**UN-HABITAT and AAAID sign pact to build Palestinian medical centre**

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UN-HABITAT and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID) on Wednesday signed an agreement to establish a Medical and Rehabilitation Centre in the Town of Taqua (Bethlehem), the West Bank of the Occupied Palestinian territories.

The agreement provides a framework of cooperation to build a Medical and Rehabilitation Centre. In accordance with the agreement, AAAID will provide US$ 354,000 to finance the activities of the first phase of the Project. This includes the construction of the first 2 floors of the proposed six floors of Medical and Rehabilitation Centre. The land for the Medical Centre was provided by the Medical Charitable Society of Taqua at a total cost of $60,000. The total cost of the remaining phases is estimated at $1,350,000.

The agreement was signed by Dr. El Kheir Khalafalla Khalid Head of Development Programmes on behalf of AAAID and Mr. Abdalla Abbas, Coordinator, Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People, on behalf of UN-HABITAT.

The Centre will provide medical services to more than 30,000 people living in Taqua and its 12 villages surrounding Bethlehem. In particular, it will provide emergency medical services to the vulnerable (poor women, children, the elderly and persons with chronic diseases) who are unable to travel to other medical centres in the area thereby avoiding long queues and arduous trips through check points. Overall, it will contribute to the well being of the rural population in the area.

Dr. El Kheir, on behalf of Mr. Abdul Kareem Mohammad Al-Amri, President of AAAID, welcomed the cooperation with UN-HABITAT reiterating AAAID's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to mitigate the suffering of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Territories. Mr. Abbas expressed, on behalf of Mrs Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, her appreciation for the initiatives of AAAID and their commitment to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian People.