



SPEECH FOR UNDP/PAPP SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Speaking event:	Signing Ceremony – KFW VII
Date and time:	Wednesday, 10.09.2008; 14:30 – 15:30 (JRS time)
Venue:	Ministry of Planning, Ramallah
Participants/audience:	Minister of Planning and Labour, Dr. Samir Abdullah Minister of Local Government, Dr. Ziad Al Bandak Deputy Head of the German Representative Office, Mrs. Gudrun Isphording Head of KFW, Mr. Matthias Schlund Tulkarem Municipality, Mr. Walid Abu Amweis
Length of speech:	5 minutes
Context of speech:	Opening remarks
Draft prepared by:	Communications Unit
Draft cleared by:	Special Representative of the Administrator

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon,

It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to join this distinguished gathering on the occasion of signing an eight million Euro agreement between *The Federal Republic of Germany*, the *Palestinian Authority through its Ministry of Planning*, and *UNDP* to confront unemployment in the oPt.

This partnership, through phase seven of the *Poverty Oriented Infrastructure Programme*, adds another opportunity for the Palestinian people to address poverty. Our methodology reflects self-reliance and self-sufficiency, an approach focused on early recovery.

According to large-scale surveys conducted for UNDP/PAPP in 2007, 42% of those interviewed consider employment the most important community need, even

above concerns such as infrastructure, law and order, and general sanitation. Simply stated, people want to provide for their families, for their communities, but face considerable obstacles to social and economic opportunities. Unemployment in the oPt is as high as 29% in the first quarter of 2008, and poverty is a real threat as it reached over 30% by the end of 2007. The Palestinian Authority has recognized the challenge and the PRDP calls for productive employment needed to enhance national prosperity. UNDP/PAPP, with 30 years of experience in oPt, and with the assistance of Germany, join this call and together will continue to focus on support to sustained livelihoods.

Through the KFW programme, UNDP/PAPP is working collectively with local authorities, civil society organizations, and refugee camp committees to create jobs and meet priority community needs – whether through the construction and rehabilitation of schools, clinics, roads, centres, water networks or the creation of hundreds of permanent jobs through the sustainability of these facilities.

I have had the pleasure to visit many of the project sites created through programme interventions. Not only are the structures beautifully constructed, but more importantly they are functional. Yet, beyond the facilities themselves, what struck me the most was how the programme has supported those often disadvantaged by the formal labour market - the blind, the elderly, the deaf, and children with special needs. Since only a few initiatives address the needs of these constituencies, the KFW programme will continue to stress their involvement.

I have talked about the KFW employment generation programme on many occasions but let us also refer to tangible results. For example, over 700,000 workdays have been generated, more than 80 community service buildings and hundreds of water networks, schools and classrooms have been constructed, 51 women centres established, and hundreds of permanent jobs created in over 260 communities in the West Bank and Gaza.

Based on the scale and significance of this programme, we are all proud to note that it has become a household name.

We believe that the future of the Palestinian people is far from bleak, particularly given the commitment of local, regional, and international partners. There is always a way forward and solutions to the problems communities face, and a wealth of global development experience upon which to draw.

Undoubtedly, additional employment challenges in the oPt still remain and the figures illustrate the obstacles that we must confront. Nevertheless, programmes like this bring hope to those chronically unemployed, those without a job for a long time; it brings trust to the government structures that facilitate employment, and strengthens capacities to create additional measures that promote employment in the oPt.

The seventh phase of the employment generation programme, signed today, has a very strong emphasis on small local authorities.

To this effect, a total value of approximately eight million Euros will be used in supporting priority service infrastructure needs of poverty-stricken communities across the West Bank and Gaza.

The ceremony today is indeed a joyous event, and on this point, I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Federal Republic of Germany, KfW, and the Ministries of Planning and Local Government who are all an integral part of the success of this programme. We hope that the lessons learnt over the years will only make this demand driven programme even more successful.

I look forward to the implementation of these new projects.

Thank you