



## Press Release

### Impact in the Workplace

### UNDP Launches Training for Palestinian leaders and Journalists on Covering HIV and AIDS

Bethlehem, July 5th, 2010 – 25 journalists and 100 Palestinian representatives from the national HIV and AIDS committee, civil society, UN agencies and religious leaders began a three day workshop on strengthening the response to HIV and AIDS in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The workshops, organized by UNDP/PAPP (Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People) in cooperation with the UNDP HIV and AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (HARPAS), will provide broad areas of training to strengthen the role of the national and international partners, including religious leaders and media in addressing HIV and AIDS in the oPt. The workshops were made possible through funding by the Global Fund to fight HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Dr. Assad Ramlawi, Director of Primary Health Care and Public Health at the Ministry of Health thanked all the partners for their support in advancing the response to HIV and AIDS in the oPt, despite the low prevalence rate. "This is part of our efforts to strengthen the Palestinian health infrastructure through the support of governmental and non governmental organizations in understanding the magnitude of this health, social, economic and political problem". He said.

The outcomes of the leadership workshop include building the capacities of PA and civil society organizations to become efficient leaders at work and in their community, designing effective and innovative ways to prevention, care, treatment and reduction of vulnerability, and in bringing stakeholders together in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The second workshop targets journalists as they play a vital role in dispelling the fear and reducing stigma by conveying the right message and facts on HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Roberto Valent, UNDP Deputy Special Representative highlighted the importance of increasing awareness not only on HIV and AIDS but also drug use and sexually transmitted diseases in the occupied Palestinian territory. "These workshops represent the foundations for our preparedness in responding and preventing these diseases" he added.

The opening sessions, which took place on July 5th, 2010 at the Intercontinental hotel in Bethlehem, were attended by Dr. Assad Ramlawi, NAC Chair and Director of Primary Health Care and Public Health at the Ministry of Health, Ms. Barbara Piazza-Georgi, UNFPA Representative, and Mr. Roberto Valent, UNDP Deputy Special Representative.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the cumulative number of HIV and AIDS patients in the West Bank and Gaza reached 66 cumulative cases, with a projected estimate of 200-500 people living with the HIV virus. The number of people living with HIV and AIDS among the 360 million people living in the Arab region, is estimated to be around 400,000. The number of new infections reached 38,000 in the year 2006, which is about four times the number of new infections in Europe.

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