

United Nations Development Programme

Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي / برنامج مساعدة الشعب الفلسطيني



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Press Release

“Preserving Cultural Heritage”

UNDP/PAPP with the Palestinian Association of Architects and Engineers Association launch the First Cultural Heritage Conference in the oPt

Jerusalem, 20 February, 2006 — The United Nations Development Programme / Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) with the Palestinian Association of Architects and the Engineers Association launch the first Cultural Heritage Conference in the oPt on Monday 20, February 2006 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Jericho. The conference was attended by H.E. Ziad Al Bandak, Minister of Tourism & Antiquities; H.E. Dr. Mohammad Ishtayyeh, Minister of Public Works & Housing, H.E. Dr. Khaled Al Qawasmi, Minister of Local Government; and Ms. Minna Tyrkko, Special Representative of UNDP a.i. as well as representatives of the donor community and several Ministries and NGO's.

Organized in 3 sessions, the conference's main objective was to provide an overall review and assessment of cultural heritage and restoration accomplishments in the oPt. In addition, the conference will highlight the policies and laws on restoration, theoretical frameworks, methods of application, expected roles of governmental, private, and non-governmental institutions, academic programmes, and lessons learned.

Throughout its 27 years of service in the development of the oPt, UNDP/PAPP has worked with commendable donors such as Japan, Germany and USAID in delivering over US\$30 million in cultural preservation and restoration projects. All of which have been carried in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, amongst other Palestinian institutions and NGO's. “UNDP has managed to preserve numerous historical buildings and centers during the past 10 years. This has led to better living conditions for Palestinians and an improvement to the tourism sector” said Ms. Tyrkko. “We are committed to continue to be partners in the development of the Palestinian people, and this important sector is no exception”, added Tyrkko.

It is worth noting that that the total receipts of the tourism industry in the oPt has dropped from \$226 million in 2000 to \$0.84 million in 2002 and the losses (until 2003) are over \$910 million.

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