
ESCWA
Weekly News
Issue 25/52

Preparations for the Arab-International Forum on Rehabilitation of Palestine

The "Arab-International Forum on Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT): Towards an Independent State" was launched at a press conference held by Palestinian Minister of Planning Nabil Kassis, ESCWA Executive Secretary Mervat Tallawry and Ambassador Said Kamal, Under-Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs in the Arab League, on 7 June 2004 at the UN House in Beirut.

The Forum, which was held under the auspices of the President of the Lebanese Republic, General Emile Lahoud, responds to two resolutions adopted by ESCWA in 2001 and 2003 calling on the Commission to contribute to the rehabilitation of the economic sectors in Palestine and to take the necessary measures for the implementation thereof. The Forum and its preparations received the support of the Palestinian Council of Ministers on 12 June 2003 and the last Arab Summit in Tunis in May 2004.

ESCWA organized an open dialogue on 8 June between Minister Kassis and parties concerned with Palestinian issues about "Development in the OPT Amidst an Unstable Political and Security Environment". It focused on possible ways of working on economic and social development in Palestine, despite the current situation, and its importance in helping the Palestinian people face the continuing occupation and the destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure.

As part of preparations for the forum, ESCWA conducted a workshop on "Arab-Palestinian Civil Society Partnership" on 9 and 10 June 2004 in order to boost development efforts and formulate guidance mechanisms for more effective Arab support. The workshop aimed at reviewing the results of the consultative meeting in Ramallah last April, which focused on the vision of the Palestinian civil society, its priorities, strategy and plan of action; the exchange of expertise through highlighting the successful experiences of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Palestine and other Arab countries; and the development of effective mechanisms for cooperation, support and follow-up within Palestinian NGOs and their Arab counterparts.