



SPEECH FOR THE UNDP/PAPP SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Speaking event:	Art Auction
Date and time:	Thursday, 27.11.2008; 19:00 – 21:30
Venue:	Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem
Participants/audience:	Local and international community, artists, etc
Length of speech:	2 minutes
Context of speech:	opening remarks
Draft prepared by:	Communications Unit
Draft cleared by:	Special Representative

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is heart warming to see all of you present here this evening for the opening of the **“Colors of Hope 2008”** art auction, displaying the work of Palestinian artists, whose experiences and backgrounds give them perspectives that are quite remarkable.

While the focus of this year’s auction is to shed light on the remarkable works of emerging artists, it also includes two works by renowned Palestinian painters from an earlier generation - Sulaiman Mansour and Taleb Duwaik.

With this exhibition here in Jerusalem, we see once again that art has no borders and brings people of different nationalities and social backgrounds together.

The arts are for everybody. Far from being an elitist pursuit, art is integrated into the very fabric of everybody’s life, and tonight we celebrate its value for the well-being of society. I am particularly pleased that, this evening, it is through art that we are reflecting one of the greatest challenges of our time, one that affects us all and indeed, is



owned by us all, namely, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Tonight, Palestinian artists show that we can use art as an MDG advocacy tool. In cooperation with Al Mahatta Gallery, sixteen artists were invited from the West Bank and Gaza to provide their interpretations of these goals.

While I apologize to those who know the MDGs like the back of their hand, I believe it is always worth reminding ourselves of what the goals actually are. There are eight of them, with a variety of targets and indicators to measure progress in combating poverty.

The MDGs represent a global and collective commitment to address some of the stumbling blocks in the pursuit of a quality, decent and equitable livelihood for all. We are talking about: poverty and hunger, education, gender equality, reducing child mortality, increasing maternal health, tackling global diseases like HIV/AIDS and Malaria, environmental sustainability, and global partnerships.

The paintings on display have a universal message, freed from the constraints of language and cultural barriers. They can indeed paint a thousand words in any dialect. Each has an individual story to tell. Together, they provide an important and compelling statement, which reminds us of our obligations in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The artists remind us that these goals are true and essential for humanity and the global wellbeing of all people. The goals, like the beautiful works we see before us tonight, are enduring: they are important for us and for generations to come.

I have used the words “collective” and “us” a few times already, because indeed each one of us has a role to play. Only if the MDGs are collectively



and deliberately addressed by national institutions, policy makers, private sector, academia, media, and us as citizens will they be achieved.

Your attendance this evening manifests our shared commitment and interest in furthering arts and cultural cooperation, while contributing financially to young and emerging Palestinian artists.

I would like to congratulate the artists on this successful exhibition and to thank everyone for making this event possible.

Now, dig deep into your pockets, enjoy the evening, and good luck with your bidding.