Press Release

UNDP Wins the Palestine International Award for Excellence and Creativity for its Economic Empowerment Programme

Jerusalem, 24 October 2011 - UNDP’s Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People won the 2011 Palestine International Award for Excellence and Creativity in the exceptional project category for its Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme, with a financial reward of USD20,000.

H.E. Prime Minister Salam Fayyad announced the winners during a ceremony held at Al Najah University in Nablus on 24 October 2011. The ceremony was also attended by Dr. Hussein AlAraj, representing President Mahmoud Abbas, award chairman Mr. Sabih AlMasri, Chairman of DEEP Board of Trustees H.E. Majeda Masri, UNDP Special Representative Mr. Frode Mauring, and others.

The Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP) is one of UNDP’s leading projects. It is funded, through a strategic partnership, by the Islamic Development Bank and implemented in partnership with the Ministries of Social Affairs, Planning, Labour and 23 national NGOs.

The First phase of the programme provided income generation activities for approximately 6,600 households in Gaza and the West Bank worth USD 45 million. The activities consist mainly of micro-finance interventions for the establishment and development of micro enterprises in the form of grants and loans. These interventions focus on empowerment and enabling the poor to live in dignity and realize their full potential.

In his speech, Prime Minister Fayyad congratulated the winners, noting that this year’s award has an international dimension to it. He also stressed the importance of building bridges and new partnerships between private and public sectors and build on the lessons learned from the Arab Spring.

DEEP’s evaluation for the award was based on its pioneering mechanism to merge the poor in sustainable socioeconomic development and establish a global Islamic trust fund to fight poverty in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The Palestine International Award for Excellence and Creativity has a profound belief in the importance of appreciating and honouring those who offer the best examples of excellence and exceptional performance. This year’s award included three categories: Institutional Excellence in Performance; Exceptional Idea/Project; and Exceptional Individual with a Special Need.

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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.