



## Press Release

### UNDP to Celebrate Opening of Centre for Families of Children with Cancer (Zeina)

**Jerusalem, Wednesday, April 23, 2003:** Under the auspices of his Excellency, Mr. Régis Koetschet, the French Council General in Jerusalem, Ismail Deiq, the General Director of the Union of Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), and Mr. Tim Rothermel, Special Representative of the UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), "Zeina" (Center for Families of Children with Cancer) will inaugurate its new centre in Shu'fat, Jerusalem on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 2003.

Founded in 2001 by group of parents whose children suffered from cancer, Zeina is a non-profit, non- governmental organization that seeks to provide support and assistance to children with cancer and their families through psychological programmes, counseling, training and educational activities. It attempts to raise community awareness about the issues that come about as a result of this condition, especially combating discrimination against affected children, and minimizing the trauma of the parents.

"If the progress of peoples is now beginning to be measured by how much care they provide for those most in need, then the opening of such a Centre is a reflection on how far the Palestinians have come, despite all the difficulties they face. This is a very important community initiative" said Mr. Timothy Rothermel. "One cannot imagine the difficulties and traumas that these children and their families face, and whatever can be done to minimize the negative effects of this experience would be welcome," added Mr. Rothermel.

"Zeina is grateful to the Government of France, PARC, UNDP and others for their kind support" said Yahia Abu Sharif, the Executive Director of Zeina. "I look forward to their continued support and partnership in the future" he added.

The first centre of its kind in the occupied Palestinian territory, Zeina initially received support from PARC, which acted as an incubator for the initiative, housing it in its premises and covering the salary of its Executive Director. The centre later received a fund from the French Consulate to set up the new centre, while the UNDP adopted Zeina's Director, as part of its United Nations Volunteer Programme. In addition, office equipment was also donated from the Korean government through the UNDP, as well as rehabilitating the garden of the centre to create a playground for children. The ceremony was also attended by Professor Micheal Vinbrob, Head of the Hem oncology Unit at Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital.

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