



To support Middle East “Road Map,” Japan boosts aid to UNDP’s Palestinian assistance programme

New US\$1.2 million grant from Japan supplements the previous \$10 million

Jerusalem, 14 May, 2003 — With the generous financial support from the Government of Japan and also using its own resources, the United Nations Development Programme/ Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) has and will continue to play a leading role in providing the tools and expertise required to assist the Palestinian Authority (PA) in its reform process and the implementation of the Road Map for peace.

During her recent visit to the region and in anticipation of the Road Map, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Ms. Yoriko Kawguchi, highlighted Japan’s contribution and pledged an additional contribution of \$1.2 million to UNDP “to enable the well-ordered execution of the agendas by the newly appointed Prime Minister, aiming at facilitating the reform efforts of the Palestinian Authority.”

Welcoming the Government of Japan’s effort, Timothy Rothermel, the Special Representative of UNDP in Jerusalem, stated: “in times of emergency and in times of peace, whether it is addressing the humanitarian crisis or assisting the reform process, the Japanese Government has shown an unwavering commitment to the development of the Palestinian people. UNDP very much values this close partnership with Japan.” Rothermel added: “With Japan’s support and our access to a global network of knowledge and expertise, UNDP is well equipped to play an important role in the establishment of a transparent, accountable, and democratic Palestinian Authority”.

Drafted by the Quartet (the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States), the Road Map proposes a plan of action for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for the establishment of a Palestinian state in three years.

Reflecting on the unique historic endorsement this plan is receiving, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in a message issued at a meeting on Arab-Israeli peace. “No previous peace plan has enjoyed such broad support from such important actors as this one does: the US, Europe, Russia, and key Arab states, including Egypt and Jordan”.

The issuance of the Road Map follows the endorsement of the appointment of a new Palestinian Prime Minister and his Cabinet by the Palestinian Legislative Council, and the adoption of a Reform Plan, that outlines the Palestinian Authority (PA) measures to introduce significant improvements into the Palestinian public sector.

“Public funds belong to the citizens and to the nation. Preserving public funds is a national and moral duty that will be exercised through institutions, laws, transparency and continuous supervision. Said the Palestinian PM Mahmoud Abbas in a recent speech before the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Areas of improvement include: financial accountability; parliamentary, municipal and presidential elections; separation of powers and a restructuring of ministries and other governmental institutions.



Speaking on PAPP's support to the Central Elections Committee, its Chairman, Dr. Hanna Nasir, stated: "With a view to support the current electoral process called by the Palestinian Authorities, UNDP/PAPP has been amongst the first involved, in close consultation with the Central Elections Commission (CEC) and in coordination with other international donors, in developing a comprehensive electoral assistance project. Such a project will undertake substantial activities required for the implementation of the electoral process, that is, the institutional and capacity development required within the electoral authority. The project is funded by the Government of Japan and UNDP's own resources and CEC has been most grateful; and appreciative for such support".

As of 1978, UNDP/PAPP has mobilized nearly \$400 million in resources, mainly from the international donor community such as the European Union, Germany, Italy, the Islamic Development Bank, IFAD, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Spain, the United States and the United Kingdom, on behalf of the Palestinian people, including more than \$20 million from UNDP's central financial resources.

Over the years, the donor community has chosen UNDP/PAPP as one of its most reliable implementation partners for development activities throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Funds contributed either by donors or from UNDP are grants that do not have to be repaid by the Palestinian Authority. In addition to support to the Palestinian Authority, the majority of funds support civil society activities. UNDP/PAPP operates under international rules of financial management, control and auditing, and as an international public institution, its operations are fully transparent.

Some \$35- 40 million is spent annually on UNDP/PAPP projects. Its ongoing projects which are active in every part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, include activities involving good governance through supporting participatory, transparent and accountable governing institutions and engaging the private sector, civil society and the government to ensure that political, social and economic priorities are based on a broad consensus in society. The voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in the decision-making process.

Since the introduction of the Reform Plan on July,2002, UNDP has been playing a central role in several reform efforts mobilizing approximately US\$13 million in direct support to new and ongoing reform activities. The biggest share of these resources has come from the Government of Japan, who has contributed \$11 million, while UNDP has contributed approximately \$2 million from its own resources.

UNDP's support of the reform process is extensive and multifaceted:

- UNDP has been actively involved in the Reform Support Groups for ministerial and civil service reform, elections, rule of law, financial accountability and local government.
- With a great deal of emphasis put on rule of law, in the Road Map and the Reform Plan - UNDP is currently involved in strengthening the capacity of institutions concerned with justice, including the construction of new courthouses in Khan Younis and Nablus, as well as an administrative building for the Palestinian Ministry of Justice.
- UNDP has been instrumental in setting up the Palestinian Central Elections Commission with offices in the West Bank and Gaza, and will also provide essential support to the elections' process, in close partnership with the UN Electoral Assistance Division.
- UNDP is not only helping enhance the internal audit capacity of the PA and reforms of several line ministries, but also supports local and rural governments in their decentralization efforts through an extensive diagnostic study.



- UNDP is making full use of the TOKTEN and UNV programmes to recruit highly qualified experts of Palestinian origin, living in the Diaspora.
- Recognizing the importance the role of civil society organizations in the reform process UNDP also works closely with the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) and is sponsoring a high level Palestinian delegation to the 11th Anti-Corruption conference in Seoul, Korea this month to report on Palestinian reforms.

Using this clear approach UNDP not only hopes to support the reform process, but also aims to assist in facilitating the implementation of the Road Map leading to a Palestinian state.

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