

UNDP plans to initiate new programmes in Saudi Arabia

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will initiate new programmes in Saudi Arabia under its five-year plan, according to a three-member UNDP team that was on a week-long visit to the Kingdom recently.

"There are several programmes coming up in the context of new country programmes under the UNDP five-year plan," said George Zaidan, international consultant for the Office of Evaluation of the UNDP, and leader of the delegation.

He added that these projects are being negotiated with the respective countries for implementation.

"We were here to review the activities of the UNDP in the Net Contributing Countries (NCCs), which include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Libya," Zaidan said. The Kingdom was the final leg of the UNDP team's regional tour.

"This was part of a broader study to assess how well UNDP programmes are being carried out and to see how they can be further strengthened to yield better results," he said.

The team, which included Nurul Alam, deputy director of the UNDP Office of Evaluation in New York, and Michael Reynolds, its senior evaluator, met officials in the ministries of economy, planning and foreign affairs, UN project coordinators, heads of non-governmental organisations and media men to get feedback on the image of the UNDP and the progress of its activities in the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, a six-week World Health Survey was conducted in Saudi Arabia for the first time, according to the ministry of health.

The ministry said that the survey covered 5,283 families or 50 per cent of the randomly chosen 10,900 families.

"The survey aims to give a clear picture of the health of the Saudi population as well as the most common genetic diseases in the country," explained Ghazi Jilani, assistant deputy health minister for research and planning.

Some 147 teams are collecting information for the survey. A number of officials from the World Health Organisation (WHO) trained workers under the supervision of the health ministry on using the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO) to enter the results of the survey after finishing the field work.