



Press Release

Beyond Cash Assistance: “Qatar Charity” invests US\$ 1.5 Million annually to support UNDP’s project to Empower Deprived Families in the occupied Palestinian territory

Jerusalem, 23 February, 2009 – UNDP’s Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) welcomes the contribution of US\$ 1.5 Million announced today by “Qatar Charity” to its “Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme –DEEP” initiative. This contribution marks a first in UNDP’s efforts to encourage the involvement of Arab donors in supporting innovative Palestinian anti poverty strategies that foster self-reliance and economic independence, as opposed to the more traditional approach of direct cash assistance.

DEEP is a US\$ 30 million initiative funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and executed by UNDP/PAPP in partnership with the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian Civil Society Organizations. The programme, which started in 2006, supports self-employment and micro-enterprise development as means to reduce unemployment, to achieve higher growth and to reduce poverty. To date close to 8,000 of the most deprived families in the West Bank and Gaza have benefited from the programme’s micro-finance and safety net facilities. According to UNDP’s most recent survey in the third quarter of 2008, 51% of Palestinians live below the poverty line and about 19% of them live in extreme poverty.

The cooperation agreement, signed today in the Qatari capital, Doha, between Qatar Charity, the Islamic Development Bank and UNDP-PAPP allocates an annual sum of US\$ 1 million to extend social services including relief, housing, health and education to families unable to manage income generating enterprises, and US\$ 500,000 to provide financial services aimed at the economic empowerment of poor households through assisting them to establish their own income generating enterprises. The IDB is allocating matching funds for this effort in the amount of an annual sum of US\$ 1 million from DEEP resources. The agreement also includes a component of capacity development of Qatar Charity’s offices in the West Bank and Gaza.

“Providing the neediest families in the occupied Palestinian territory with financial and business development services, building their capacities, and making them full participants in social and economic development guarantees sustainability of development efforts,” stressed Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, Special Representative for UNDP/PAPP, “but most importantly it help breaks the cycle of dependency, transforming recipients of humanitarian assistance into active income providers. We are very happy to see the Qatar Charity endorsing and adopting this approach,” he added.

For further information, please contact:

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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.