



## PRESS RELEASE

### Creative UNDP Design Shelters Environment and Children in One Stroke

**Jerusalem, May 26, 2003**—Wrecked cars; tires, tires and more tires! This is the disconcerting image that one sees whilst entering some West Bank towns, where people live in an unstable political climate, under the regular imposition of closures. Most villages and towns are grappling with how to deal with the problem of solid waste in such difficult circumstances. The lack of financial resources and in some cases the destruction of garbage collection trucks by the Israeli military, do not make things easy.

This is why the UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, in partnership with the Roads and Environment Safety Organization, used a common environmental principle to achieve uncommon things. It applied the simple formula of recycle and reuse to endless mounds of automobile tires, 1,100 to be exact. Added a little dough (US\$25,000) and spiced the mix with a good deal of creative thinking and the result is: a playground that will not only rid the world of these unsightly tires, but will also serve almost 3,000 children in Ramallah.



The playground, which will be inaugurated in a ceremony on Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003 is not only a unique venue for the children in the city to play in, but will also provide them with a shield from the conflict zone in which they reside.

Reem, the UNDP project manager behind the idea, asserts that "this children playground, which is constructed with used tire, is a humble attempt to place the concepts of reuse and recycle on Palestinian society's agenda." For Reem, "while these two concepts are by no means new, we are attempting to exact a change in society's appreciation of the necessity of these concepts in the management of our daily lives, wherein we can create such enjoyable and important social venues with very little cost."

With the motto of "tell me, I'll forget; show me, I'll remember; and involve me, I'll understand," Mr. Rimawi, the Director of the Roads and Safety Organization, suggests that "this project is an attempt to engage the average citizen in the occupied Palestinian territory with the ideas of environmental protection, which often take a back seat in areas



of conflict.” “We are very grateful to the UNDP for seeing the wisdom in such creative projects: we value their partnership” added Rimawi.

It is noteworthy that this project is a sample of a series of creative endeavors by the UNDP to address environmental issues through creative solutions. The series includes educational workshops that allow school children to take a leadership role in recycling papers and cups in their schools, and a computer rehabilitation programme, that recycles run down PCs to be used in public computing centers, free of charge.

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