



SPEECH

UNDP/PAPP SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Speaking event:	National Conference to Launch "Jenin's Strategic Development Plan"
Date and time:	Tuesday, 25.12.2008; 09:30 – 13:30
Venue:	Palestinian Red Crescent Society, Ramallah
Participants/audience:	H.E. Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, H.E. Minister of Planning Samir Abdullah, H.E. Minister of Local Government, Ziad Al Bankdak, Ireland Representative office, Mr. Qadourah Mousa, Jenin Governor
Length of speech:	5 minutes
Context of speech:	Opening remarks
Draft prepared by:	Social and Productive Capital Team Leader and Communications Unit
Draft cleared by:	Special Representative

Ministers,
Governor of Jenin,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

We gather today to launch the **Jenin Strategic Development Plan** conceived and facilitated through the Participatory Rural Development and Planning initiative. Let me start by thanking Irish Aid for their generosity, my UNDP colleagues for their dedicated efforts, and our Palestinian partners, from various line Ministries to local communities, for their committed engagement.

Although the production of the Jenin Strategic plan has been time intensive - nearly three years of demanding effort – the process of arriving at this launch was equally noteworthy. In brief, I wish to highlight some significant accomplishments.

- First, we established the **Area Development Committee** - consisting of 34 members from civil society organizations, local councils, the private sector and cooperatives - to assist with overseeing the development of the plan. Moreover, to ensure basic anchoring in and ownership by the PA, we supported the creation of the District Planning Unit (equipped the unit and trained its staff members in Jenin).
- Second, a comprehensive **District Strategic Development Planning Manual** was prepared. This manual serves as a ground-breaking guidebook for oPt in support of development practitioners in participatory planning exercises.
- Third, based on several important diagnostic studies and assessments in the District, including a gender report, a socio-economic survey, and a thorough profile for 87 localities, **the Strategic Development Plan for Jenin** was prepared.

- Lastly, at the same time, and premised on various findings, we established **five sector working groups**; initiated a **capacity development programme benefiting over 380 people**; facilitated a **legal and institutional framework** for development planning in oPt; and currently **provide support to ongoing small-scale community development projects** such as rehabilitation of schools, youth centers, kindergartens, and Income generation activities.

All of these activities were conceived and implemented through an inclusive and participatory process to enhance interaction between different development actors, including communities.

This effort, however, was a modest intervention that could potentially have significant contributions to all of the oPt. Therefore, rather than refer only to the significance of the Strategic Plan for Jenin, I want to deviate slightly from standard remarks to address the significance of accountable and responsive local governance systems in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Mechanisms such as the preparation of the Jenin Plan focus on strengthening relations between the PA and the Palestinian people to improve governance and planning. Participatory processes contribute to public trust and raise the overall quality of a pluralistic society. The Government benefits through better targeting of modest financial resources and obtainment of information toward policy-relevant ideas. In turn, communities gain a sense of improved confidence in their elected officials and assist in the identification of local priorities. Lastly, by having access to Government information such as local budgets, time-frames, and development plans, citizens better appreciate how their resources are deployed as well as the limitations of State provisions.

But, this is not merely about replicating one model in another context. Blue-prints (or prescriptive approaches) do not work in a rapidly changing environment. It is not enough to introduce a pilot initiative such as the Jenin Strategic Development Plan. The more important question is how do we move from one off events to institutionalizing and formalizing this interaction that I referred to earlier. It reminds me of a popular Arabic saying "One Hand Can Not Clap", we need Government and People clapping together to make a beautiful sound.

Otherwise stated, this requires considerable political compliance and responsiveness on one hand and constructive contributions from citizens on the other hand.

Allow me to conclude by expressing optimism. This is an important step forward and one that we should be proud of, one that involved active citizenship and a responsive government. We strongly believe that Strategic Development Plans could be replicated throughout the oPt and encourage deliberations on next steps to see Jenin Plans in places such as Ramallah, Nablus, and Hebron. UNDP and others stand ready to facilitate, however, success is contingent on the PA to appropriately anchor these exercises to ensure sustainability and follow-up.

I assure you that UNDP remains committed towards the success of this endeavour and to support the Authorities and the Palestinian people where possible. And, to reiterate, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Ireland, the Ministries of Planning and Local Government, Jenin Governorate, and all of the local communities who are all an integral part of the success of this programme.

Let us clap together.

Thank you