



Japan and UNDP/PAPP Inaugurate the first Court House in Nablus

Jerusalem, 20, February 2004— Under the auspices of H.E. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian National Authority, the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People inaugurate the first court complex in Nablus. The inauguration ceremony, which attracted members of the bar association and civil society institutions, was attended by Dr. Zohair Sorani, Head of the High Judicial Council; H.E Nahed Al-Rayyes, Minister of Justice, Mr. Mohammad Aloul, Governor of Nablus and Mayor of the city, Mr. Ghassan Al-Shakaa'.

First of its kind in the occupied Palestinian territory, the court complex, which cost US\$ 2.5 million, houses two courts: the magistrate court of the Nablus area and the primary court for the northern governorates of the West Bank.

Expressing his government's pride in this important achievement, the Head of the Japanese representative office to the PA, Mr. Izuru Shimmura stated: "What we aim to support is a unified authority that bares the responsibility of upholding rule of law under the scrutiny of the judiciary and civil society in institutions with the existence of political plurality".

Speaking on behalf of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Mr. Ghassam Al-Shakaa' expressed deep gratitude to UNDP and Japan for assisting the PA in its efforts to uphold the rule of law and build competent judicial institutions despite the difficulties .

Timothy Rothermel, Special Representative to the UNDP stated "Nablus is not only the largest city in the West Bank that acts as a metropolitan centre for other governorates, but is also the oldest cradle of civilization in the territories. It is only fitting, therefore, that this new structure is located in Nablus". "This complex will serve as a model for future constructions already being planned" he added.

Since the introduction of the Reform Plan on July 3, 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, which has contributed \$11 million, while UNDP has contributed approximately \$2 million from its resources. In addition to setting up the Elections Commission, UNDP is not only helping enhance the internal audit capacity of the PA and reforms of several line ministries, but is also supporting local and rural governments in their decentralization efforts. UNDP also works closely with the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAM).

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