacity.

The above mandates that the UN support the process of 'good governance and social cohesion'.

#### 4.6. Conclusions

These four development priorities stem from the identification of the structural and programmatic barriers in Chapter Three. The priorities are thus rooted in the analysis of the socio-economic, political and developmental context, while also considering the comparative advantage of the UNCT.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the four priorities are deeply interconnected, which demonstrate the complex linkages between developmental and humanitarian needs and thus the need for a holistic response by all stakeholders in Yemen.

## 5. Conclusions

This report has set out the main findings from the 2010 Yemen CCA preparation process. It has drawn mainly upon a thorough and far-reaching review of the relevant policy-oriented literature combined with extensive inputs from research interviews and consultations in Sana'a, a workshop with UNCT, followed by written feedback on several drafts of this report at national and regional levels. In sum, this CCA has emerged from a deeply collaborative process and the attention given to consultation and verification has created a uniquely validated study, which ought to support the forthcoming policymaking processes by the UNCT and the GoY, with particular relevance to 2012 – 2015.

While the CCA has the specific technical purpose of preparing the UNDAF, the process is also a unique opportunity to reflect critically on why development priorities have not been met overall in Yemen since the 2005 CCA. It is an important tool in analyzing, in a holistic manner, the humanitarian and political crises that have affected the country during the last five years. Furthermore, this report has taken the opportunity to look forwards by identifying future possible trends towards more joined-up planning, integrated responses and coordinated action among the UNCT in support of the GoY.

**Chapter 1** began with a comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic and political context. The analysis examined how the last five years have seen a reversal in development because of rapid population growth, economic and fiscal shocks, high poverty and unemployment rates, limited educational and livelihood opportunities, systemic social exclusion, and vulnerability to environmental degradation, climate change and other natural hazards. Socio-political weaknesses include governance; deprivation of basic services; protracted violent conflict and high levels of social violence; pervasive gender inequality; population growth and its impact upon resource availability; limited law enforcement; and allegations of widespread corruption. These two sets of dynamics in tandem have led to a range of other contextual issues that include: forced displacement; high levels of food insecurity; malnutrition; increasing drug abuse and HIV; and organized crime and trafficking. Root and instrumental causes consist of: weak governance; deprivation of basic services; centralization of power in the north and the exclusion of the south; weak rule of law; and corruption.

**Chapter 2** assessed where achievements have occurred from a human development and HRBA perspective, which in turn added another layer to our understanding of the causes. Progress has been slow overall in relation to the MD, MDGs, and other international commitments, with respect to poverty and hunger (MDG 1), gender equality (MDG 3), child mortality (MDG 4), maternal health (MDG 5), and environmental sustainability (MDG 7). Despite the GoY's commitment to upholding human rights, the protection of human rights in national legislation has received few guarantees.

Nevertheless, this report has emphasized the importance of recognizing strengths; and education, combating diseases, and the global partnership as well as a commitment to human rights treaties all came to the fore.

Accordingly, **Chapter 3** identified a critical set of opportunities that have enabled progress within the broad framework of stability, reform, recovery and development. The opportunities focused on the formal and informal economy, political reform, international coordination, the region, human resources, and community relations, and ought to form the main catalysts of change and entry points for intervention.

Looking to the forthcoming UNDAF, Chapter 3 also highlighted the chief structural and programming barriers to development. The five structural barriers focused on: state authority and legitimacy; cultural values and traditions; institutional capacities; human capacities; and the state's carrying

capacity. The four programmatic barriers involved the: increasing gap between funding and needs; inaccessibility to quality essential services; disjointed thinking and planning; and failing to contextualize standardized approaches.

Finally, towards contributing directly to the UNDAF and in considering the relative strengths of the UNCT, this CCA concludes with the following four development priorities:

1. Inclusive and diversified economic growth with a social dividend;
2. Sustainable and equitable access to quality basic social services to accelerate progress towards MDGs;
3. Women and youth empowerment; and
4. Good governance and social cohesion.

## Annex 1. Map of Yemen



Map No. 3947 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS  
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Geographic Section

## Annex 2. Background to Violent Conflicts in Yemen

### 2.1. The Sa'ada Conflict

The Sa'ada conflict is largely categorised as a clash between GoY forces and a Zaydi-Revivalist movement that derives its name from its founder, Badr al-Din al-Houthi. The first round of fighting began in 2004, after a public demonstration in the north of Yemen spun out of control. The conflict has since taken the form of six consecutive wars, the latest coming to an end in February 2010 after Qatar brokered a ceasefire between the two parties. These wars, which are rooted in poverty and underdevelopment, have thus far displaced over 250,000 people and have resulted in unknown casualties, of which non-combatants (men, women and children) represent a disproportionately high percentage. Severely impacting Yemen's international reputation and hampering access to some of the country's poorest governorates, the Sa'ada conflict has had a profound impact upon both the Yemeni state and its people, diverting government funds from the provision of basic and essential services to military spending and discouraging regional and international investment in the local economy and business sector. Beyond this, the conflict has also generated widespread discontent among the Yemeni people, aggravating a growing separatist movement in the south of the country and paving the way for a gradual radicalization of the population and the infiltration of extremist groups like Al Qaeda. Though Yemen's wars have been relatively isolated geographically—only reaching the outskirts of Sana'a in their fifth cycle—their political and economic relevance have transformed them into a fundamental obstacle to the development of the entire country, so that they have had to be dealt with as a central theme of this assessment.

#### Root Causes

The Sa'ada conflict is rooted in underdevelopment, unequal distribution of resources and services in a context of growing resource competition, historic grievances and conflicting identities. Its origins can be traced back to the 1970s when the newly formed Yemen Arab Republic began a policy of rapid development within the capital that deliberately neglected the needs of the rest of the country, particularly the Sa'ada-Amran-Hajja area. Gradually, the comparative underdevelopment of the north became more pronounced, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>166</sup> Tensions within the region began to rise as improvements in travel, communication and literacy levels facilitated the spread of information in Yemen, allowing traders, labourers, and students to travel outside the Sa'ada region for the first time. Increased exposure allowed northern Yemenis to come into contact with regional socio-political trends like Zaydi Revivalism, which encouraged them to revisit their own identities and adopt less tribal and more unified positions in society. Advances in education allowed many to challenge previously accepted social hierarchies, leading to sporadic violent conflicts in the mid-1990s and setting in motion the tensions that would gradually destabilize the region. At the time of unification, several factors therefore limited state control over the north. They were: the decreasing influence of traditional tribal leaders; increasing dissatisfaction with the GoY as a result of the marginalisation of the north in development programs; growing religious tensions in the region which manifested themselves as suspicions against the state's ultimate loyalties; and the introduction of democracy in the Republic of Yemen, which encouraged the competition of rival ideologies in the mainstream political process. By the late 1990s, the roots of the future conflict had become apparent.

These root causes would later be clouded by local and regional politics. While conflict has emerged as a product of political, religious, tribal and developmental challenges and confrontations, the government has, at times, expressed concern that the Houthi grievances were being manipulated by

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<sup>166</sup> RAND Corporation, 2010. *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Houthi Phenomenon*, p. 5.

Iranian elements in the broader context of the animosity between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and has portrayed the rebellion as an insurgency, a threat to Islamic unity, and an attempt to restore the pre-1962 Imamate. Despite reports that the Houthis had been supplied with Iranian weapons, both the Iranian government and the Houthi rebels have denied any support from Iran, and Sana'a and Tehran continue to enjoy friendly diplomatic relations.<sup>167</sup>

### **Proximate Causes**

After the attack on the US on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the GoY allied itself with Western powers in the global war against terror, which led the US government to provide Yemen with military training and support in the fight against Al Qaeda. This assistance meant that the GoY could now make a bid to exert stronger coercive control over the north of the country, which presented a growing challenge to the state's legitimacy. The alliance itself, however, also allowed local political bodies like the Houthis to use threats of external influence upon local politics as a lightning rod to channel new supporters to their cause. The Houthis used the immense unpopularity of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the continuing US support of Israel, to further challenge the authority of the GoY, giving their arguments additional local relevance by challenging the legitimacy of President Saleh's family. A combination of all of these factors led to the arrest of Houthi leaders in 2004, igniting the root causes of the conflict into overt war.

### **Actors**

**The Houthis:** The Houthis are a group of combatants associated with the Zaydi Revivalist movement in Yemen, which emerged as a result of deep-seated frustrations among those tribes who felt as though they had become marginalized after an Egyptian-backed revolution against the Zaydi Imam in 1962 brought an end to Hashemite domination. Led by Badr al-Din al-Houthi and later by his son Hussein al-Houthi, the revivalists that spawned the Houthi presence promoted religious and local identity over national priorities. There was a resentfulness of the central government's tolerance of growing Sunni Wahabi influence and its policy of concentrating investment in infrastructure and services on Sana'a and areas with economic resources, to the exclusion of the rest of the country, and in particular the Sa'ada-Amran-Hajja area. In 2004, the government sought to arrest the charismatic and increasingly popular Hussein al-Houthi whose opposition to the Yemen's alliance with the US in the 'war on terror' had become a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the government.<sup>168</sup> These actions sparked a wave of hostility against the state in the north of Yemen and allowed the Houthis to develop into a fighting force.

Since then, the Houthis have surprisingly avoided assuming a singular tribal identity, which is significant given the country is dominated by tribal allegiances. Instead, the group strategically draws support from tribes of the northern Bakil federation, rival to the Hashid federation which has been a traditional ally of the central government. The Houthis lack both a political program and a centralised command structure, with varying degrees of coordination applying across four constituent groups: an ideological core with symbolic or political ties to Iran and an anti-Western posture; those driven by concern for Zaydi and Hashemite identity; groups of armed men whose main interest is money; and a majority, tribesmen defending their families and villages against state violence.<sup>169</sup> These trends have allowed them to generate immense support, as Yemenis from diverse backgrounds have joined their cause.

**The Government of Yemen:** The GoY, quite naturally, perceives the Houthis as a growing threat to state sovereignty and has become drawn into a prolonged military struggle against them. Although it has been argued that other threats to Yemen's security, such as the growing separatist movement in

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<sup>167</sup> RAND Corporation, 2010. *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Houthi Phenomenon*.

<sup>168</sup> International Crisis Group, 2009. *Yemen: Defusing the Sa'ada Time Bomb*.

<sup>169</sup> RAND Corporation, 2010. *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Houthi Phenomenon*.

the south and the increased radicalization of its people, will perhaps prove to be more strategically significant in the long term, the GoY has devoted extraordinary resources into securing a victory in the north in hopes of setting an example to all other aggressors.<sup>170</sup> In doing so, it has strived to enlist the help of regional and international powers by painting the Houthis and their offshoot, the Believing Youth, as religious extremists with terrorist ambitions.<sup>171</sup>

**Regional and International Actors:** On a regional level, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Qatar have each been linked with the conflict in Yemen. The localisation of the Sa'ada conflict within a Zaydi Revivalist narrative has led to widespread allegations that Saudi Arabia and Iran have used Yemen as the sight of a dawning Sunni-Shia regional cold war. These claims are as difficult to prove as they are to disprove, and while Saudi Arabia was actively involved in the sixth war in 2009 as the conflict became entangled with broader border disputes, there remains no proof of Iran's alleged backing of the Houthis. Other regional neighbors, like Libya, have also been accused of aiding the rebels, while others, like Qatar which has been involved in mediation efforts in Yemen since 2007, have played a strong and determining role in ending the hostilities.

Meanwhile, on an international level, deliberate Western silence on the issue of Yemen has allowed the conflict to continue unchecked with numerous human rights violations committed by both sides, including the recruitment of child combatants. At the same time, international focus upon the growing radicalization in Yemen within the context of the global War on Terror has shifted attention from the war in the north and the separatist movement in the south, blurring distinctions between rebel groups and terrorist cells. Therefore, the GoY is now able to use military assistance provided by the US and others to suppress local uprisings under the pretence of furthering international security interests.

**Other Local Actors:** As the conflict in Sa'ada continues to shift its position in local politics throughout its many manifestations, it has begun to absorb new local actors, recently becoming increasingly tribalized and impacting more and more governorates. Either through coercion, incentive, or newly formed allegiances, new tribes are gravitating towards the conflict in the north, some of whom are paid for their participation by the GoY, others who are loyal to the Houthis.

### Cycle of Violence

As the conflict evolved since 2004, increasingly high levels of violence have been used to suppress rebellions in the north, while the Houthis continue to maintain that they are not the aggressors in the conflict. Tanks, artillery and air bombardments have been used in the sixth round of fighting, resulting in widespread damage to homes and property, strengthening local identities and provoking a steady flow of recruits to the Houthi forces, provoking a humanitarian crisis and exacerbating the developmental problems that fuelled the sense of marginalization and deprivation that initially led to the conflict. As new combatants joined the fighting, the conflict spread, enveloping long-standing grievances and tribal vendettas.<sup>172</sup> A formal ceasefire was signed in February 2010, with the Sa'ada rebels agreeing to disarm, release captured soldiers, vacate occupied property, remove roadblocks, and withdraw from strategic positions. They also agreed to end their cross-border attacks against Saudi targets, which had drawn a sharp response from the Saudi army, air force and navy in November 2009. Although progress on implementation of the terms of the ceasefire has been slow, the agreement remained in place despite frequent clashes in July raising fears of a seventh round of fighting. On 29 August 2010, Qatari-sponsored peace talks produced a 22-article agreement to renew the truce.

### Impact

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<sup>170</sup> Christopher Boucek, 2010. *War In Sa'ada*.

<sup>171</sup> International Crisis Group, 2009. *Yemen: Defusing the Sa'ada Time Bomb*.

<sup>172</sup> See below 'Figure 4. Timeline of Sa'ada Conflict'.

A recognized product of poverty and underdevelopment in Yemen, the conflict in the north of the country has succeeded in aggravating its own root causes by further isolating the Sa'ada-Amran-Hajja area from both governmental and non-governmental assistance programs. Thus, the impact of the conflict on this area is particularly evident in relation to the lack of progress made towards the MDGs in the 2005-2010 period. It has led to the breakdown of infrastructure, displacement of people, and destruction of public and private property in the north, which has had a serious impact upon poverty by removing most of the available legitimate livelihood opportunities from the region's inhabitants. Resultantly, MDG1 cannot be achieved in the north of Yemen while the war persists because hunger and starvation are rampant, with many people living without access to clean drinking water or regular food sources and unable to provide for themselves by securing sustainable employment. Traditional trade routes have been disrupted because of the conflict, discouraging economic investment and development in the area. With the widespread closure of facilities and lacking access to the essential resources necessary for survival, MDG 2 is equally impacted as children are not able to attend school. Progress towards MDG 3 is also faltering as, without access to the north, any local, regional and international actors seeking to provide assistance to the region are unable to promote the rights of women, a segment of the population placed in additional danger in times of war when they are targeted and exposed to violence and abuse. MDG 5, therefore, is additionally sidetracked as pregnancy in times of war significantly increases the risk of mortality among women. Children are equally vulnerable, as seen in slow progress made towards MDG 4 and the as of yet unknown numbers of casualties among them since 2004. Due to the loss of their homes during the conflict, children are exposed to harsh conditions with insufficient food to ensure their healthy development. Preventable diseases spread rapidly through war zones, undermining any progress made towards MDG 6. Meanwhile, the wanton destruction of military targets and civilian communities has led to large-scale environmental destruction and the undermining of MDG 7. Finally, MDG 8 is equally unattainable, as the actual and alleged involvement of regional and international actors in the conflict builds upon communal rejections of foreign interference in local politics.



Figure 8. Timeline of Sa'ada Conflict

## 2.2. Radicalization

For nearly two years, the GoY has grappled with a third escalating security threat - a resurgent Al Qaeda following the amalgamation of the Saudi and Yemeni cells to create AQAP in early 2009,<sup>173</sup> Al Qaeda's roots in Yemen date back to the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad, when as many as 20,000 Yemenis travelled to Peshawar to against the Soviet occupation. They were joined by second-generation Yemenis whose parents had been exiled when the British handed over Southern Yemen to the Marxist National Liberation Front. Many of those who returned were co-opted into the state campaign to defeat southern secessionists in the 1994 civil war.

Attacks targeting Western tourists began in late 1998, followed by the attack on the USS Cole in Aden in 2000. After the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 attacks, collaboration between US and Yemeni counterterrorism services severely restricted its activities. In November 2002, a missile launched from a US drone killed Abu Ali al Harithi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Yemen, and five other militants. Their deaths contributed to a significant decline in the group's operating capacity in Yemen for several years, until the February 2006 prison break allowed Nasser al Wahayshi and Qasim al Raymi to reconstitute the organization. A new wave of attacks followed, including a suicide bomber's attack against a convoy of Spanish tourists in July 2007 which killed eight tourists and two Yemenis, An assault on the US embassy in Sana'a followed two months later in which seventeen people were killed including 6 attackers. The group took credit for a series of attacks targeting foreign tourists and oil facilities in Yemen in 2008, and launched another round of attacks at home and in Saudi Arabia in 2009. In May 2009, following a week of clashes between protestors and security forces that killed eight people – including four soldiers – in Abyan, Lahij and Al Dhaleh, Al Qaeda called for the establishment of Islamic rule in the country. Professing its support for the Southern Movement's struggle against the central government, AQAP leader Nasser Al-Wuhaishi vowed to retaliate against security forces for killing civilians in the clashes.

In mid-December 2009, Yemeni security forces launched a major crackdown on AQAP strongholds and training camps with strikes in Abyan, Sana'a and Shabwah governorates, reportedly killing at least 60 militants. In response to the failed Christmas Day bombing of North West Airlines flight 253 in the US, an airstrike on 15 January 2010 reportedly killed six AQAP militants, among them one of its most senior leaders, Qasim al Raymi.

Since the government crackdown on the Southern Movement began in February 2010, AQAP has increasingly concentrated its operations in the southern governorates, with dozens of attacks targeting security forces and government officials in Abyan, Shabwah and Aden. Southern Movement leader Tariq al-Fadhli, went so far as to raise the US national flag over his family compound to signal his rejection of Al Qaeda. But the movement is not monolithic, and there is the potential for radicalization, particularly among the youth. Although government attempts to portray aspects of the secessionist movement as Al Qaeda-driven have been frequently dismissed as part of a campaign to maintain US military assistance and funding, the deterioration of the security situation across large parts of the south and the alienation of an increasing section of the southern population certainly contributes to the creation of an environment in which Al Qaeda thrives.<sup>174</sup>

In December 2009, Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi estimated that up to 300 Al Qaeda operatives live in Yemen. In March 2010, Saudi Arabia arrested over 100 Saudis and Yemenis for conspiracy to carry out suicide bombings and attacks on oil installations. The prospect of a resurgent Al Qaeda – with its reputation for exploiting widespread discontent and weak central governance, and sectarianization of conflict - is likely to shift international attention away from its humanitarian and developmental needs towards stabilization, risk containment and the securitization of aid as

<sup>173</sup> Christopher Boucek, 2009. *Yemen: Avoiding a Downward Spiral*.

<sup>174</sup> Sarah Phillips, 2010. *What Comes Next in Yemen? Al-Qaeda, the Tribes and State-Building*.

demonstrated by the US\$150m stabilization strategy funded by USAID since 2009. However, the main threats to the country remain extreme poverty and limited carrying capacity within the context of a rapid population boom.

### 2.3. Centralization of Power in the North and the Exclusion of the South

Until 1990, Yemen existed as two separate states – the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. In March 1990, following the demise of the Soviet Union, unification brought together the tribal Zaydi Shia north with the secular Sunni communist south which became independent in 1967 following 130 years as a British colony. In the south, the lack of participatory governance has also become an important driver of conflict.<sup>175</sup> Initially after unification, power was divided evenly between the north and the south with the president of North Yemen becoming the first president of the unified country, while the General Secretary of the South's ruling Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) became the vice-president, and the president of South Yemen became prime minister. In accordance with the unification agreement, cabinet and vice-ministerial posts were equally shared between representatives of the former North and South, with each government ministry adopting a balanced system with the minister and vice-minister respectively from either the North or the South. In the military, while the defence minister was from South Yemen, the chief of army staff was from the North.

The balance of power shifted back to the northern centre following the 1993 parliamentary elections in which President Saleh's northern-based General People's Congress won 123 of the 301 seats, with the Islamist Yemeni Reform Group (Islah) securing 62 seats (all in the north), and the southern-based YSP winning only 56 seats. The result was a major disappointment for the YSP, relegated to third place behind Islah – a party formed in 1990 by members of the GPC, the Hashid Tribal Confederation whose power base is centred in the northern governorates of Sana'a and Amran, the Muslim Brotherhood which had emerged in northern Yemen in the early 1960s, some prominent businesspeople, and a few other small groups.<sup>176</sup> The party remained an ally of the GPC after the election and cooperated with its effort to marginalize the YSP. Southern political leaders responded to their defeat by relocating to Aden the former capital of the south, and refusing to join the new government. Southern deadlines for fiscal decentralization, action to address the economic marginalization of the south, and improved security passed and the country descended into civil war. Following the war, the GPC-Islah coalition reversed many of the reforms initiated by the YSP at unification, amending almost half of the articles in the constitution and introducing 29 new articles consolidating power in the northern-dominated executive.

A decade later, the Southern Movement has emerged in response to what many in the south claim feels like a northern occupation of the south, deprived of their basic rights to participate meaningfully in the civil, economic and political development of their homeland and the realization of their human potential.<sup>177</sup> After the civil war, former civil servants and PDRY military personnel were suspected by the YAR military of having continued Marxists sympathies and were excluded from state and oil industry jobs. Between 80,000 and 100,000 former PDRY civil servants and military personnel who were forced to take early retirement on inadequate pensions. Initial demands for equal rights and access to employment grew alongside frustration and anger over the confiscation of land, discontentment over chronic underinvestment and socioeconomic neglect of the south, and a heavy-handed response to initially peaceful public demonstrations by the security forces. As a result, many southerners feel there is a deliberate strategy of de-development in Aden and south. In 2008, a study commissioned by donors found that "more than three quarters of all investment projects in the south failed to materialize or were seriously delayed; 0 per cent of investors cited lack of land as

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<sup>175</sup> RAND Corporation, 2010. *Regime and Periphery in Northern Yemen: The Houthi Phenomenon*.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>177</sup> Stephen Day, 2010. *The Political Challenge of Yemen's Southern Movement*.

the main obstacle; 49 per cent blamed lack of coordination between government departments; 47 per cent were abandoned after intimidation; legal delays and obstructions; 12 per cent said they had not been able to afford the bribes demanded.”<sup>178</sup>

Since the Houthi rebellion began, southern activism has increased. In late 2007, riot police fired live rounds to break up demonstrations and killed 13 people. By early 2008, there were tanks on the streets, and security forces arrested almost 300 secessionists. In 2009, Tariq al Fadhli, a veteran of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan who fought alongside the northern army to defeat the southern secessionists in 1994, and a former ally of the Sana’a government defected to the Southern Movement and openly called for separation from the north during an April rally in his home province of Abyan in the south. Tensions escalated during the summer when the government established a special court to prosecute members of the press, and arrested 500 southern elites. The situation continued to deteriorate in 2010, with more than 130 security incidents recorded since a government crackdown began in February 2010 when Sheikh al Fadhli called for a southern secessionist intifada. As a result of this rhetoric and the government’s response to it, security has been severely affected in three governorates, Lahij, Al Dhaleh, and Abyan.<sup>179</sup> Parts of the south, including Habilayn and Tur al-Baha in Lahij province, and Lawdar, Mudiyah and Al-Qaar in Abyan province, and Dhaleh have been completely paralyzed by general strikes. In Dhaleh, Southern Movement supporters accuse the government of imposing a blockade on the city since March, and the army of shelling that killed six people in June.<sup>180</sup>

Demands for equality, decentralization and participation in the welfare of the country are unlikely to dissipate. Indeed, as economic conditions deteriorate there is, instead, the high probability that they will increase. While southern politicians remain divided over both strategy and tactics and there is no external support for secession, the Southern Movement is unlikely to pose a threat to the integrity of the state. Nevertheless, public demonstrations, increased insecurity and instability, and the deployment of security forces to maintain order, all divert resources which might be productively employed to tackle the economic and social crises facing an overcrowded country of 23m constrained by dwindling water, food, and fuel resources, and an economy in freefall. Some analysts also fear that the potential for radicalization among Yemen’s massive youth population may be exploited by Salafi groups linked to Al Qaeda, stating that “the potential for youth discontent erupting into protest or sympathy with jihadist ideology is a particularly significant threat”.<sup>181</sup> This is especially pertinent in the context of a resurgent Al Qaeda rebranded as AQAP, which has been assessed as “one of the strongest and most organized Al Qaeda franchises in the world”.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Ayman Baggash Al-Sayah, 2008. 'Nearly 78 percent of investment projects in Aden have stalled, says a recent study', *Yemen Times*, 22 December.

<sup>179</sup> Harnisch *et al*, 2010. 'Tracker: Unrest in Southern Yemen'.

<sup>180</sup> Mounassar, 2010. 'Yemen army shelling kills six, wounds 17 in southern town'.

<sup>181</sup> Khalil and MacDonald, 2009. *Report of the Assessment towards a whole of EU Approach to State Building in Yemen: Addressing Fragility to Prevent State Failure*.

<sup>182</sup> Patrick Knapp, 2010. 'AQAP and Suspected AQAP Attacks in Yemen Tracker 2010'.

### Annex 3. Yemen's Ratification of International Human Rights Agreements

<b>Nature of Agreement</b>	<b>International Agreement</b>	<b>Ratification</b>
<i>Human Rights</i>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966	Ratified 1987
	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)	Ratified 1987
	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)	Signed in 1972 but does not consider itself bound by Article 22
	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)	Signed and Ratified in 1984
	Convention and/or Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees	Ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol
	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)	Ratified in 1991
	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)	Ratified in 1989
	Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols	Ratified in 1990
	Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity (1968)	Ratified in 1987
	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)	Ratified in 2009
	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006)	Not Signed
	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962)	Ratified in 1987
	Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952)	Ratified in 1987
<i>International Standards Relating to Social Security Nationality and Statelessness</i>	Convention Concerning Equality of Treatment of Nationals and Non-Nationals in Social Security (1962)	
	Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954)	Not Signed
	Hague Convention on Certain Questions Relating to Conflict of National Laws	
	Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1967) Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961)	Not Signed Not Signed
<i>Trafficking and Smuggling</i>	The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990)	Not Signed

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	Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labor (1930)	Ratified in 1969
	Convention Concerning the Abolition of Forced Labor (1957)	Ratified in 1969
	ILO Convention No. 97 Concerning Migration for Employment (1949)	Not Signed
	ILO Convention No. 111 Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (1958)	Not Signed
	ILO Convention No. 143 Concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers (1975)	Not Signed
	Convention Concerning Minimum Age of Admission to Employment (1973)	Ratified in 1969
	Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor 2000 (1999)	Signed and Ratified in
	International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (1921)	Not Signed
	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1950)	Ratified in 1989
<i>Other Important Documents and Declarations</i>	Geneva Conventions (1949)	Ratified in 1970
	Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals who are not Nationals of the Country in which the Live (1985)	Not Signed

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## Annex 4. List of Organizations and Individuals Consulted

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2. UN Country Team, 14 August 2010
3. UNDP, 14 August 2010
4. UNFPA, 14 August 2010
5. WFP, 14 August 2010
6. FAO, 14 August 2010
7. UNICEF, 15 August 2010
8. WHO, 15 August 2010
9. IFAD, 15 August 2010
10. ILO, 15 August 2010
11. OCHA and representatives of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Mechanism, 15 August 2010
12. Ministry of Health and Population, 15 August 2010
13. Ministry of Human Rights, 15 August 2010
14. Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 15 August 2010
15. UNHCR, 16 August 2010
16. Ministry of Fish Wealth, 16 August 2010
17. Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs, 16 August 2010
18. Ministry of State for Parliamentary and Shura Council Affairs, 16 August 2010
19. Ministry for Strategic Planning, 16 August 2010
20. Social Fund for Development, 16 August 2010
21. Supervising Committee for Relieving IDPs, Operational Unit for IDPs Camps, 16 August 2010
22. IOM, 16 August 2010
23. World Bank, 16 August 2010
24. Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, 17 August 2010
25. Women National Committee, 17 August 2010
26. Ministry of Water and Environment, 17 August 2010
27. Ministry of Education, 17 August 2010
28. Ministry of Justice, 17 August, 2010
29. Ministry of Local Administration, 17 August 2010
30. USAID, 17 August 2010
31. European Union Delegation, 17 August 2010
32. UK Department for International Development, 18 August 2010

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