

United Nations Development Programme

Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي / برنامج مساعدة الشعب الفلسطيني



Date: 26 May 2004

PRESS RELEASE

Inauguration of a Pioneering Palestinian Center for Diagnosis and Treatment of Tumors at Beit Jala Government Hospital

Jerusalem, April 30th, 2003: The Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Italian Government, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) inaugurated a pioneering Onco-haematology Center at Beit Jala Government Hospital, on Thursday, May 8, 2003. The project was implemented by UNDP with a budget of US\$ 2.2 million, as part of a US\$ 9.4 million contribution from the Government of Italy aiming at improving the quality of health care in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

The new facility is intended to support and improve cancer treatment possibilities in the oPt. It will be dedicated to screening, diagnosis, and treatment of solid tumors as well as haematologic onco-logical diseases, and will be comprehensive of adult, paediatric, day care and outpatient clinic, histopathology laboratory, and a diagnostic endoscopy unit.



In addition to the construction of the premises for the Onco-haematology Center and the Pathology Laboratory, the project includes a technical assistance component comprising training of Palestinian medical personnel to be staffed in the newly developed center, procurement of all necessary equipment for the histopathology laboratory, and provision of drugs supply for the first year of operation.

"The Government of Italy has shown its deep commitment to assisting the Palestinian people in these difficult times, especially in the district of Bethlehem, which assumes a special historical significance" said Mr. Timothy Rothermel, Special Representative of the UNDP/PAPP in Jerusalem. "Today, this centre marks a bright spot in the path of peace".

Al-Sharif commended the deep relations between the Italian and Palestinian peoples and the important assistance providing by the Italian government to the PNA. He also commended the role of the UNDP and the Italian Cooperation Office in the support of Palestinian health developmental programs in the different parts of the country.

In his turn, Consul General of Italy in Jerusalem Mr. Ghisi said that the government and people of Italy are interested in providing assistance to the Palestinian people and the PNA. He said that the center for treatment of cancer forms a real pillar for Palestinian health



institutions since their medical services will reach all the nation's districts and will provide the necessary treatment for inhabitants suffering from this dangerous disease.

The Italian Government and the UNDP have assumed a key role since 1988 in the development of health institutions in the oPt. Other activities of the project included the rehabilitation and expansion of three hospitals in the West Bank; namely, Hebron Government Hospital, Ittihad Hospital in Nablus, and Beit Jala Government Hospital. Moreover, with Italian contribution, the UNDP provided medical supplies and equipment to eight hospitals in the West Bank, and the Audiology Center in Bethlehem. The Government of Italy also contributed an amount of US\$ 7 million for the construction of the northern wing of Hebron Government Hospital, which is currently being implemented by the UNDP.

The inauguration ceremony took place at the Beit Jala Hospital and was attended by Dr. Munther Al-Sharif, Deputy Minister of Health; Mr. Gianni Ghisi, Consul General of Italy in Jerusalem; Dr. Antonio Aloï, Director of the Italian Cooperation in Jerusalem; Prof. Arnaldo Carbone, Project Health Coordinator in Rome; Mr. Timothy Rothermel, Special Representative of the UNDP/PAPP; and a number of Palestinian officials.

For more information, please contact Ehab Shanti or Dania Darwish in Jerusalem at 972-2-6268229 or by email at ehab.shanti@undp.org.