



PRESS RELEASE

UNDP and KFW Celebrate the Launching of the Employment Generation Programme in Support of Municipal Infrastructure and Public Development Projects in the Gaza Strip

Gaza, March 9th, 2004- As part of their rigorous effort to combat the rising levels of poverty and unemployment, and improve the overall social and economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, the United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP), and the German Development Cooperation (KFW) celebrated the launching of an extensive employment generation programme in Gaza worth 10 million Euros.

Carried out in partnership with local municipalities and NGOs, the programme aims to reduce poverty within the Palestinian community through the implementation of 73 municipal and community infrastructure development projects generating approximately 219,000 workdays.

The launching ceremony comes after UNDP/PAPP's successful completion of Phase 3 of the project which was launched in 2002 with a total budget of US\$ 2.9 million allocated for the Gaza Strip. out of the programme's total budget, and created around 100,000 man workdays through the implementation of 30 projects in the fields of municipal and community infrastructure rehabilitation.

"We deeply appreciate the co-operation between UNDP and the German Development Cooperation," said Timothy Rothermel, the Special Representative of the UNDP/PAPP. "This grant reflects the Government and people of Germany's deep commitment to assist the Palestinian people, especially in these difficult times."

"The launching ceremony for the 4th phase of the employment generation programme funded by Germany demonstrates our sustained support to the Palestinian people, especially at these difficult times. We very much value our partnership with UNDP/PAPP and their efforts to reduce the suffering and misery of the citizens of the West Bank and Gaza," stated Dr. Andreas Reinick, Representative of the German government.

"We appreciate the generous support of the Government of Germany, the German people and UNDP/PAPP to the Palestinian people in all fields, and particularly the financial support that helps the Palestinians maintain their living under the severe circumstances they are faced with," said Dr. Usama Al-Farra, Mayor of Khan Younis.

It is noteworthy, that 370,000 jobs were lost since the beginning of the Intifada. As the World Bank and the United Nations reported, the ratio of population per employed person

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has climbed by more than 50% since the start of the Intifada. Where as in the Third Quarter of 2000, one worker supported 4.3 persons in the West bank and 5.9 in the Gaza Strip, the ratios are now 6.9 and 9.4 respectively.

As for the poverty levels, it is estimated that 66.5 percent of Palestinian households are living below the poverty line—57.8% in the West Bank and 84.6 in Gaza. Furthermore, 56.5 percent of the Palestinian households overall—58.0 percent in the West Bank and 53.6 percent in Gaza—have lost half of their usual income since the beginning of the Intifada.

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