



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

THE 2014 PALESTINE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Development For Empowerment

FOREWORD

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been issuing annual human development reports to assess the state of global development from a people-centred perspective; one that places the expansion of human capabilities, choices and opportunities at the heart of the development process.

Human development reports are not statements of UNDP policy: the independence of the writing team is crucial, allowing for a solid analytical critique based on an impartial political and cultural analysis.

Overall, the status of human development in Palestine based on traditional indicators shows limited relative progress in recent years compared to earlier periods. Significant achievements were made in traditional indicators (e.g. GDP growth, food security, health services) in the latter half of the first decade of the 2000s. Yet, much of this positive change was largely driven by external forces (e.g. international aid and adjustments in Israeli imposed restrictions) and past achievements were not necessarily indicative of sustainable development. Autonomy, capacity, and resiliency had not yet been adequately built into Palestinian systems, and the implications of this can be seen in the slow progress or, at times, a reverse in trends from 2010 onwards.

The theme of the 2004 Human Development Report was "empowerment". Ten years later, the same theme has been chosen again, with a view to taking stock of developments on the path to Palestinian empowerment since that time, while taking into account the continued pertinence of this theme in the Palestinian context.

The Palestinian condition is deeply dominated by the Israeli occupation, which in essence constitutes a virtually complete reallocation of power away from the occupied to the occupying power. This, therefore, renders very difficult the pursuit of an empowerment agenda in the Palestinian context, which can be meaningfully changed only if the Israeli occupation ends.

Taking that into account, fundamental changes must be made to redress the asymmetry in the balance of power between the occupied and the occupying power. To this end, it is of paramount importance to revamp the existing framework of the peace process, with a view to enabling it to deliver on a two state solution.

In parallel, the Palestinians need to address the challenges relating to internal social order and conflict within their society. At the centre of this effort must be the pursuit of an agenda aimed at empowering the disadvantaged and inspiring the Palestinian people to believe in their capacity to achieve their objectives. Policies should be formulated and actions defined to ensure that the conditions for empowerment, including active participation, adequacy of information, accountability, and local organizing capacity are adequate to ensure effective empowerment.

The Palestinian Human Development Report for 2014 is the product of an independent research team, who have scrutinized Palestinian society and the occupation critically.

We hope that the Palestinian Human Development Report 2014 will be a useful tool for motivating discussion on human development issues in the oPt and beyond.

I wish to extend my thanks to all the contributors to the Palestinian Human Development Report 2104. My sincere hope is that the report makes a modest contribution towards achieving justice and peace in the region.

Frode Mauring

UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator April 2015

<http://www.ps.undp.org/content/dam/papp/docs/Publications/UNDP-papp-research-PHDR2015.pdf>

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