

# YEMEN

## Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2014 – 2016



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## List of Acronyms

AQAP	Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
CMM	Conflict Mitigation and Management
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DO	Development Objective
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning System Network
FtF	Feed the Future
FY	Fiscal Year
FFP	Food for Peace
FSN	Foreign Service National
FoY	Friends of Yemen
G2G	Government-to-Government
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBV	Gender- based Violence
GH	Global Health
GHI	Global Health Initiative
HDI	Human Development index
IR	Intermediate Result
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Mutual Accountability Framework
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MOPHP	Ministry of Public Health and Population
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises
NDC	National Dialogue Conference
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OE	Operational Expenses
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OYB	Operating Year Budget
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PWP	Public Works Program
R&D	Research and Development

ROYG	Republic of Yemen Government
SCER	Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum
SFD	Social Fund for Development
SME	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
STIP	Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships
SUN	Scale-Up of Nutrition initiative/movement
TPSD	Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN	United Nations
USDH	United States Direct-Hire
USG	United States Government
WTO	World Trade Organization
YMN	Yemen Microfinance Network

## Executive Summary

Yemen is a country in transition. Characterized as a fragile state, it is conflict-afflicted, impoverished, and in a critical post-revolutionary stage. Almost half of the country's population of 25 million lives without access to safe water and sanitation, and over ten million suffer chronic hunger. High unemployment and poverty contribute to political tensions that are compounded by conflict with separate secessionist movements in the north and south, and disruptive extremist operations of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

Yemen is strategically important for stability in the region as well as for security of key oil and commercial maritime routes. United States Government (USG) priorities for Yemen are to combat AQAP, marshal support for global efforts to stabilize Yemen, and direct developmental and humanitarian assistance to underpin sustainable and inclusive economic development, improved governance, and social protection. The Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for Yemen delineates USAID objectives and defines priorities for developmental and humanitarian assistance over the planning period of fiscal years 2014 through 2016.

As of January 2015, USAID Yemen continues to implement the July 2014 CDCS despite the operational challenges posed by countrywide instability associated with the Houthi movement. Although progress is hindered and slowed, partners continue to provide critical humanitarian assistance to address urgent needs and support Yemen's transition with an array of critical development programs.

Strategic Focus: This three-year strategy directs efforts in ways that leverage a historic opportunity for political transition, and it aligns and integrates technical areas of development assistance with current humanitarian aid programs. This strategy will capitalize upon positive momentum in the country, mitigate the challenges of vested interests and humanitarian crises, and stay flexible in the fluid context of transition. The focus will be on addressing the core barriers to participation that inhibit development and resilience. The immediate emphasis is delivery of humanitarian assistance and support for an informed, inclusive and participatory approach to political transition. Going forward, the programmatic thrust increasingly addresses development challenges at the local level, including matters of governance, civic participation, public service delivery, economic growth, and private sector job creation.

USAID/Yemen's overarching goal for the strategy period is **Strengthening Yemen's progress to a Prosperous and Resilient Country**. The goal will be achieved through three Development Objectives (DOs):

- **DO 1:** Effective and Representative Democracy Advanced.
- **DO 2:** Social Development Improved.
- **DO 3:** Sustainable Economic Opportunities Increased.

The expectation is that a successful political transition will result in devolution of governing power to the local level and better establish conditions in which development and more inclusive growth can occur.

USAID's aim is to facilitate the transition and assist in the improvement of individual and community well-being. The strategy will advance this aim by helping to build the asset base of households to reduce vulnerabilities and facilitating and developing systems for local governance and cooperative public and private community action in the areas of economic growth and development, natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, conflict mitigation, public safety, and construction and maintenance of public infrastructure, including water and sanitation systems, health clinics and schools.

USAID supports participation and inclusion to empower reformers, as well as institutional strengthening for more inclusive and accountable methods of political and economic governance. USAID promotes job creation and supports improved food and water security, health care delivery, family planning, and primary education outcomes. USAID supports increased access to improved water supply and sanitation services and increased prevalence of key hygiene behaviors to prevent disease and improve health outcomes. Economic opportunities are enhanced through a value chain approach, targeting job creation in high value agricultural production, processing, marketing and support services. Improved efficiency and sustainability of rain-fed and irrigated agricultural systems is promoted to improve water productivity and stretch the limited water supply.

USAID projects aim to reduce gender disparities in access to, control over, and benefits received from resources, wealth, opportunities and services. Activities serve to reduce gender-based violence and mitigate its harmful effects on individuals and communities. USAID will increase the capacity of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies. USAID promotes inclusion across the scope of the program so as to draw on the potential and talent of the entire population, to encourage innovation for new wealth creation, and to improve prospects for more effective, comprehensive, and sustainable development results.

## **Development Context**

The Republic of Yemen is one of the driest, poorest and least developed countries in the world. It ranks 154 of 182 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index. An estimated 50 percent of the people are poor, and one in three is malnourished. Poverty is endemic, particularly in more remote and less accessible areas. About two thirds of the population (including 80 percent of the poor) lives in rural areas and most of them depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture is a vital economic sector, providing jobs and income in a country with an unemployment rate estimated as high as 40 percent.

People are poor due to lack of productive resources and inadequate access to basic necessities such as safe water, health care, and education. In Yemen, the ownership and exploitation of resources, including land and water, are controlled by elite segments of society. The country's poor natural resource base cannot meet the needs of a population that is growing steadily and doubling every twenty

years. A shrinking resource base, coupled with already low productivity and the shock of internal conflict, places enormous pressure on Yemen's social and economic systems and contributes further to increasing poverty.

Politically, Yemen is at a crossroads. After reaching the brink of civil war in 2011, Yemen is making progress in implementing a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-brokered political initiative and implementation agreement. Mass unrest in 2011, which culminated in violent revolt, emerged from, and was catalyzed by, conditions of acute societal fragility stemming from sectarian, tribal, and regional divisions. Conditions were exacerbated by deepening poverty, lack of gainful employment opportunities (particularly for the youth), and by loss of faith in a government that was increasingly seen as not being capable of meeting pressing social and economic needs. Since the November 2011 signing of the GCC Agreement, the people of Yemen have accomplished what many thought impossible. Under the leadership of President Hadi, Yemen embarked on a serious effort of reforms to better meet the needs of its citizens, facilitate a democratic process, and partner in support of regional security. The successful conclusion of the National Dialogue Conference in January 2014 was a critical milestone achievement in the ongoing GCC-prescribed transition process. The dialogue marked the first time representatives from diverse segments of Yemeni society – including political elites, tribal elders, women, youth, civil society, formerly disenfranchised southerners, and religious minorities – met for substantive discussions about the country's political future. This conversation represented a sea change in the way politics is done in Yemen, and it begins to form a foundation for a more inclusive Yemeni state, society, and economy.

Gains in political and security sector reform do not yet translate to improvements in the daily life of average Yemenis. Over 13 million people – almost half of the population – do not have access to safe water and sanitation, and 10.5 million people are food-insecure. More than one million children do not have access to education. More than 300,000 people are displaced due to conflict and nearly a quarter-million refugees, mostly from the Horn of Africa, reside in Yemen.

Conflict, and the threat of violence, is widespread. In both the northwest and the south, the state's failure to meet the needs of constituents has resulted in disengagement and the emergence or re-emergence of separatist agendas. In the north, a broad-based rebellion of the Zaidi sect led by the al-Houthis has been supported with arms from Iran. In the south, the movement consists of a coalition of diverse groups united by a common goal of secession from the north and independence for the territory of the former South Yemen. Taking advantage of Yemen's problems, a sustained al Qaeda insurgency has at times controlled significant territory in the country's center and south.

The country's uneven development, while being a cause for conflict, is also affected by it. Security threats have diverted government attention and resources from critical development priorities, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and rendered a wide area of the country insecure and inaccessible to development and humanitarian efforts.

Yemen's transitional government has taken great strides to address these issues, but the support of the international community remains critical to prevent derailment of the transition process. As negotiators

progress toward constitutional reform and elections, tensions remain heightened as the structure of the state is debated in the midst of humanitarian crises and continued threats of secession and conflict.

The Yemeni government's "Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development" (TPSD) describes plans to rebuild the economy, advance the political transition, enhance security and the rule of law, and significantly improve the welfare of the Yemeni population. A "Mutual Accountability Framework" (MAF) outlines the supporting role of donor countries. The government's Social Fund for Development (SFD) and Public Works Program (PWP) are major means for donor-assisted delivery of relief, recovery, and developmental programs. The SFD delivers a range of social risk management functions for poor and vulnerable populations, including local institution strengthening for risk mitigation, increased access to basic services for risk reduction, and workfare for coping. The PWP provides needed community infrastructure to improve access to basic public services. The program implements small-scale, labor-intensive infrastructure projects through local contractors. The program's scope includes projects in health, education, water supply, sewage, stone paving of roads and streets, and vocational training. USAID collaborates with the Transition Government and other donors, and endorses the TPSD and the MAF. USAID's strategy is designed to be consistent with and complementary to the TPSD.

## Long-term Development Challenges

Assisting Yemen's government and people to deliver on the promise of their political transition is the core challenge facing donors through the strategy period.

- State and Citizen Dynamics

Underscoring the importance of political transition, the 2013 Failed States Index ranks Yemen 6th.

The stakes of the transition are high, and the prior experience of the early 1990s at the time of unification is instructive. Similar to today, there was political commitment to a balanced and transparent transition based on inclusive dialogue and participation. However, disillusionment, betrayal and resentment set in as a poorly managed process played out. Underlying grievances were never properly discussed and addressed and, in the end, there was civil war.

After dominating the agenda of the National Dialogue, the grievances of the Southern separatist and Houthi (North-West) movements continue to drive debate on regional formation under a federal system of government.

The culmination of the National Dialogue, which concluded in January 2014, was a final report with hundreds of recommendations. Among the outcomes, the concept of a federal system of governance emerged and was later approved. The State is to be divided into six administrative regions. Commissions are to be formed to draft a new constitution and formulate the details of a new federation. President Hadi's term of office was extended to accommodate delays in the transition. Advancement of the rights of women, including 30 percent representation in political office, is among recommendations included in the NDC Report.



Federalism could enable improved government response to citizen needs, but the pace, scope, and political and public will to decentralize remains uncertain. There is still a significant portion of the population that feels Yemen should be two countries, as well as other groups that seek governing autonomy. Distrust among Yemeni political elites, tribal factions and regional groups remains sharp; and Southern secession is a significant looming threat.

Public expectation for change remains high, but individual depth of knowledge on the transition is minimal. Women, especially rural women, are particularly marginalized in the economy and in discussions about stabilizing the security situation as a whole. Growing impatience to what many perceive to be a costly and time-consuming process of transition is not to be unexpected. The population is young, under-employed, and restless. A lengthy period of transition with little to show is frustrating to many.

Governing capacity in Yemen is low, and the civil service is poorly regarded. The inability of the state to effectively fulfill principal functions and provide key services is problematic. The government has no presence in many areas of the country, and policy frameworks, and implementation and enforcement capacities are often lacking. The government, as well as political parties, has been unable, and in many cases unwilling, to provide conduits for women to access power, represent women's concerns, or include women within their structures. A lack of governmental transparency, accountability, and political competition enabled entrenchment of political elites and sustained systems of political, social and economic exclusion up to 2011. Widespread corruption continues to afflict government performance.

- Humanitarian Crises

Extreme poverty, chronic food insecurity, limited resources, poor education and low skills, growing economic uncertainty, and ongoing security threats (along with the lack of support systems and coping strategies) combine to make a large portion of the population life-threateningly vulnerable to acute crises. Threats include displacement due to insecurity and conflict, unmanageable food prices, and malnutrition. Severe water shortages portend serious social and economic implications that are already discernible. Those in acute crises include internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants, and refugees, as well as households affected by conflict. Poverty is estimated to have climbed from about 43 percent of the population in 2009 to almost 55 percent in 2012. Almost half of the country's population of 25 million lives without access to safe water and sanitation, and over 10 million people suffer chronic hunger. More than half of the children under age five in the country—an estimated two million children—are chronically malnourished, and as many as half of these suffer from acute malnutrition. In the North, 340,000 people are displaced from their homes due to conflict; 150,000 people in the South have returned but remain unsettled after displacement due to conflict; and more than 240,000 migrants and refugees, mostly from the Horn of Africa, require on-going assistance.

Males and females experience the conflict differently, with women experiencing decreased mobility and gender-based violence. Men are experiencing revenge killings, arbitrary arrests and involvement in gang

fighters over control of resources. Control over declining oil reserves and water is increasingly a focal point for internal conflict.

- Chronic Food Insecurity and Malnutrition

Overall, more than 10 million people suffer chronic hunger out of a population of 25 million. Malnutrition ranks among Yemen's greatest public health challenges and is reportedly the leading underlying cause of child mortality. Stunting and wasting rates are estimated at 58 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Data suggest that major drivers of child under-nutrition include poor maternal nutrition, poor infant and young child feeding practices (particularly lack of exclusive breastfeeding), inadequate dietary intake, early and frequent childbearing, poor health and frequent illness, unsafe water, deficient sanitation infrastructure, inadequate access to quality health services, poverty, low educational attainment, and gender inequality.

Yemen's food availability has, from the 1980s onward, depended mainly upon commercial imports, with a majority of farmers growing cash crops like *qat* instead of food products. Food import competition is lacking and prices are high and subject to volatility. Purchasing power is poor.

- Economic Uncertainty and Limited Resources

Economic opportunities are limited, and the labor force is growing by 200,000 annually. The informal sector accounts for 40 percent of economic activity, which points to diverse coping strategies of large sections of the population, as well as the problem of underemployment and an attendant lack of skills.

Low skills are a symptom of a poor educational system and limited vocational training opportunities. Challenges in the public education system include low enrollment and retention rates, especially for girls; poor academic achievement; problems of security both in school and in getting to school; dilapidated classrooms and facilities; poor teacher skills; and inadequate teaching and learning materials. Many girls forced into early marriages, a form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), are removed from school, cutting short the education and skills needed to provide for themselves and their families.

The productivity of the expanding low-skilled population is low. Rather than generating new economic growth, the growing population creates additional burden on already strained physical, social and economic systems. Increasingly, the lack of opportunity and large numbers of un-engaged and jobless young people fosters grievances and intensifies the potential for conflict.

Emigration provides an alternative, if uncertain, source for the absorption of new entrants to the labor force, as well as a source of much needed foreign exchange. An estimated 800,000 Yemenis work in the GCC, maintain strong links to Yemen, and remit a sizable portion of their income on a regular basis. Job conditions and security for these workers is always uncertain and dependent on host country policy. The risk of becoming victims of trafficking is acute, especially when migrating to Tier 2 and 3 host

countries<sup>1</sup>. Tightening of immigration regulations in Saudi Arabia in 2013 resulted in the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni workers. As in prior instances, this poses significant hardship on the worker and family members dependent on remittances and further imbalances the Yemen job market and labor force.

- Water and Natural Resources

Yemen possesses limited natural resources beyond oil and natural gas reserves, which are dwindling. Yemen is trending toward becoming thirstier, hotter, drier and more crowded as the country's population grows and the earth's climate changes. The topography of rugged mountains, highlands, deserts, and coastal plains, coupled with arid weather conditions, render Yemen highly susceptible to desertification and floods, and make it a disaster prone country. Increasing numbers of Yemeni households in poorly constructed dwellings are located in hazard prone areas. As conditions worsen, a likely scenario is that Yemeni men, who have more mobility than women, will increasingly migrate in larger numbers to seek work. Yemeni women, who are confined to their homes or villages, will be left to cope with increasingly unproductive land and disaster prone communities.

Lack of water is a crucial issue. Half the country is in emergency status with regard to access to adequate water and sanitation; as such, water is already a source of conflict within the country. Agriculture uses more than 90 percent of the country's scarce water supplies. Almost all of that is for growing *qat*, a non-food crop. The government estimates that the per capita average share of renewable water resources is one tenth of the average in most Middle Eastern countries and one fiftieth of the world average. Yet, even at low usage rates, demand increasingly outstrips fresh water supply. For rural women, collecting water for the household is one of the heavier burdens in a disproportionately large workload. In highland and mountain areas, women and girls typically spend up to seven hours daily collecting water. As a result, girls are often deprived of an opportunity for education.<sup>2</sup> Water scarcity is a binding constraint to growth, and the lack of clean water raises social costs through negative impacts on health. The current trend suggests that critical water shortages will ultimately propel the country ever deeper into poverty. Despite serious donor attention to the water problem, Yemeni political commitment has been lacking, and efforts directed toward improved resource management have been unproductive.

- Gender and Social Exclusion

Girls and women are deprived of rights and constrained with respect to individual initiative, self-improvement, and political and economic engagement. Women are exploited for free labor and are increasingly victimized in society through pervasive inequality, domestic abuse, and social violence. The 2013 Global Gender Gap Report, prepared by the World Economic Forum, ranks Yemen last among 136 countries studied.

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<sup>1</sup>Tier 2: Oman, Jordan, UAE, Malaysia (Watch List) Tier 3: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait.

<sup>2</sup>IFAD. Rural Poverty Portal. <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/>.

Societal views toward women reflect largely agrarian, tribal, and patriarchal traditions. Deemed to be vulnerable and needing to be protected within the family, acceptable occupational options for women outside the home are limited. Superseding even educational opportunities, girls are typically tied to a duty of service to the family from age seven onwards. In the 15-24 age group, 30 percent of females remain illiterate.

Yemen currently has no minimum age for marriage. Boys or girls can be married at any age, but in practice it is girls who are most often married young, often with much older men. The country's high population growth rate is attributable to a significant extent to early marriage and an early first pregnancy. Opposition to a minimum age for marriage is led by conservative parliamentarians on a belief that doing so would risk "the spreading of immorality," undermine "family values," and would be contrary to Sharia, Islamic law. The political crisis in Yemen has paralyzed parliamentary action on this and many other legislative reforms.<sup>3</sup>

## Development Opportunities

The shocks and stresses of on-going conflict and harmful impacts of political and economic crises are a feature of life for Yemeni households. Given widespread incidence of acute crises overlaying chronic drivers of extreme poverty and insecurity in the fragile state context, the major challenge is to build systems and assets so as to simultaneously reduce risks, enhance adaptive capacity, and facilitate inclusive growth. The approach is to intervene at economic, political, and social leverage points for critical change at every level, i.e., that of the individual, households, communities, and the state to foster greater inclusion, provide better adaptive capacity to crises, and to mitigate and reduce risks. Most fundamentally, the aim is to reduce chronic vulnerability; maintain a foundation and conditions upon which development and more inclusive growth can occur; and, ultimately, to build the asset base of the individual, household, and community in order to catalyze a more positive dynamic of investment, enhanced productivity, and rising incomes.

### Leverage Points to Inclusiveness and Good Governance

- Civil Society and Political Inclusiveness

Support for the National Dialogue is a good example of an entry point for mitigating political alienation and exclusion by strengthening the social and cultural connectors that bring Yemenis of all identities together. The conduct of the National Dialogue process proved to be participatory and transparent. Although only 29 percent of delegates were female, all the different political factions, including diverse political parties, social movements, organizations and interests, effectively engaged. This achievement provides the opportunity to build on and extend this possibly evolving culture for political debate and consensus decision-making. This moment of transition is the opportunity for broader and more meaningful participation of women, young people, and rural populations as they seek to become a

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<sup>3</sup>Human Rights Watch. 2013. How Come You Allow Little Girls to Get Married?" Child Marriage in Yemen.

larger part of the political system and to be more visibly involved in civil society. Activist associations and networks merit attention and support, as do new leadership figures who have surfaced among women, youth, and emerging parties.

Divisive issues affecting political and social cohesion will likely remain unresolved regardless of the near-term outcome of political transition. Outlets for the airing of grievances that divide the population should continue to be offered beyond those of the formal political process. The conduct of constructive dialogue is to be encouraged, and the capacity of representatives of both the north and south to engage on issues and grievances warrants support.

- **Representative Institutions and Processes**

Public opinion research shows that citizens do not hold public institutions and democratic processes in high regard and are skeptical of motives. It is imperative, going forward, to increase public confidence in democratic institutions and processes.

The opportunity of constitutional referendum and national and local elections as the culmination of planned political transition offers popular participation in the most fundamental of rights in a democracy. Post-election, a new Parliament will provide the opportunity for increased access to and transparency in the legislative process. A better functioning organization with improved constituency relations will improve perceptions of the legitimacy of government. As legitimacy grows, the public will increase its trust in political processes and revert less readily to violence for the expression of grievances.

- **Responsive Governance**

The capability and responsiveness of the state to effectively fulfill its principal functions and provide key services is an essential aspect of state building and a matter of high priority in the transition. The transition presents the opportunity to better distance reformed structures of governance from traditional networks of patronage, giving these structures greater ability to address broad development challenges such as redressing the political, legal, economic, and social exclusion of certain demographic groups, especially women.

Central to the extended debate and broader transition process are questions of decentralization and federalism. Post-transition, Yemen is likely to see a shift of formal, institutional power from Sana'a to greater decentralization and empowerment of local government. Advancing the capacity of local institutions and leaders to respond to citizen priorities will be essential to the legitimacy of the emergent Yemeni state.

### **Leverage Points for Economic Opportunity**

Constraints to private enterprise and growth are serious and binding and must be addressed; however, strong leadership and committed constituencies for reform are lacking in this period of political transition. The leading constraint of unreliable and high-cost electric power will remain problematic

through the performance period, as will issues related to business rules and corruption. Although meaningful policy, legislative, and regulatory reform will likely be left unattended until after elections and installation of a new government, opportunity exists to address other leading constraints of finance and workforce skills. Also, productivity increases and improved competitiveness are possible through the increased application of improved technology and techniques; and through increased efficiencies within value-chains. Expansion and development of key value chains with a focus on creating sustainable economic opportunities within micro, small, and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) offer the best potential for job growth. Investment in the expanded production of high-value agriculture and associated input, processing and marketing systems offers an opportunity to create jobs and increase incomes, while also addressing issues of food insecurity, water access, and land use.

There are large gender gaps in labor force participation rates: 74 percent of adult men vs. 24 percent of adult women; and 53 percent of male youth compared to 37 percent of female youth. Both adult and young women are much more likely to be unemployed as compared to male counterparts (12 percent of adult men vs. 55 percent of adult women; 26 percent male youth vs. 74 percent female youth). Women are under-represented in all sectors of the economy and are concentrated in agricultural work at the production end of the value chain. Health care and education are among few other readily well-perceived opportunities outside of the home for the economic engagement of women.

### **Human and Social Capital Levers**

- Education

In 2001, basic education in Yemen became compulsory for both boys and girls between the ages of six and fifteen. According to UNESCO, primary school enrollment rates have increased by 20 percent since then to achieve a rate of 86 percent in 2012. This rise in enrollments has contributed to higher literacy rate for Yemenis aged 15 - 24, reported to be 86 percent in 2011. However, despite this progress, approximately 500,000 primary school age children were out of school in 2012, and less than half of all girls complete primary school. Boys enroll in and complete primary school at a higher rate than girls.

The TPSD specifies a commitment to increase basic education enrollment and completion rates, particularly for girls, and to increase the quality of the education in the early grades so that students gain the foundational skills necessary to build literacy to succeed in school. An early grade reading assessment supported by USAID in 2012 confirmed that most second and third grade students were not reading fluently. Pilot activities to tackle this problem are yielding promising early results, and the opportunity for national level programming based on these efforts is building.

- Health

Women in Yemen endure a disproportionate burden of disease. The cause stems from their lack of decision-making power and control over resources, limited mobility and challenges to accessing health service delivery points, limited knowledge of healthy behaviors and care options, poor quality health systems, illnesses related to water and food insecurity, reproductive health challenges driven by high

birth rates and early marriage, and physical and sexual violence incurred because legal statutes and cultural norms do not protect them from GBV. The challenges are daunting and arise from a wide variety of social, cultural, and infrastructural constraints.

The causes of maternal and child mortality are known and are preventable for the most part with affordable, low-tech solutions if women and children can freely access them. This is an uncommon situation at present. If the Yemeni health system scales up a few life-saving improvements and techniques, and if the Yemeni population, especially women, are empowered to utilize more health services and practice better health choices at home, then health outcomes will improve.

Similarly, greater access to and decision-making authority on contraceptive use is contingent on not only dependable services and commodities but also on female empowerment. Currently, only 27 percent of Yemeni women use any family planning methods. A high fertility rate of 4.27 children per woman is a constraint to Yemen's future development and a serious obstacle in the fight against poverty. Public resources are limited and increasingly inadequate for the provision of quality health and education services for the growing population. Government policy and plans aim to reduce the population growth rate. Program elements include expansion of coverage and quality of family planning and reproductive health services; efforts to change attitudes towards use of family planning methods; provision of improved quality obstetric care; contributing to the debate on a draft law setting a minimum age for marriage; and raising the enrollment rate in primary education, in particular for girls, and reducing the illiteracy rate among women. The government, through the Ministry of Public Health and Population, has requested that USAID support the strengthening of the public Maternal and Child Health and Voluntary Family Planning service delivery systems and assist in scaling-up best practices in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Family Planning.

- Nutrition

Poor nutrition is not only about food. It is a complex problem, which is caused by ill health as well as a poor quality diet. Underlying causes include an unhealthy environment caused by the lack of clean water, sanitation or hygiene; and widespread gender inequality which can affect women's access to food, water, and health care services for themselves and their children. Working across health, education, agriculture, and value chains and water sectors simultaneously is required to produce improved nutrition outcomes.

## **The Role of USAID**

USAID's programmatic focus is to support the success of the transition, address humanitarian needs, facilitate job creation and the delivery of basic health care and primary education services, improve governmental capacity, and increase citizens' confidence in political processes. The immediate focus is the transition, but the programmatic thrust addresses underlying development challenges at the local level, consistent with USAID's comparative advantage and strength in addressing complex challenges in the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance.

USAID will coordinate the sequencing, layering and integration of multi-sectoral efforts across the spectrum of humanitarian and development assistance programming options. USAID will proactively map and manage inter-partner coordination to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in program delivery with a focus on agreed purpose and objectives. This approach is needed to address the complexity of the problems, as well as inter-relationships between causes of the problems. The aim is to augment capacities to endure and overcome potentially catastrophic events and stresses by helping people to build more durable and diverse livelihood options; and to facilitate and develop systems for local governance and cooperative public and private community action in the areas of economic growth and development, natural resource management, disaster risk reduction, conflict mitigation, public safety, and construction and maintenance of public infrastructure, including water and sanitation systems, health clinics, and schools.

The complexity of the development challenge dictates broad programmatic scope across the spectrum of political, social, and economic dimensions to include interventions at the national level to support inclusive political transition, and at the local level to facilitate improved and responsive governance, service delivery, and economic opportunity.

USAID will seek to help build formal governing capacity but will also strengthen existing systems of communal organization and self-governing citizenship where appropriate. Programming will build on existing indigenous forms of civil society and values anchored in Islamic practice and mutual self-help, including principles of generosity, support to the weak, fairness, reconciliation, and integrity.

USAID will facilitate civic leadership on issues of importance to the local community, and leverage SDF and PWP capacities to improve public service delivery, including clean water, electricity, and public safety. USAID will directly invest in improved health care delivery, family planning, and primary education outcomes. Economic opportunities will be enhanced through a value chain approach, targeting high value agricultural production, processing, and supporting services. Local initiative, partnerships, and ownership are essential elements to the USAID approach. Representatives of civil society, religious organizations, government, and business are essential collaborators to strategy implementation.

USAID's approach is meant to be integrated and holistic so as to yield impact greater than the sum of the sectoral parts. Third-party monitoring and evaluation will keep management apprised for informed decision-taking and reporting. A performance baseline will be established and indicators will be defined for the expected outcomes for later evaluation.

By promoting broader inclusion, USAID will help address chronic barriers to political voice, social well-being, and economic opportunity that have been the historic drivers of Yemen's fragility and under-development. USAID will promote gender equality and female empowerment across the scope of the program so as to make use of all of society's potential talent in building a better future for Yemen. USAID programs will aim to decrease the gaps between males and females with access to political, social, and economic participation. USAID will target increased participation of youth in recognition of



the size of its demographic segment, but also for the potential outside gain the younger population offers if constructively engaged in building a stable democracy, strong society, and prosperous economy.

Overarching principles guiding strategy implementation include the following:

- Programs are to focus on the human dimension of development and emphasize inclusiveness, gender equality, and female empowerment.
- Yemeni ownership and partnership is essential to effective program implementation.
- Do No Harm: Ensure sensitivity to cultural norms, and do not exacerbate or worsen conflict.
- USAID efforts to promote good governance are premised on the institutionalization of mechanisms for participation, accountability, and transparency.
- Moving toward economic recovery, poverty alleviation, and job creation is critically dependent on enabling a diverse and competitive private sector which may be expected to innovate and identify and establish new economic opportunities.
- Enhanced practices and accelerated transfer and scaling-up of innovative technologies, local solutions, and market-driven models are essential to program achievement. Applications of science, technology, innovation, and partnerships (STIP) will be employed to improve the impact, reach and sustainability of development efforts. As appropriate, and as funding allows, USAID will test and reward proven innovations that show results in program implementation.
- Continuity of effort is important to effecting change and achieving impact, but operational and programmatic flexibility is to be maintained (within the confines of the strategic results framework) to ensure adaptability and responsiveness as needs and priorities evolve.

## Selectivity and Focus

In a departure from prior strategy, USAID will address stabilization as part of, rather than separate from, the overall development program in a systemic approach for greater impact. The programmatic emphasis is inclusion, social cohesion, and the construct of a sound foundation for growth and development. The hypothesis is that growth and equitable development alleviates causes of conflict. However, the challenge of conflict-sensitive program management remains as Yemen confronts a multiplicity of structural, intractable and inter-related crises linked to violent extremism, regional insurgencies, economic and environmental stress, and uncertain political transition. Where Yemenis feel alienated, development interventions will strengthen the social, economic, and cultural connectors that bring Yemenis of all identities together. Activities will avoid targeting one identity group for benefits to the exclusion of others, so as to not foment resentment. Instead, activities will bring multiple identity groups together based on common interests to build relationships and resilience in the face of divisive messaging. Proactive measures to implement equitable, inclusive programming can

help mitigate grievances and reassure marginalized Yemenis that legitimate interests will be recognized and addressed throughout the transition process. USAID's efforts to improve good governance will fundamentally confront patronage networks at the heart of some of Yemen's core drivers of conflict. Equally, in supporting efforts for devolution of central power and resources to sub-national entities, USAID will further encourage local solutions to long-standing grievances.

Until a constitution is drafted, implementing legislation ratified, local elections held, and administrative responsibilities defined and transferred, the environment for sub-national programming remains problematic. In this context, coordination on local-level programming is dependent upon specific line-Ministry leadership or the initiative of donor or local representatives.

Local leadership (public and private) is foremost among considerations for USAID decision-making on local development activities. That leadership must include both men and women to ensure that a demand-driven approach reflects stakeholder ownership and relevance of activities to the unique needs of males and females. Location-specific political economy analyses and regular stakeholder consultations will facilitate identification and understanding of root political/governance challenges behind development failures in defined areas.

Gender responsive safety and security considerations are critical. Commitment by local leadership to protect program participants, beneficiaries, stakeholders, and implementing partner personnel is needed to qualify an area safe for the deployment of project assistance.

The best prospects for the sequencing, layering, and integration of USAID initiatives at the local level are depicted in a map included in the Annex. The area identified is based on the assessment of multiple factors, including incidence of acute crises, physical access, and broad-based economic potential. Economic potential is largely agricultural and attributable to relatively greater rainfall in the delineated area. Within this area, USAID will prioritize the most promising locales. OFDA is actively addressing humanitarian needs in the area, and FFP programming is already geared to complement Feed-the-Future (FtF) agricultural value-chain efforts.

## **Donor Assistance and Coordination**

The government's "Mutual Accountability Framework" (MAF) outlines the relationship between Yemeni goals to restore political, security, and economic stability and the supporting role of donor countries. The Framework is meant to align donor assistance in accordance with agreed objectives for optimal impact. This approach is built on and consistent with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Coordination. The Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) and its donors, including the USG, are signatories to these Agreements.

In 2012, donors pledged over \$7 billion in support of Yemen's transition and development. This included a pledge of about \$3.3 billion from Saudi Arabia, the single largest contributor of aid to Yemen.

Assistance from Saudi Arabia includes petroleum products to help ease fuel shortages caused by attacks on key pipelines.

Saudi Arabia and Great Britain co-chair the Friends of Yemen (FoY) Group, a multilateral forum of 24 concerned countries that was launched in 2010. The United States helped found the FoY with a purpose to increase donor coordination and widen the scope of support. The initiative was also an acknowledgement that past pledges were not being disbursed in either a timely or effective manner. Lax monitoring and evaluation processes with respect to GCC donations in particular made those funds vulnerable to corruption and exploitation.

Traditional donors to Yemen include the United States, GCC states, United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, South Korea, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission, various United Nations agencies (UNDP, IFAD, HCR, WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNHCR), and Arab multilateral development funds (the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Islamic Development Bank, the OPEC Fund, and the Arab Monetary Fund).

Since the start of the transition, USAID has worked with over 180 local organizations representing constituencies across the country. Management and implementation planning and coordination will be fundamentally important to effective USAID program delivery, and the leveraging of other donor and host government resources is important to USAID accomplishment of objectives.

## Development Hypothesis

If USAID and its partners support a more democratic system of governance, and contribute to the social and economic status of the population, Yemen's progress to become prosperous and resilient will be strengthened. If the current political transition process succeeds, and planned reforms are implemented, the outcome will be far-reaching and enabling. Inclusiveness in national and community governance will be institutionalized, public service delivery will improve, and inequities in distribution will fade; public perception on the legitimacy of government will improve, and incentives for behavioral change with respect to health care and education, respect for natural resource constraints and limitations, and individual initiative in productive enterprise will change for the better.

Consolidation of effort and selective engagement with trusted, progressive "change agents" in civil society and government at the local level will maximize the potential for program synergy and accomplishment of measurable improvement in the well-being of individuals, households, and communities. Economic growth, agriculture, and land and water management programs will link to more sustainable strategies for economic development. Improving private-sector competitiveness, while creating jobs and enhancing workforce preparedness, will spur economic growth. A healthier, well-nourished population and better-educated youth will increase employability and life skills. Enhancing political participation and civic activism, improving election administration, and strengthening governmental capacity will improve public service delivery and raise public confidence in the government. Government-led initiatives, with USAID support, will assist in addressing high population

growth rates and unsustainable pressure on social sector and natural resources. Additionally, pursuing more effective investments in gender equality and female empowerment will accelerate overall progress in development.

## Critical Assumptions and Risks

For the purposes of this strategy, the following assumptions have been made:

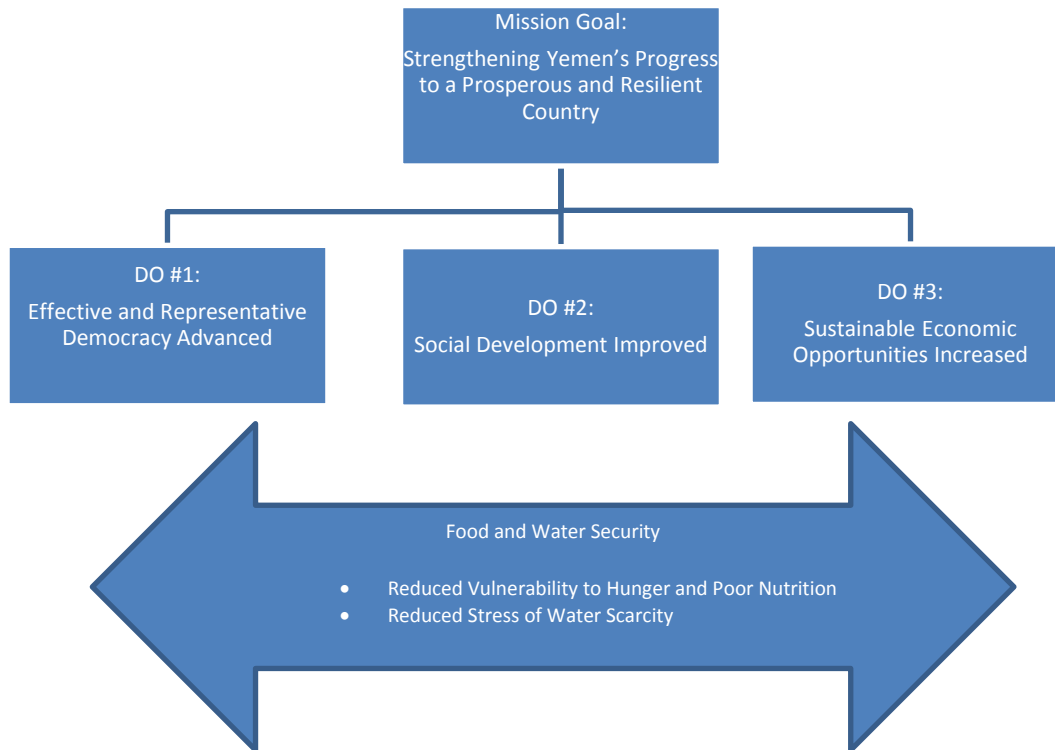
- Political transition will progress essentially in accordance with the GCC brokered initiative and implementation plan, and benchmarks will continue to be meaningful and met after the February 2014 expiration of the agreement. Delays are expected, progress will be uneven, and difficult and divisive issues will remain unresolved.
- The security situation will remain uncertain. A deflation of conflict over the next few years that would benefit USAID programming is not expected.
- Social tension will remain at elevated levels, but patience with political transition will be sustained. Price volatility on essential consumer items could spark unrest.
- The Government of Yemen will implement reforms as specified in the Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development and the Mutual Accountability Framework. Subsequent plans will be consistent with current plans with respect to overall policy, approach, and objectives.
- The government will make progress in building systems for improved accountability to better address citizen demands for the elimination of corruption and improved delivery of services.
- Behavioral change will follow and respond to policy and institutional developments meant to incentivize individual initiative with respect to education, health, economic opportunity, natural resource management, and equality of women.

There is significant risk to the viability and continuing validity of the Strategy if these assumptions do not hold true; yet, situations of conflict, civil unrest, and/or derailment of political transition are foreseeable.

- Intensification of Islamic militancy associated with AQAP, discord in Northern Yemen associated with the al-Houthi movement, or secessionist sentiment in Southern Yemen associated with the Hirak Movement could provoke increased violence or terrorist activity. Confrontation in the debate or implementation of planned political reforms could spark conflict as some necessitate influential government actors and elites to act contrary to vested interests.
- Internal tensions aggravated by high unemployment and impoverishment could lead to fresh upheaval and widespread demonstrations of protest. A hike in food prices or uncompensated reduction in the fuel subsidy could foreseeably trigger events leading to public disorder.
- Derailment of political transition from the plans of the GCC framework is conceivable. Popular sympathy could shift to local spoilers or violent actors as frustrations and resentments of change or the lack of change grow. Political shifts could foreseeably prompt stalemate on key transition benchmarks or possibly abandonment of the GCC framework by a major political faction.

In an unstable environment, donor assistance will be critical to crisis management and mitigation, as well as the return to investment in growth and development.

## Results Framework



## CDCS Goal and Development Objectives

### **CDCS Goal: Strengthening Yemen's Progress to a Prosperous and Resilient Country.**

USAID's goal is multi-dimensional. It is linked to national development plans and targets specific components in coordination with other development partners. The goal reflects the overall hypothesis that if USAID and its partners support a more democratic system of governance, and contribute to the social and economic status of the population, Yemen's progress to become prosperous and resilient will be strengthened. Resilience signifies the ability of the Yemeni people, households, communities, and the state to mitigate, adapt to and recover from the shocks and stresses of internal conflict and political and economic crises in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. Prosperity indicates prevailing conditions of low unemployment, rising income, and increasing purchasing power. While supporting the transition, and staying positioned to advance the outcomes of the transition, USAID aims to strengthen the administration of humanitarian and development assistance while targeting vulnerable communities emerging from cycles of crisis. More than a static relief-to-development approach, the effort is to create adaptive capacities, assist in breaking the

chronically vicious cycle of poverty and fragility, and establish a foundation for inclusive growth and development. The aim is to be more strategic for greater impact. The goal is country resilience and prosperity.

USAID's development objectives (DOs) are sector-based with attention to political (democracy and governance), social (education, health, and population growth) and economic (business, agriculture, natural resource management, and the workforce) dimensions of the goal of accelerated progress toward resilience and prosperity. This approach effectively aligns the strategic framework with TPSD priorities, builds on past success, offers potential to bring programs to scale, and defines structure for Mission implementation of multiple sector-based initiatives. Although focused by sector, programmatic synergies are essential to program accomplishment.

**DO 1: Effective and Representative Democracy Advanced.**

The intent is to build on the legitimacy and success of the GCC transitional process and assist Yemen's government and people to deliver on the promise of political transition. USAID will support the ROYG, political parties, and civil society with an aim to improve government response to the needs of male and female citizens and to enhance the accountability of political processes.

**DO 2: Social Development Improved.** Human development is stifled in the current environment of inequity, with pervasive gender inequality as one aspect of that inequity. Attending particularly to the health and education needs of women and girls in Yemen offers highly favorable returns on investment and is critical to addressing challenges of high fertility, GBV, and social and economic exclusion.

**DO 3: Sustainable Inclusive Economic Opportunities Increased.** The lack of economic opportunities for a growing number of Yemenis is destabilizing; it weakens resilience to crisis and threatens the current political transition. USAID will support efforts to create private sector economic opportunities oriented to reducing chronic vulnerability and facilitating inclusive growth. USAID will address both the near-term challenges of revitalizing businesses, as well as competitiveness issues inhibiting growth and development.

**Cross-Cutting Program Priorities: Food and Water Security.**

Program priorities of food and water security are multi-sectoral undertakings. Water security is a function of access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation, as well as effective management of finite supply. Factors contributing to family food security include sufficient availability, access, and safe and appropriate use of foods. A family is food secure when members do not live in hunger or fear of hunger.

- Reduced Vulnerability to Hunger and Poor Nutrition. Efforts to increase issue awareness, expand health care delivery, and improve economic opportunity for household asset diversification and increased food purchasing power will combine to reduce food insecurity and the incidence of malnutrition.
- Reduced Stress of Water Scarcity. The application of improved, affordable technology and management techniques will result in more efficient and effective use of existing water supply and improve water productivity and availability for safe human consumption.

**Strategic Theme: Inclusion.**

The primary programming principle of inclusion is a response to the exclusionary effect of the political economy of Yemen and the belief that country resilience and prosperity is best approached through engagement of all of society’s potential talent. It is a summary statement on program intent to capture and capitalize upon the historic opportunity of political transition to promote government of and by the people, to begin to correct social injustices, and to broadly improve economic opportunities.

This theme directs resources for the specific benefit particularly of women and girls. Women were at the forefront and played a leading role in the 2011 popular uprising; aspirations include achievement of equal rights enshrined in a new constitution. Political transition will not be successful without the meaningful engagement of women and girls in the political and economic life of Yemeni society.

USAID is committed to protect and promote universally recognized human rights of all groups of people in Yemen, including ethnic and religious minorities, the disabled, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities in the pursuit of political rights and civil liberties, equal opportunities, and non-discriminatory access to public goods and services.

USAID’s inclusive development approach emphasizes empowerment of women and youth. The intent is a fully participatory approach to political processes as well as inclusive decision-making in households and communities; equal access to sustainable livelihoods, economic assets and resources; and the equitable supply of basic education, health and other services that are essential for personal well-being, growth and transformative development results.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**

Informed and timely decision-making on programming options and the achievement and maintenance of programmatic synergy across the portfolio of sponsored activities is essential to accomplishment of higher-level program objectives. To this end, USAID performance management includes employment of a Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) approach throughout the Program Cycle. Procedures and systems are being developed to better ensure



organizational learning as to what is working and not, and to inform iterative, timely course corrections as warranted in this politically, socially and economically volatile working environment.

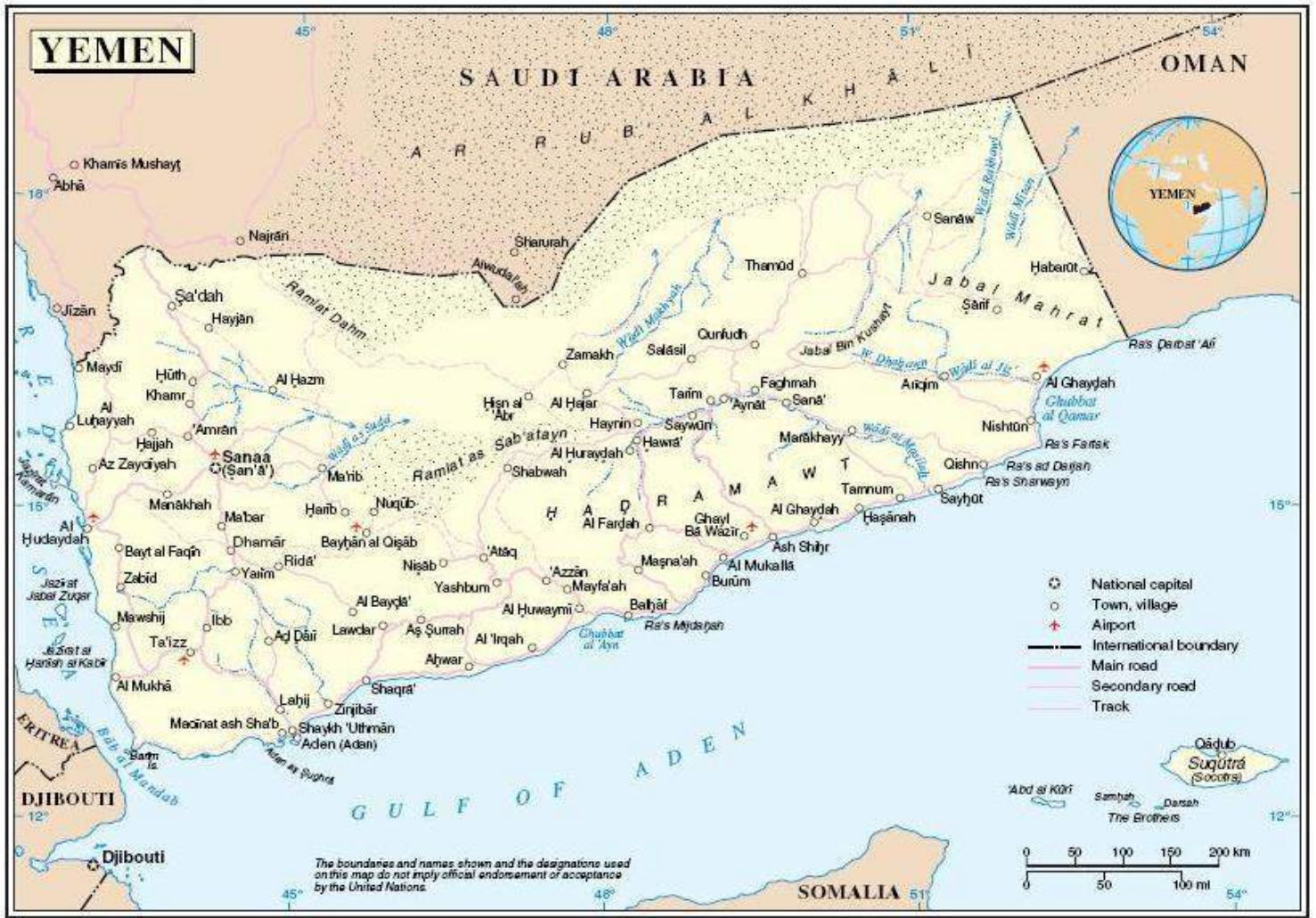
As demonstrated during the CDCS development process, increased coordination within USAID, among its implementing partners, with other donors, and with host government counterparts helped to create synergies that resulted in an integrated and synergistic strategy that incorporates a resilience approach which is highly dependent on good collaboration. The continuation of effective collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, monitoring and evaluating objective and project/activity goals amidst rapidly evolving contexts throughout the life of the CDCS is crucial to its success.

Taking this knowledge gained through collaboration, the Mission was able to build a highly-complex yet well-grounded CDCS, leveraging resilience under certain conditions. Through a Third Party Monitoring and Evaluation contract, the Mission will measure and test the resilience hypothesis and measure its progress toward meeting objectives. Through performance evaluations and cross-sectoral assessments, the Mission has collected and will continue to compile valuable information on gender, conflict, and environmental compliance. Measures will be taken to ensure that results and learning from CDCS implementation are made available and shared openly with local organizations, citizen groups and other stakeholders. This may include Quarterly Partners Meetings, Monthly M&E Meetings, Quarterly Financial and Program Reviews; Annual Portfolio Reviews with the host government; and regular Donor forums.

Given the complexity of Yemen's operating environment, the non-linear nature of programming in transitional contexts, and the range of game-changing events that could unfold over the course of the CDCS and require shifts in programming, adaptive management approaches are key to ensuring the optimal and appropriate program response at all times.

Over the life of this strategy, the Mission will devote at least five percent of its programming budget to M&E, bringing it in line with agency guidance. The majority of this funding will go toward the Third Party Monitoring and Evaluation contract.

# Annex A: Maps



Map No. 3247 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS  
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

## Annex B: References

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