



Rubble Removal from Settlement Areas in the Gaza Strip

December 21, 2005

Introduction



As part of the negotiations for the Government of Israel's (GOI) disengagement from the Gaza Strip, the Special Envoy of the Middle East Quartet, Mr. James Wolfensohn suggested that the United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) would be the most suitable

“agent” to carry out the task of clearing and recycling the rubble generated by the destruction of houses in the recently evacuated settlement areas. Both the GOI and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) concurred with the Special Envoy that UNDP would serve as “the trustee” of the project and PAPP would be the designated agent for carrying out this important task. The following information provides the details of the process, as agreed by all parties involved.

Project Details

As the agent of this project, UNDP/PAPP will be entrusted with the task of clearing, sorting, and grinding the rubble and

the subsequent temporary storage of the material in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, to allow for the use of the cleared land. The areas in which the settlements were located will be cleared for re-use as soon as possible. It is estimated that **1.2 million tons** of rubble will be generated (mostly concrete and some metal) and the grinded material will be suitable for reuse for the pavement of roads in the Gaza Strip.

Project Cost

The operation is estimated to cost **US\$24.7 million**, which will be paid for by the Government of Israel (GOI).

About PAPP

For the last 26 years, UNDP/PAPP has been one of the leading development agencies in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched PAPP in 1978, following the passing of a UN General Assembly resolution in support of the economic and social development of Palestinians. With this objective in mind, UNDP/PAPP has since implemented hundreds of projects throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, funded by a number of international donors. Initial funding was provided by UNDP and five bilateral donors: Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands and the United States of America. Since then, UNDP/PAPP has expanded and has now received over US\$600 million from countries around the world.

Time Frame

The project shall commence at the beginning of next year, as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed on the 19th December 2005, between the Government of Israel (GOI) and UNDP/PAPP. It is estimated that the project will be completed within one and a half years (18 months) from the date of signing.

The work will be carried out in **3 stages**:

1. All contracting and tendering for the work involved will take place in the coming 2 months.
2. The second phase will include the clearing and transportation of the rubble from the former settlement areas, into a designated area in the southern Gaza

Strip (Rafah); a process which will take four months. This will allow for the reuse by the PNA of the former settlement lands within 6 months from the date of signing the agreement.

3. The third phase will take a period of one year, for the process of sorting and grinding the rubble to make it reusable for paving roads in the Gaza Strip.

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Environmental Assessment

According to the Agreement between the GOI, the office of the Middle East Quartet's Special Envoy and UNDP/PAPP, the GOI has assumed the responsibility "to remove all environmentally hazardous materials (traces of asbestos) in the houses, in a manner that is consistent with Israeli practice and meets internationally accepted environmental and safety standards."

As a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) team recently verified, the GOI has indeed carried out this commitment and minimal hazardous material remains. During the course of the project, there will be 2 professionals appointed by UNEP to assist UNDP/PAPP in ensuring the safe removal of whatever hazardous material remains.



A military base being dismantled in northern Gaza

Basic Facts: The Gaza Strip

- The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places in the world with an area of 365 km² (45km long, 2-5km wide).
- It has a population of 1.4 million, approximately half of which are under the age of 18.
- The total number of registered refugees currently stands at around 969,600, or nearly 70% of the population.
- There are 8 refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, the largest and most densely populated of which is Jabaliya, just north of Gaza City, where 90,000 people live in an area of 3km².
- The unemployment rate currently stands at 38%, and approximately 73% of the population live below the poverty line (US\$2 per day).
- The areas recently vacated are estimated to account for 20% of the Gaza Strip.

How does this project fit within UNDP/PAPP's mandate of assisting Palestinian development?

This project will assist in the development of the Palestinian people in a number of ways:

1. The project will be carried out by local Palestinian contractors under the supervision of UNDP/PAPP, in accordance with international standards for financial transparency.
2. A concerted effort will be made to ensure that the project will generate the maximum number of jobs possible for Palestinian workers, through labour intensive work.
3. According to PNA estimates, 95% of the cleared land will revert to the public domain. By ensuring a speedy clearing process, UNDP/PAPP will be assisting the PNA in carrying out its essential development plans for the areas. According to the PNA, these areas will be used for essential public facilities including schools, housing, and hospitals.
4. The reusable material – roughly estimated to be worth over US\$2 million – will be handed over to the PNA and will be reused in building essential road infrastructure throughout the Gaza Strip.



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