

Press Release

UNDP to Build USD 58 million Waste Water Treatment Plant in Gaza With Japan and Kuwait Funding through Islamic Development Bank

Gaza – 25 February 2014 – The Palestinian Water Authority, Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, Khan Younis Municipality and UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People signed today a USD 58 million agreement to construct the Khan Younis Waste Water Treatment Plant in the Gaza Strip.

The implementation, construction and co-financing of the Plant will be through UNDP, in partnership with the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, with funds from the Government of Japan and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development through the Islamic Development Bank.

The Khan Younis Waste Water Treatment Plant aims at protecting public health, water resources and environment of more than 320,000 residents of Khan Younis Governorate while developing public and social infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. In addition, more than 40,000 working days will be generated for unemployed Palestinians; which will also contribute to enhancing their livelihoods.

"This is a project with an utmost urgency and we cannot afford to waste more time," said Dr Maged Abu Ramadan, Chairman of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility. "Our objective is to safeguard the humanity and dignity of people living in the Gaza Strip. Such projects will help communities lead better lives, and we as Palestinians thank everyone of their assistance and support".

Due to the acute shortage of treatment capacity in the Gaza Strip, over 100 million liters of untreated and partially treated sewage is discharged daily into the sea. This has resulted in the pollution of sea water and marine life; rendering Khan Younis residents living under direct health hazards induced by widely spread water-borne diseases.

The first phase of the Khan Younis Waste Water Treatment Plant will be constructed in accordance with international codes, at a flow capacity of 26,600 cubic meters per day and load estimates to serve 217,000 residents in year 2018; complete with its effluent and infiltration schemes to be a comprehensive, functional and operational treatment plant.

Throughout the constructed infiltration basins, more than 9 million cubic meters of treated wastewater will be recharged annually into the local aquifer, thus providing a new non-conventional water source to be used for agricultural purposes in the eastern parts of Khan Younis.

“Access to clean water is the foundation for the fulfilment of basic human needs. At present, over 90 percent of the water extracted from the aquifer in the Gaza Strip does not meet WHO standards for drinking water,” said Frode Muring, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator. “This project is for the people of Gaza. The Plant will provide job opportunities and will ensure that the Gaza population will have adequate livelihoods, attainable standards of health and the right to clean water,” he added.

The signing ceremony was held on Tuesday 25 February 2014 in the presence of Mr Rebhi Al Sheikh, Deputy Chairman of the Palestinian Water Authority, Dr Maged Abu Ramadan, Chairman of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, Mr Yahya Al Astal, Mayor of Khan Younis and Mr Frode Muring, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator.

Khan Younis Governorate has been suffering from the absence of a wastewater collection system and a functional wastewater treatment plant. Around 70 percent of Khan Younis Governorate’s population is not connected to a sewage network; disposing generated raw sewage through more than 30,000 cesspits and open lagoons, allowing the waste water to filtrate to the water aquifer causing serious water pollution.

For further information, please contact:

Dania Darwish, Communications Specialist, Tel. +972-2-6268229 – e-mail: danial.darwish@undp.org.
For more information on UNDP/PAPP see <http://www.ps.undp.org>.

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.