Detailed Reported on:

Workshop

(Role of the Media during the Corona Pandemic and the Social Peace Promotion)

Among two main axes:

- **The media social responsibility during the Corona pandemic**
- **The local media role in promoting social peace**

On the 1st of April 2021 AD, Yemen Information Center for Research, Developmental Studies and Media Production (YIC), the Gender and Development center, organized a workshop at Sana'a University on the role of media during the Corona pandemic and the social peace promotion, with the participation of a selected group of journalists and media professionals in Sana'a.

At the opening of the workshop, the first deputy of the Yemen Information Center, Engineer Abdel-Wahab Al-Aqel, gave a speech in which he indicated: that the aim of organizing the workshop is to enrich the topics discussed with the ideas and observations of media professionals and specialists regarding the role of the media in the current stage, to come out with recommendations that serve the humanitarian work, whether in the field of combatting the Corona pandemic, and in contributing to promoting social peace building through local media.

And Al-Aqel added: that this workshop comes within the framework of achieving the goals of (Yemen Information Center) which are to spread the spirit of hope between individuals and the society in Yemen, by establishing peace through promoting and supporting the efforts made by various local and international parties in support of peace and national reconciliation, and restoring the social fabric of the Yemeni people to its previous era, by contributing to social upbringing, and lifting the human suffering from the Yemeni people in addressing the effects of the conflict, spreading the culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and rejecting hatred, extremism and racism of all kinds ... indicating that the center is working to establish a database that supports the property rights of the word accurately and authentically.

In the workshop, the Professor of Mass Communication at the Faculty of Media, Sana'a University - Deputy of the Gender Center, Dr. Saleh Hamid, reviewed the working paper (Social Responsibility of Media in Light of the Coronavirus Covid-19 Pandemic) and the Social Responsibility of Media at the International Level and its Impact on Local Media, and the Use of Social communication Platforms in the times of Corona (Covid-19), by introducing how the media affects the handling of pandemic news

to the public in the northern and southern governorates, which resulted in discrepancies in numbers and statistics between governorates, loss of trust between the citizen and local means, and the citizen's reliance on international sources and social media platforms in their handling of the pandemic information.

The paper also reviewed the impact of crisis media in the time of Corona (Covid-19) as an example, and the importance of the media during crises and mentioned practical foundations and rules for managing the crisis on the part of communicators (media professionals, politicians, diplomats, or officials), represented in making the media, through its various means, a tool for the interaction between crises, the lack of generalization or media silence, and for the careful preparation of crisis management by assessing the size, power and impact of the counter media locally or externally, recognizing the existence of a crisis, and monitoring the lessons learned from the crisis before closing its case.

The study pointed to the political effects of the media in times of crisis, which resulted in (the media's constant endeavor to attract the public and increase their numbers, by presenting various forms of media templates - and the recipients' confidence in the truthfulness of the information provided by the media - and the huge amount of media messages that they provide. The daily media makes the public unable to perceive the situation) and the political influences of traditional media (television as an example), and the negative effects of the modern media (Facebook as an example)… in addition to the importance of the credibility of the media (governmental and private) during crises... The working paper also came out with a summary that showed that the modern means (social media platforms) alleviated the crisis of direct communication between people due to fears of the virus outbreak, and that the social media audience bears a large part of responsibility, while it is being talked about in terms of negative aspects that resulted from the use of these means during the crisis.

In the workshop, the discussion about the paper presented by Dr. Saleh Hamid was opened by the participants, as the journalist Mansour Al-Jaradi (Wujooh Foundation) explained:

- The importance of the need to provide awareness to the community before receiving information.
- Upon realizing the danger of the Corona pandemic, the initiative (Protect Yourself) was launched through focusing on broadcasters as they are more effective and have an impact on the society in Yemen.
- That there is a problem in people's acceptance of the pandemic in a serious manner, due to the delay in announcing the quality; This reflected negatively on the society and increased the number of deaths, and contributed to the difficulty of dealing with it as required by the state.
- The official media bears responsibility for its inability to educate the society about the prevention of the Corona pandemic.

- And that alternative medicine is important in reducing the burden of the infection with the virus.

Dr. Jameela Ya'coub (YIC) also wonders:
- Is there a joint media and awareness plan with the official authorities?
- As for the correct information, there are isolation centers and medical personnel in various Yemeni governorates … Are there any official reports or statements about the number of the infected?

The journalist Bushra Al-Ghayli raises a query about:
- Why are Yemeni women more affected by the pandemic, missing out on the seriousness of the overall situation of the pandemic (from housewives to the media professionals)?

Comments on the questions were raised by Dr. Saleh Hamid, who explained:
- The importance of focusing during the current stage on radio stations that target the majority of the audience, and re-map radio programs by focusing on the developmental and social aspect that directly targets the citizen.
- The media professional should focus on searching for the information extensively and presenting it to the public.
- The awareness plans in the media must be made by the official authorities, especially from the Ministry of Information.
- The most affected women by the Corona pandemic are the economists (working women), which is mentioned in a study that was prepared.

And there was a comment by the Vice President of the Center, Prof. Abdel-Wahab Al-Aqil, on the inquiries raised:
- "The timing of the workshop was appropriate in light of the Corona pandemic outbreak (the second wave), and the importance of highlighting the role of the media in the community awareness-raising process on the pandemic prevention and promoting the principle of social peace in parallel."

Abdul-Aziz Oudah stated that: "The workshop focuses on the importance of the role of the media in light of the outbreak of the Corona pandemic in the Yemeni society, and the promotion of social peace in general), which presented the results of one of the Yemen Information Center research entitled: The role of local media in promoting social peace building that was conducted by Dr. Taha Farie Al-Sanwi.

In the second session of the workshop, the results of the research "The Role of Local Media in Promoting Social Peace Building" presented by the Head of the Media Department at Yemen Information Center Abdul-Aziz Oudah were reviewed. The summary of the research that was prepared by "Yemen Information Center for Research, Developmental Studies and media production" was mentioned, in addition to the importance of research based on analyzing the role of the media in creating societal awareness and building the foundations for coexistence and peace in Yemen in light of the current conditions, in theory and practice as well as presenting the research results that showed weakness in the role of the local Yemeni media in promoting community peace building, and showing the recommendations of the research sample, which were summarized:

The research sample recommended that a number of measures be taken in order to overcome the factors that hinder the media from playing its role in promoting social peace building: first of all, 80% of the total research sample size agreed on the necessity to develop a comprehensive media plan that serves urgent community issues. Second of all, 75% of the total sample size agreed on the need to look into the necessity of limiting the negative and pessimistic discourse of the media. Third of all, 68% of the total sample size agreed on the necessity that the culture of coexistence be one of the priorities of the media. Fourth of all, 63% of the total size of the research sample agreed on the necessity to increase the volume of media material that disseminates the culture of peacebuilding. Fifth of all, 60% of the total sample size agreed on the necessity to restrict the media discourse that stirs hatred and discord among the members of society.

After reviewing the results of the research, the participants were divided into three working groups in the workshop. The results and recommendations presented in the working paper were discussed to come up with the following recommendations:

Recommendations of the workshop participants:
- Preparing a comprehensive plan to serve community issues in line with the needs of the current situation.
- Directing social media to spread the culture of peaceful coexistence among members of society.
- Establishing a media platform and neutral websites that promote a culture of coexistence and concern for citizen issues.
- Directing the various media outlets towards societal issues that focus on citizens and serve the public interest.
- The importance of defining all kinds of provocative terms calling for hatred, violence and racism, in order to work on obliging the Yemeni media to avoid mentioning them in general
- Intensifying messages in favor of peace.

- Focusing of the media on issues of concern to the society mainly, and moving away from details that do not interest the Yemeni citizen.

In the workshop, the Executive Director of (Yemen Information Center) Nashwan Al-Mujahid gave a speech in which he explained that: "the center is based on building an information base that supports the rebuilding of the country in various societal and developmental issues, bypassing the impact of the conflict on the humanitarian and economic levels, and contributing to providing solutions to all the challenges that the country is going through, indicating that the center carries out various activities within the framework of its currency, which includes research, surveys, media and building an information balance that includes all the cases from the various Yemeni governorates.

At the end of the workshop, certificates of appreciation were distributed to the workshop participants.