



PRESS RELEASE

High poverty rates in the oPt need to be urgently addressed

Jerusalem, 17 July 2007 -- According to a recent large-scale public opinion survey commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian people (UNDP/PAPP), 58% of Palestinians in the oPt live below the income poverty line, and more than half of them live in extreme poverty.

According to the UNDP/PAPP Special Representative Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, these survey results mean that close to two million Palestinians in the oPt live in poverty. He added: "While I realize that a more recent and limited survey set the poverty rate at 50% after the Palestinian Authority resumed paying its employees, it should not detract attention from the core issue, namely, that poverty rates are alarmingly high in the oPt. This calls for a deliberate intervention, including adopting development policies addressing the root causes of poverty. Concerted action is required because poverty will not disappear by itself."

The survey covered more than 5,000 Palestinian families in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who were interviewed between 3 April and 8 May 2007.

The poverty line was based on a monthly income of NIS 2,000 (US\$501.2) per month for a family of two adults and four children.

According to the poll, 70% of households in the Gaza Strip live below the poverty line, while 56% of West Bank households and 19% of East Jerusalem households live below the poverty line.

Some 42% of households in the Gaza Strip live in extreme poverty compared to 26% in the West Bank.

A majority of Palestinians, 58%, reported a decline in their household incomes in the six months prior to the survey. In addition, 38% of Palestinians said their household incomes remained steady during the same period. Only 4% said their household income increased.

The full UNDP/PAPP paper on income poverty, which also maps poverty in the oPt's 16 governorates, is accessible on-line in both English and Arabic at (www.undp.ps), and is available in hard copies.

For further information, please contact:

In Jerusalem: Dania Darwish, Communications Officer, Tel. +972-2-6268229 – e-mail: dania.darwish@undp.org. Wadi Razzouk, PR Specialist, Tel. +972-2-6268311 – e-mail: wadi.razzouk@undp.org, In New York: Sausan Ghosheh Communication's officer, Tel. +1 (212) 906-5382 – e-mail: sausan.ghosheh@undp.org. For more information on UNDP/PAPP see <http://www.undp.ps>.

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.