

### **Sweden to contribute to wage payments in the Palestinian public sector**

Following a Government decision today, Sweden is to contribute SEK 20 million to support wage payments to employees within the civilian public sector - in schools and health services, for example - in the West Bank and Gaza. The contribution will be paid by Sida to the PLO.

"The humanitarian and political situation in the Palestinian territories is very serious. The Palestinian Authority is in risk of collapse, along with essential social services such as healthcare and education. This would have devastating consequences for the Palestinian people. We must therefore do what we can to strengthen the position of the democratically elected President Abbas, promote Palestinian unity and avoid isolation of Gaza," says Minister for International Development Cooperation Gunilla Carlsson.

"To enable resumption of a genuine peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, we must provide clear support to Palestinian democratic forces, safeguard Palestinian institutions and help establish a process of reconciliation with broad Palestinian participation," says Ms Carlsson.

The Swedish contribution will be channelled through the Mirror Single Treasury Account of the PLO. The account has been set up by the head of the PLO's Economic Department, Salam Fayyad, who is also Prime Minister of the Palestinian Government, in cooperation with President Mahmoud Abbas and in dialogue with the EU and the US. The account will be supervised by auditors Ernst & Young.

\*\*\*