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Speech by Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen
UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator
At the launch of the Palestinian Human Development Report

Your Excellency Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you to the launch of the Palestinian Human Development Report. It offers a critical look at the situation of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The report is sponsored by UNDP but is written by Palestinians about Palestinians. It is intended to inform and inspire continued debate about how the human security of Palestinians affects their present and future.

Its starting point is the importance of human security: the security of the individual from fear, hunger, want and oppression. Without this security, development becomes difficult at best; and at worst, is only a theoretical exercise.

The report argues that security has to be viewed in its broadest sense, as **human** security. Policies that focus purely on state security, while ignoring the underlying issues that cause instability, are unlikely to succeed.

Human security is the freedom of children to go to school without the fear of assault. It is the freedom of a farmer to visit his fields safely and to hope that his crops or olive trees will not be damaged. And it is the freedom to travel without frequent harassment.

The human development report is a reminder that Palestinians continue to face many challenges. It contains disturbing research about levels of depression and fear among young people. This should be a concern for Palestinians, Israelis and the international community.

Threats to human security do not derive solely from occupation, the report states. Internal divisions and the activities of security services have also had an impact on Palestinian human security. Freedom from oppression is also the freedom of the individual to make choices without the interference of the State, the family or tradition. The report makes clear that no healthy society can thrive without the voices of the people being heard, be it the voices of civil society or those who have been silenced politically.

Human security is the platform for development, the aim of which is to create an environment where people can enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. These aims are achieved by increasing access to knowledge, preserving the environment, improving nutrition and health services, securing jobs and a decent income, preventing crime and violence, promoting political and cultural freedom and offering satisfying leisure and community life to all.



The report looks at these factors in the Palestinian context and assesses the challenges to their realization. The authors critique the role of the Palestinian Authority and civil society, the government of Israel and the international community. UNDP does not necessarily agree with all the conclusions in Human Development Reports, but we value the independence of the contributors and authors and recognize that it is vital that the matters they raise are aired and considered. Promoting debate as a means of supporting the definition of sound policy is an important part of UNDP's work and is the objective of all human development reports.

We are pleased that the launch of the Human Development Report forms part of a series of interventions we're planning this year. Within a week we will be publishing our report on the situation in the Gaza Strip more than a year after Israel withdrew its troops in January 2009. That report finds among many other things that considerable repairs still need to be done – to the value of three-quarters of the physical damage to infrastructure, homes and businesses. It is clear that the lack of access to health, education, work, clean water and electricity in the Gaza Strip contribute to an appalling lack of human security.

The ***Gaza One Year After*** report will be followed by a report on the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied Palestinian territory which we are working on with the Palestinian Authority at the moment.

The measure of these goals, which promote international standards on poverty reduction, education, health, gender equality and environmental sustainability, is also a useful benchmark of the success of development policies. The Palestinian Authority is not a signatory of the Millennium Declaration because it is not a Member State of the United Nations. Nonetheless, UNDP proudly supports the Authority as it makes progress towards achieving its human development aims. We see these efforts to reach international standards of development as part of the broader goal of institution building in which it is engaged.

We are also here to remind the Israeli Government, as the occupying entity and a United Nations Member State that is party to the Millennium Declaration, that it has a responsibility to enable the achievement of these goals across the oPt.

The MDGs cannot be achieved in the absence of human security. And without human security, it is very difficult to imagine achieving any other lasting and meaningful security. Instead, what we will see is greater tension, more force and stronger shields.

I'd like to thank the Prime Minister for joining us to launch the report. There are too many people to thank in person for the production of the report; their names are listed inside it.

I'll conclude by quoting Kofi Annan in remarks he delivered on the 5th anniversary of the Millennium Declaration: all people should have "the freedom to choose the kind of lives they would like to live, the access to the resources that would make those choices meaningful and the security to ensure that they can be enjoyed in peace." This report explores these wise words in the Palestinian context, reminding us of our hope that development can bring the "Larger Freedom" to which all peoples aspire.

Thank you