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The Saudi Development and  
Reconstruction Program for Yemen



## ‘Beautiful Aden’: Environmental sanitation and life-saving emergency flood response

*As SDRPY reduces health risks from environmental and visual pollution and helps curb the spread of epidemics and disease, its work crews in Aden have become first responders during lethal floods in the province.*

According to the Cleaning and Improvement Fund of Aden (CIFA), 1,200 tons of domestic and commercial waste have piled up every day in the streets of Aden in recent months, causing serious environmental and health hazards. Local doctors report a spike in hygiene-related diseases – including illnesses caused by infection, insect-transmission and water-borne parasites.

The lethality of recent floods has highlighted the importance of the goals of the ‘Beautiful Aden’ environmental sanitation and hygiene campaign, launched by the Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen (SDRPY) on 23 March 2020 in collaboration with CIFA and civic organizations. The campaign’s key goals include reducing health risks from environmental and visual pollution and helping to curb the spread of epidemics and disease, dangers heightened by the flood disaster. The campaign was launched with the aim of removing up to 9,000 cubic meters of accumulated waste from streets and public areas in Aden Governorate in more than 600 transfers per month for three months, with the number of beneficiaries projected to be 589,419.



The campaign has included de-watering, drainage and desludging operations that have mitigated the direct consequences of the floods.

### ***Rescue and recovery experience in action***

When torrential rains and floods have hit the area – causing extensive damage, destruction and even fatalities – the campaign has been able to adapt to the emergency and respond, while still achieving its original targets on schedule. On the basis of SDRPY's previous experience in crisis response in Yemen – including post-cyclone rescue and recovery operations and flood response in Aden itself – operational flexibility was built into the 'Beautiful Aden' campaign at the planning phase and instantly put to work for the benefit of the province's residents, neighborhoods and streets.

During the first serious flooding to occur during the course of the campaign, the program rendered emergency assistance by removing more than 625,000 liters of floodwater by 9 April.

"We were very scared about a health crisis from the flood, and we don't have a water drainage system," remarked Amin Garad, a resident of Jamal neighborhood in Khomaksar District, at the time. "But the campaign anticipated the rain problem and responded immediately when it started."

"The torrential rains have damaged the whole area," said Ali Alzorgi a resident of Jabal Qawareer neighborhood. The campaign's bulldozers removed mud that was blocking



residential areas, he explained, and “if the mud had remained, water tankers would not have been able to enter the area, so residents would have had no access to a clean water at all.”

When torrential rains hit Aden again on 21 April, SDRPY responded to a distress call from the Yemeni government by immediately implementing urgent measures to drain floodwater and open main roads. Work teams opened the Aqaba Road and the link between the Crater District and Al-Mualla District after it was closed by flooding. The program also re-opened Shoula and Sheikh Ishaq Roads and carried out several urgent interventions in Hafoun.

SDRPY vacuumed 2,005,000 liters of water and removed 1,563 tons of waste during the most recent crisis in Aden. These operations confronted the work teams with much greater difficulties, as the floods left behind massive damage that would have been far greater in the absence of the environmental sanitation campaign. Instead, key transportation routes such as the Aqaba Road were opened, mitigating the destruction and allowing teams to maneuver through affected areas and assess the damage more extensively.

The response has also included vacuuming and removing massive volumes of water at internally displaced person (IDP) camps, including the site at the Al-Saudi Institute. SDRPY has conducted both de-watering and desludging operations for three other IDP sites at Al-Sawama’a, Lila Khalil and the sewage processing center. In addition, SDRPY has conducted full-scale de-watering operations in ten neighborhoods in six districts: Har Al-Saadah, Al-Shabbat, Har Al-Salam and Har Al-Safarat (Khormaksar District); Al-Dakka (Al-Mualla District); Beer Fadi (Buraiqah District); Reme and Kaputa (Mansoura District); Hujif (Tawahi District); and Omar Almkhtar (Sheikh Othman District). SDRPY is continuing these operations at the time of this report.

### *The ‘Beautiful Aden’ campaign: key issues and solutions*

The project includes not only improvements such as afforestation and planting of vegetation (including 5,000 non-water-consuming seedlings), rehabilitation of vital roads, and repair of lighting for streets, roads and public areas throughout the province. It has also devised procedures in cooperation with local authorities, civil society organizations and local environmental champions to ensure sustainability of the sanitation and hygiene work once the project has concluded.

In recent years, CIFA has lost nearly 60% of its machinery and equipment. This sharp loss has resulted in the accumulation of large quantities of solid and residual waste scattered across the neighborhoods and streets of the governorate, and an increased risk of disease and epidemics in an already delicate situation.

This issue is compounded by the rapidly increased population. According to CIFA, the Aden metropolitan area swelled from roughly 865,000 inhabitants in 2014 to over 1.9 million people in 2019 generating a total of 959 tons of waste per day. The crisis is further exacerbated by the problem of IDPs and refugees. In 2019, the total number of registered IDPs was 12,144, a number dwarfed by their registered refugees (136,104) and unregistered refugees (135,500). In total, a densely populated area already experiencing severe challenges

in handling waste has increased by more than 284,000 – adding 142 tons of waste per day to total output – solely by virtue of IDPs and refugees.

Under the ‘Beautiful Aden’ campaign, SDRPY is providing essential support in the form of more than 22 pieces of heavy machinery and advanced equipment, including bulldozers, garbage trucks, compacting machinery, and over 200 rubbish bins. In the first nine days, the campaign removed over 1,986 tons of waste. As of 25 April, the volume stood at 8,857 tons, equal to 25,083 cubic meters. During the period of 21-25 April alone, the campaign removed an additional 1,583 tons of flood waste.

### *In the words of resident beneficiaries...*

“When we play, we have no space because we are surrounded by waste” said a girl living in the Al-Kood neighborhood.

“The children are playing on trampoline, and the trampoline is right in front of refuse,” said Rami Khamees, her father. “May God reward them with goodness,” he added. “They are exerting effort by cleaning, which makes our lives healthier.”



The campaign includes reducing health risks from environmental and visual pollution. After 21 days, it had already served 111,116 direct beneficiaries



### *Program impact and outcomes*

The project has created temporary job opportunities for more than 300 citizens, working alongside 12 field monitors, 80 participants from civil society organizations, and 40 individuals from local farms. It covers 10 neighborhoods in 8 districts: Sheikh Othman, Mansoura (Abdel Aziz and Cairo), Dar Saad, Buraiqeh (Inma and Al Shaab), Khormaksar, Al Mualla, Tawahi and the Crater District.

The 'Beautiful Aden' campaign is one of many SDRPY initiatives in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Yemen. SDRPY engages in several projects to help improve water infrastructure, supply clean drinking and irrigation water, and render other forms of support to advance Sustainable Development Goal 6.

### *SDRPY origins and scope of operations*

The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen is implementing projects in support of education, healthcare, agriculture and fisheries, electricity and energy, transportation, and government entities across Yemen, and it currently has local offices in eight governorates. As of February 2020, SDRPY had launched over 173 projects in partnership with 51 Yemeni companies, thus expanding employment opportunities, building capacity and transferring knowledge.

The program was established in 2018 to support Yemen in its efforts toward reconstruction through the improvement of basic services and to help bring about economic, social and environmental recovery. SDRPY practices integrate the highest standards of organizational excellence and international development values, and contribute to enhancing infrastructure, improving livelihoods, advancing economic growth, strengthening stability and security, nurturing peace, and helping Yemenis themselves to pave the way to a future of sustainable prosperity.

For more information, visit: <https://www.sdrpy.gov.sa/en>