By the beginning of 2003, the sixth year since the establishment of the Social Fund for Development (SFD), it may be said with confidence that SFD has been able to achieve many successes and accomplishments in the framework of ongoing development work at the national level. Success has been embodied in the implementation of a great number of projects and activities that help to create and reinforce citizens' confidence in the government’s ability to access remote areas and provide basic services to both poor urban and rural population.

SFD has played a prominent role as a national developmental institution that performs an efficient professional work, and helps to create and reinforce citizens' confidence in the government’s ability to access remote areas and provide basic services to both poor urban and rural population.

As a reflection of its innovation as well as learning from experience, SFD has attained a high level of performance and is committed to continuous progress and improvement. This has been manifested in the reduction in the cost of school buildings, and introducing of development concepts such as “targeting the poor”, “impact assessment”, etc. SFD, due to its strong presence, has also incited other development agencies to compete and improve their performance.

While SFD continues implementation of a wide range of projects in a variety of sectors in all regions of the country, it is, at the same time, exerting great effort to build and improve institutional capacity, whether within its own internal structure or for partners from governmental and non-governmental organizations, private sector, and civil society.

During this final year of SFD’s Phase Two (2003) and subsequent years, SFD will continue to enhance its role as an implementer and allocator of resources, and dynamic character enjoying a modern and advanced institutional structure committed to work efficiently, with transparency and a high sense of responsibility. SFD will endeavor to become a center of attraction for foreign support to be integrated in the developmental process of the country and has the potential for expansion in order to comprehend more support.

The Board of Directors of the SFD held its first meeting for 2003 on February 1 and was presided over by the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Board, H.E. Mr. Ali M. M. M. al-Bu-Allal. Of the 42 projects discussed were (1) the SFD’s workplan for 2003, and (2) the ceiling of the projects and the national bids.

The workplan was approved with total allocations amounting to $43 million for the funding of 698 projects. The meeting has also confirmed the continuation of efforts with donors to mobilize funds for SFD III starting in 2004. Emphasis was also placed on increasing government contribution to the SFD. The Board authorized the SFD management to approach projects and to increase the ceiling of the national bids to $500,000.

A second meeting was held on March 24, 2003 and discussed the developmental operation financial statement for the year ending December 31, 2002, and to the selection an auditor for the SFD for the fiscal year of 2003.
Infrastructure Unit

Eduction: The number of projects at the implementation stage reached twelve distributed over three governorates at an approximate cost of $3.8 million, bringing total SFD commitments in the education sector at the end of the quarter to $107.5 million of which the cumulative amount disbursed is $66.5 million.

Cultural Heritage

The restorations works of Sana’a’s Grand Mosque and the Mosque of Shihab/Kawkabani is continued. Also, new projects were developed along with the completion of some of the works already in progress.

Participation in the symposium for the national and international preservation of the heritage of Old Damascus was, from Damascus March 20-22, 2003. Also, a visit was made to a rehabilitation and preservation project in the historic city of Aleppo for training exposure to the Syrian experience in this field.

Rods

A workshop for branch project officers in the roads sector was held in which seven officers attended. The purpose of the workshop was to impart a general idea concerning road projects implementation and to present solutions to the problems that may occur during project implementation, particularly in the direct implementation projects.

As a result of the workshop, a number of field visits were made to Dhiheen road project in Amran and the Wadi Dijah road project in Raymah in order to demonstrate some of the problems that may come up in this type of project, and how to solve them.

Water & Environment Unit

The number of water projects that entered the implementation stage in this quarter amounted to 31 projects of this year was three projects totaling $333,000, causing the cumulative number of projects to reach 74. Total SFD commitments in the water sector reached $9.16 million while total expenditures amounted to $1.81 million bringing the cumulative expenditures as of the end of the quarter to $22.8 million.

Environment

The number of ongoing environment projects that have entered the implementation stage during the first quarter of this year was three projects totaling $333,000, causing the cumulative number of projects to reach 74. Total SFD commitments in the environment sector reached $9.16 million while total expenditures totaled $479,000 bringing the total at quarter end to $51.1 million.

During this quarter, an independent regional consultant was commissioned to conduct an environmental assessment of a number of SFD projects. In view of the lack of local consultants specializing in this field, two local consultants were selected to work with the regional experts during 10-12 days in stay. The team visited 15 randomly chosen project sites in various sectors distributed over four governorates. The environmental audit aims to account for the environmental impact of project implementation and operation and to conclude recommendations for decreasing adverse effects as well as to implement an environment plan followed by SFD in projects implementation.

Training Unit

Training projects for the first quarter of the year amounted to 30 distributed over two training programs and one regional support to the project in the field. The total contracted projects is 28, distributed as follows

Training Sector:

This sector encompasses 17 projects of which two were completed over the quarter. The projects were as follows:

Three projects were aimed capacity-raising for the SFD consultants in Sana’a, Dhamar, and Hodida branches in the field of environmental effects on project proposals.

Two projects for the training of health workers and agricultural extensionists in the field of health and environmental awareness-raising as part of the program “Water-harvesting” in Hodida and Dhamar governorates.

One project for qualifying contractors in Hadhramaut governorate in the SFD’s contracting procedures in road projects.

Three projects targeting the education sector in various fields of which are:

- Support four schools in Sana’a as a pilot phase in training teachers on school activities.
- Support to friends of the Environment Clubs in secondary schools through training of supervisors and students in awareness-raising and environmental issues.
- Training program focusing on experience exchange in handicrafts among female trainees who have already received training financed by the SFD and conveying that experience to new female trainees representing ten school districts in Sana’a’s city.
- Four projects consisting of 17 training programs, seven of which target the agricultural cooperative union and agricultural cooperatives in the fields of: increased planting and vaccination of mango groves; economies of milk production; use of insecticides; food production targeting rural women. These institutional support projects are supported by a number of NGOs.
- A pilot project to apply new teaching methods in literacy: one by using poetry and folk heritage. Another: A special training to 200 teachers who are subjects that interested adults. This was conducted with the aid of a simplified SFD- booklet prepared for this purpose.

Organizational Support Sector

This sector has eleven projects in the implementation stage as follows:

Institutional support for NGO’s (7 projects): Six of the projects are for the support of internal training activities through training of trainers and provision of some necessary equipment and materials. One project is part of the second phase for field surveys of cooperatives that are involved in the agricultural sector.

Institutional support for governmental organizations (4 projects): One project for the purpose of preparing necessary equipment (one file server for the Central Statistical Organization), and three projects are intended for the education sector, namely, providing computers to four schools in the Capital secretariat, and equipment to laboratories and school activities.

Social Protection Unit

Four projects were contracted for a total cost of $467,000 including:

- Contribution to the funding for the supply of family planning devices, to which the SFD contributed NFA ($30,000) and the LGU ($82,000), the total project cost was signed at the SFD premises by the Managing Director of the SFD, the Minister of Health and Population, and the representative of UNFPA.

- New training project for the Mareb governorate and the Jiblah/Khawlan district (Sana’a) at a cost of $385,460. The project aims to train 236 male and female students in more than twelve health and medical disciplines to the level of a high diploma after secondary school. The trainees are distributed in a number of institutes in the country. They are expected to work in the President’s Hospital and Marib Hospital, in the Mareb governorate and in the Jiblah/Khawlan Hospital once they graduate.

Special-Needs Groups (SNG’s)

Twelve projects were contracted at a total cost of $76,500 of which some are as follows:

- Training programs on the use of computer for the Khayun and Myriads Societies that work with mentally disabled groups.
- Training programs in secretarial and computer operations are also implemented for Dar-al-Rahma Girls’ orphanage and the Social Guidance Center which works with juveniles.
- Training program for the preparation of trainers in orientation and mobility for the blind. Training started on February 1 and was carried out by an Indian expert on the SFD’s request to rehabilitate blind.
- Training program for ten trainees working with the blind in a number of centers and societies for the blind from various governmental and semi-governmental institutions.

Achievements of the First Quarter of 2003

The SFD has contracted 112 Projects during the fourth quarter of 2003, with a total investment of about $35.6 million.

Integrated Interventions

- One training program for 17 male and female trainees in the preparation and implementation of health and environmental awareness programs lasting three days.

- A training program was completed for the community Development Committee for the village of Al-Qahera, Ta’iz, Massa, Deer Al-Rudayni, and Al-Lihayyeh district in Al-Hodidah governorate concerning community contracting.

- A Project consisting of four training programs in community involvement and gender roles: The project aims to enable project officers at the main office and branch offices of SFD to carry out field studies, identify the needs of women, and integrate gender issues.

- A new microfinance program supported by ASA, and currently under implementation.

Achievements of the First Quarter of 2003

- Total number of ongoing environment projects that have entered the implementation stage during the first quarter of this year was three projects totaling $333,000, causing the cumulative number of projects to reach 74. Total SFD commitments in the environment sector reached $9.16 million while total expenditures totaled $479,000 bringing the total at quarter end to $51.1 million.

- Three projects targeting the education sector in various fields of which are:
  - Support four schools in Sana’a as a pilot phase in training teachers on school activities.
  - Support to friends of the Environment Clubs in secondary schools through training of supervisors and students in awareness-raising and environmental issues.
  - Training program focusing on experience exchange in handicrafts among female trainees who have already received training financed by the SFD and conveying that experience to new female trainees representing ten school districts in Sana’a’s city.
- Four projects consisting of 17 training programs, seven of which target the agricultural cooperative union and agricultural cooperatives in the fields of: increased planting and vaccination of mango groves; economies of milk production; use of insecticides; food production targeting rural women. These institutional support projects are supported by a number of NGOs.
- A pilot project to apply new teaching methods in literacy: one by using poetry and folk heritage. Another: A special training to 200 teachers who are subjects that interested adults. This was conducted with the aid of a simplified SFD- booklet prepared for this purpose.

- Projects in the training programs for female trainers belonging to centers for the National Program for Community and Productive- Families Development in 14 governorates. The project aims at the enabling female trainees to gain basic skills in the repair and maintenance of sewing and embroidery machines.

- A Project consisting of four training programs in community involvement and gender roles: The project aims at a cost of $333,000 bringing the total at quarter end to $51.1 million.

- During this quarter, an independent regional consultant was commissioned to conduct an environmental assessment of a number of SFD projects. In view of the lack of local consultants specializing in this field, two local consultants were selected to work with the regional experts during 10-12 days in stay. The team visited 15 randomly chosen project sites in various sectors distributed over four governorates. The environmental audit aims to account for the environmental impact of project implementation and operation and to conclude recommendations for decreasing adverse effects as well as to implement an environment plan followed by SFD in projects implementation.