



The United Nations Development Programme
Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

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Designed and Printed by
bluebell design

Beach cleaning in
Gaza City as part of
UNDP's Rapid Support
to Livelihoods project.
October 2009







A school boy distributing information about HIV and AIDS in Nur Shams refugee camp near Tulkarem on World Aids Day, December 2, 2009. UNDP administers the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the occupied Palestinian territory.

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From Crisis Recovery to State Building

The Special Representative's

Introduction

The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People was first set up by the United Nations Development Programme to help improve the social and economic condition of a people without a state and then switched its focus in 1993 to supporting the Palestinians' efforts at limited self-government and state-building in anticipation of the creation of a state.

Since then UNDP has made an indelible mark on the West Bank and Gaza. From Jenin in the north to Rafah in the south, there is not a single Palestinian community that does not benefit from a UNDP project.

The projects have included ministries, courts, hospitals, schools, power plants, roads, water and sanitation installations and homes, as well as employment generation and capacity development projects. In the absence of a national state,

UNDP, in association with the Palestinian Authority and other agencies, has helped build up services that have maintained and improved Palestinian living conditions in spite of Israel's occupation and Palestinian population growth.

Support for the needs of the Palestinian people and their institutions has been combined with a focus on UNDP's global priorities. Issues such as climate change, the global recession, gender equality, youth issues and support for people with disabilities, are as important in the occupied Palestinian territory as anywhere else.

UNDP is working with its fellow UN agencies and the Palestinian Authority to create a framework for climate change adaptation. Poverty reduction and helping women play a larger role in the society and economy are central to UNDP's programmes.



Jens Toyberg-Frandzen(right) greets Salam Fayad, the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority at the opening of the Beit Jala school for the blind, built by UNDP and funded by the German development bank, KfW. October 2009.

An important scorecard for UNDP in the occupied Palestinian territory is the Millennium Development Goals, global targets set by the world's leaders in 2000 to improve health, education, the economy and the environment for the whole world by 2015. Testimony to the success of the international community's support for the Palestinian

Authority and civil society is the high levels of adult literacy of 92 per cent and life expectancy of 72 years in the Palestinian territory. Further evidence of success is that the Palestinian territory is on course to attain six out of eight of the Millennium Development Goals in reduction of child mortality, improvement in maternal health, promotion of gender

equality, achievement of universal primary education, progress on communicable diseases and focus on development.

While health and education indicators are similar to the developed world, poverty figures resemble those of the developing world. In the Palestinian territory the poverty rate is 68 per cent and the unemployment rate is 25 per cent.¹ The economy shrank by 1 per cent in 2008 while the population increased by 3.2 per cent. Eliminating extreme poverty and the proper management

of the environment, two of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, will remain a major challenge to be overcome by 2015.

According to the International Monetary Fund's report to the Sharm al Sheikh conference in March 2009, the economic outlook for Palestinians was "bleak" in both the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank, settlement expansion and checkpoints restricted movement while Gaza continued to be cut off from all but the most basic of supplies by Israel.

In Gaza, restrictions on access have strangled the economy and brought misery to the area. The misery was compounded in December 27, 2008, when Israel launched the 23 day military operation which left around 1,380 dead and more than 5,000 wounded.

For eighteen months prior to the military incursion, Gazans were deprived of many of the rights which are universally taken for granted including access to healthcare, education, transport, work, fuel and freedom of movement. Services and infrastructure deteriorated to such an extent that commentators speak of a state of "de-development".

After the violence, UNDP assumed the role of leading the international community and partners through its chairmanship of the Early Recovery Group, with the aim of re-building Gaza and restoring livelihoods in the

face of political uncertainty and military closure.

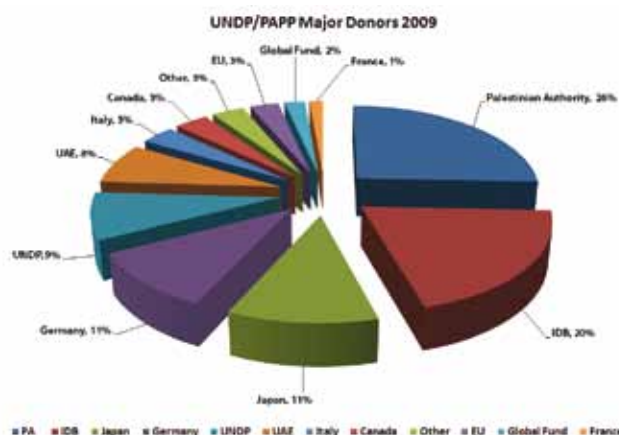
This report has chapters on each of our main focus areas, crisis response, governance, poverty reduction and environment as well a chapter on some of the achievements made since 1978, when the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People was established.

UNDP is engaged in more than 100 projects in the Palestinian territory so it would be impossible to do justice to all of them in under 50 pages but this report is designed to give an insight into UNDP's activities here. Further information is available on our website, www.undp.ps



Jens Toyberg-Frandzen

Special Representative of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme
Jerusalem, April, 2010



¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force Survey October-December 2009.

Gazans trying to
get back to normal
following the
cessation of violence
in January 2009.





Crisis Response and Early Recovery

“I hope that this dark hour will prove to be the turning point for Gaza and the rest of Palestine. This recovery and reconstruction plan has the potential not only to re-build Gaza but to build it back better, and I hope that all those with an interest in doing so will unite behind it.”

Salam Fayad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority



A mechanical digger breaks up a destroyed house in the northern Gaza Strip, October 2009

Just after 11.30 am, on December 27, 2008, approximately 88 Israeli aircraft attacked 100 targets in less than four minutes, thus beginning a 23-day conflict which would result in at least 1,380 deaths and considerable damage to the homes and infrastructure of the Gaza Strip.

The attack was the culmination of a series of confrontations between Israel and the Hamas movement, which controls the government of Gaza, and armed militias. The violence totally disrupted UNDP's work in Gaza. The immediate priority was to keep staff safe. As soon as the bombing attacks and the incursion ended, the new task was to come to the aid of the inhabitants of Gaza.

As the bombing started on a Saturday, the majority of UNDP staff

were at home and close to their families. The office's 52 staff were instructed to work from home the next day although electricity cuts would make work very difficult. UNDP's security officer and senior management continued to work but all normal tasks were stopped. The most important activity was checking on the safety of staff and providing for urgent needs. Some staff had to be evacuated and housed at the UNDP office which provided a haven for 120 people. Everyone needed food, water and cash, none of which were easily available.

As the conflict continued with aerial bombardments and the invasion of the Gaza Strip, the situation deteriorated. Staff in Jerusalem began to plan for an evacuation of

Fishermen in Gaza in October 2009. UNDP is working to support Gaza's fishing industry.



all 52 employees in Gaza and their families. Planning involved finance, human resources, procurement, logistics and security staff as well as co-operation with colleagues in New York and Copenhagen.

In Jerusalem, Maxwell Gaylard, the Humanitarian Co-ordinator, established the Early Recovery Cluster Network, to co-ordinate the response of the international community to the crisis and ensure a swift transition from short term humanitarian relief to longer term recovery.

The conflict stopped on January 18, 2009 but not before almost every member of staff had been affected in some way. The 23 days of fighting

had left both adults and children traumatized and one member of staff and his family were amongst those in Gaza whose homes were totally destroyed.

In spite of undergoing such trauma for a prolonged period, UNDP's staff in Gaza had to respond to the needs of everyone else. UNDP provided 30,000 Gazans with food packages and within days, UNDP recruited 25 engineers, most of them former employees, to assess the damage.

In conjunction with the Palestinian Authority and local and international partners, engineers scrutinized the damage caused to produce a report that could serve as the basis for compensation or legal claims.

They found that 3,535 homes were destroyed, 2,854 suffered major damage and 52,900 suffered minor damage.

In addition, UNDP surveyed 1,815 Gazan families to find out what they felt their needs were in the aftermath of the conflict. Their views were published in *Inside Gaza; attitudes and perceptions of Gaza Strip residents in the aftermath of the Israeli military operations*² in March 2009.

On March 2, 2009, in Sharm al Sheikh, international donors were presented with the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan³, produced as a result of a team effort led by the Palestinian Authority with UNDP support which had begun in January.

Crushing the rubble of destroyed buildings before re-use as building material at UNDP's rubble crushing site near Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip. October 2009.



² <http://www.undp.ps/en/focusareas/crisis/surveyerf.pdf>

³ <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/PSLG-7QHJQZ?OpenDocument>

In the same month, UNDP started distributing \$27 million in cash assistance to help people whose homes had been damaged or destroyed. The money, which was provided by the Palestinian Authority, was compensation for families whose homes suffered minor damages and a small grant for others to help them with immediate repairs and necessities.

Those whose homes suffered minor damage received up to \$3,000 in compensation while those whose homes were destroyed or badly damaged received between \$3,000 or \$5,000 in assistance. As

of December, 2009, a total of \$21.8 million had been distributed to 9,162 beneficiaries out of 13,188 with a further \$5.2 million expected to be distributed in 2010.

One of the most pressing tasks was the removal of the rubble created by the conflict. An estimated 600,000 tonnes of rubble had to be cleared to prevent more death and injury.

A further 11 people were killed and 25 were injured by the explosion of previously unexploded ordnance in the months after the ceasefire.

Out of a total of 2,533 rubble sites, explosive ordnance detection teams



Workers rehabilitating orchards in the Gaza Strip. October 2009



Work on the construction of homes for 120 families in Rafah has been at a standstill since Israel banned the importation of building materials in 2007. October 2009.

examined 1,090 which they judged to be potentially dangerous and categorized 174 as having a high risk of containing unexploded ordnance. So far 83 items of unexploded ordnance have been found and de-activated ranging from anti-tank mine and phosphorous shells to large bombs.

Before work could begin, 2,100 people underwent training on removing asbestos safely and

unexploded ordnance awareness.

By the end of 2009, 245,000 tonnes of rubble was removed and around 60,000 tonnes crushed for use as building material.

UNDP also responded to the people of Gaza's other needs, providing work, psychosocial support, rehabilitating the electricity network and supporting agriculture and fishing.

Learning a Trade: New Skills in Gaza

Fadwa Abu Shanab is enjoying an education for the first time in 26 years. She hopes that the wood crafting skills she is being taught by the Society for the Care of Disabled Families will allow her to earn money to support her husband and seven children.

She is being taught about the art of woodcraft, how to create her own designs and how to cut, saw and finesse her woodwork.

Fadwa, 37, had to leave school at the age of 11 because her parents could not afford the fees. In 1992, she married but two years later her husband became permanently disabled after he injured his head in a work accident.

Fadwa Abu Shanab utilizes her wood carving skills. Rafah, December 2009.



"I would like to have a trade to be able to cover the cost of my husband's medication and give my children the chance to have a proper education. So far we are not able to sell our work but I am ready for the next step," said Fadwa.

She is one of 500 students being trained by the Society for the Care of Disabled Families in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. Other courses include accounting, secretarial skills and management. Fadwa started her training in June 2009 and is due to finish in March 2010.

Around 20,000 Gazans are receiving training from civil society organizations as part of the United Nations Development Programme's Rapid Support to Livelihoods and Social Services and Advanced Planning for Early Recovery project which began in 2008 to alleviate the economic and social crisis caused by Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip which began in 2006.

The Rapid Support project, which was funded by \$2.6 million from

UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and \$3 million from the United Arab Emirates, aims to enhance the resilience and social cohesion of Gazans and lay the foundation for recovery.

The project was divided into two main areas. Around 1,500 people were employed to clean streets and beaches and rehabilitate neglected farmlands, to make up for deteriorating municipal services and to provide income for the unemployed.

Secondly, UNDP worked with 53 non-governmental organizations to improve their capacity to provide services and to utilize them for the provision of services such as training, homecare for the immobile, remedial education, psycho-social support, gender awareness training and recreational events.

The isolation and continued impoverishment of Gazans continues but the Rapid Support project which runs until the end of 2010 has provided income and support to around 50,000 beneficiaries.

Fadwa explained that with her husband unable to work, only she has the potential to earn money for her family once she completes her training, "I finally have a reason to wake up and live," she said.

Green Shoots of Recovery: **Aid to Farmers**

Every morning at 4am, Emtayez Salamah leaves her home for the two and a half kilometre walk to her fields. Sometimes she gets a lift on a passing cart or car but she normally arrives in time for the first prayer of the day just before sunrise.

Her husband died five years ago and she continues the work they used to do together on a small holding between Rafah and Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip.

On January 21, 2009, Mrs Salamah walked to the holding to discover her crop of tomatoes withered and dead. She had not been able to water the plants for almost a month. First, the bombing was so regular and intense that she could not leave her home and then Israeli tanks and troops operated close to Rafah and her land.

Mrs Salamah and her six children and elderly mother live in the Shaboura refugee camp in Rafah. As refugees they receive food from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency which provides for most of their nutritional needs. But it is the money that she makes from crops that provide the family with cash for education or fresh meat. "It helps a lot. We eat chicken once a week or every two weeks. We need every bit of food we can get. Sometimes we cook tomatoes and sometimes potatoes," she said.



Emtayez Salamah at work in her greenhouse. Rafah 2009

The family earns between 1,000 and 1,500 shekels from their produce per month. But the failure of the tomato crop meant the family had little money to buy seeds for the next harvest. "This is my only source of income. I have nothing else," said Mrs Salamah.

Since the war, UNDP has supported farmers by providing 6,060 food baskets, cultivating 400 dunams of land and rehabilitating and providing seedlings for 220 dunams of greenhouses as well as providing training for 1,000 farmers. UNDP were able to intervene in the aftermath of the war and ensure that Mrs Salamah got the seeds she

needed to grow and sell her next crop and pay school and university fees for her children.

"I want the best for my children and I educate them as much as I can. They are all good at school and they help each other with homework. I don't want them to feel that because they lost their father, they are disadvantaged. So far I have managed to keep my children in school and university," she said.

"Today for example, I harvested and sold 40 packs of cucumbers at 15 shekels each. I save money for when there is no produce or if there is no money I ask my sister for help. We help each other."



A farmer ploughs
newly reclaimed
land near Hebron.
March 2010.



Poverty Reduction

“I always believed that poverty can be totally conquered in our own lifetimes if the right approach is adopted. I based my belief on the inherent ability of the poor that can be unleashed once they are given the opportunity to help themselves.”

Muhammad Yunes, founder of the Grameen Bank

According to a 2008 World Bank report, the proportion of Palestinians living in deep poverty is 69.9 per cent in Gaza and 34.1 per cent in the West Bank.⁴ Unemployment is estimated at 39.3 per cent in Gaza and 18.1 per cent in the West Bank. There are stark contrasts; in Jericho unemployment is 6.7 per cent while in Khan Yunis, it is 44 per cent. Young people are particularly affected, with rates around 60 per cent in Gaza and 30 per cent in the West Bank.⁵

UNDP's work in poverty reduction and economic development is aligned with the Palestinian Authority's Reform and Development

Plan. In spite of the challenges presented by occupation, it aims to promote livelihoods, agro-productivity, economic recovery and self reliance by protecting individual and community capacities which are the building blocks of Palestinian society.

Sometimes poverty and need are most simply addressed by the provision of assistance whether that be cash for work or food parcels. Although UNDP provides such assistance when necessary, such as in the aftermath of Israel's military attack on Gaza, our focus is on reducing dependency by providing opportunities rather than relief for

subsistence living.

UNDP's work to alleviate poverty can be divided into two areas, creating job opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship, and influencing policy and the kind of services available to poor people.

Land and infrastructure development creates opportunities for temporary employment through labour and the purchase of local products and services. Longer term employment is created by encouraging the use of the assets that people already have such as directing their skills in entrepreneurial projects or investing in assets such as land and skills so they can be used to lift families out of poverty and dependency on aid.

Equally important is advice on policy and business development to government agencies and civil society organisations that help the poor. UNDP has helped create a standardised system of measuring poverty which allows fair allocation of resources and creates a benchmark by which the success or failure of interventions can be measured.

In the past organisations measured their work in terms of the number of tools or heads of livestock delivered to poor people whereas now success is judged by the effect on the poverty level of a family offered assistance. The best measure of aid is not its volume but its impact.

UNDP has also worked to improve the capacities of micro-finance institutions in developing the

A window manufacturing workshop part of the Salfet industrial facility which was built by UNDP and financed by the German development bank, KfW. March 2009



⁴ Palestinian Economic Prospects <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCReportSept.08final.pdf>

⁵ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force Survey October-December 2009.

range of products that they offer and changing the nature of their relationships with clients from being simply money lenders to creating partnerships in which they take an active role in ensuring the success of their investment.

UNDP has also worked with government ministries to create networks and partnerships with non-governmental organisations. One project with the Ministry of Agriculture featured an aerial land survey of the West Bank which concluded that 1.6 million dunams of land are currently being underused and investment in them could create jobs and support the Palestinian economy.

Much of UNDP's work in poverty reduction has been focused on the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme which has targeted 3,500 families with the aim of helping them graduate from poverty.

In agriculture, UNDP assists farmers to improve their livelihoods by fighting disease such as Brucellosis, improving irrigation to safeguard water resources and reduce costs, and improve the value of crops focusing on crops which are better suited to the environment or have a higher market value.

Land development is one of the best ways to get international aid to those that need it. In construction projects, around 15 per cent of the total investment generates employment. With land development, 67 per cent of the



A new-born baby in the new wing of Qalqiliya hospital, built by UNDP and funded by Kfw.

investment provides jobs and direct support to the local economy, while the rest is spent on developing farming assets.

Land development does not rely on international aid alone. It is one area in which we see a real partnership between farmers, local authorities and international donors with farmers providing up to 50 per cent of investment out of their own pockets.

Politically, the under-use of land can be used as a pretext to expropriate land from its rightful owners. One of the best ways to avoid expropriation is to invest and work the land.

The agricultural sector plays a major

role in the Palestinian economy. Although it accounts for only eight per cent of Palestinian gross domestic product, it is the most important business in 400 villages in the West Bank where 60 per cent of the population resides. The reduction in the number of permits available for Palestinians to work in Israel has meant that land reclamation and management has become increasingly important in supporting livelihoods in rural areas.

In recent years, UNDP has worked in 260 out of the Palestinian territory's 400 villages, planting 1.8 million trees, creating 210,000 short term job opportunities and developing 33,000 dunams.

Rebuilding Lives: The Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme



Sameer al Hams in his workshop in Rafah. June 2009.

Sameer al Hams' workshop is hard to miss. Twelve washing machines spill from its doors into the dusty street.

He shares the workspace with a yellow stretch Mercedes taxi and dozens of old televisions and spare parts.

But it is the washing machines which have transformed Sameer's life, giving him an opportunity to lift him and his family out of poverty. A year ago, Sameer was dependent on aid, now he employs three men and saves \$100 per month.

Sameer and his family are one of 500 families in Gaza who are the

beneficiaries of the Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme, a pilot scheme designed to lift families out of poverty rather than simply alleviate the effects of poverty.

The project is funded by the Islamic Development Bank and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme with the help of Palestinian non-governmental organizations.

Sameer, 51, a father of five, left school at the age of 12 and like the majority of Gaza's labour force found work in Israel. For twelve years he helped build

Israel, working in construction sites all over the country. For a further 10 years, he worked at an aluminium plant in Rishon Letzion, south of Tel Aviv.

Then in 1996, following a bout of killings and reprisals, Sameer's application for renewal of his permit to work in Israel was denied. It was a serious blow, but Sameer had saved money and could take comfort that he would no longer have to spend up to eight hours per day travelling to and from Rafah to his place of work.

He bought a taxi and was still able to maintain his family's standard of living. Gaza's economic situation began to deteriorate in 2000 after the start of the Second Intifadah and got progressively worse. Rafah became a front line in the renewed conflict.

In May 2004, Sameer's taxi was crushed by an Israeli tank when Israel took control of several areas of Rafah. One week later his eldest son was shot dead by Israeli soldiers as he worked in a borrowed taxi. In one week, Sameer had lost his son and his livelihood. "All my savings had gone into the car and it was destroyed. We had gone from being comfortable to having no income. The whole of Gaza was suffering and there was no new work," he said.

The family was awarded a stipend of 500 NIS per month by the Palestinian Authority as compensation for the

death of their son. As refugees, the family also received food aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which was set up in 1949 to look after the needs of Palestinian refugees. But without regular work, the family's income remained below \$1 per family member per day, the measure of extreme poverty.

The period from 2004-2008 was a struggle for the family. One of their sons, now 23, suffers from autism and other disorders and cannot get proper care. Gaza's economy continued to shrink in spite of the departure of Israeli settlers and legislative elections.

Sameer's son-in-law, Mohammed al Hams (a distant relative) worked

Mohammad al Hams repairs a washing machine.



as an electrician, fixing washing machines. Over this period Sameer taught himself the mechanics of washing machines and how to fix them. But Mohammed's business was too small to provide his family with a good income, let alone pay a wage to his father-in-law.

Poverty was an isolating experience. Sameer no longer had the money to buy the gifts that it is customary to bring to the homes of relatives and friends so he stopped visiting. His friends and relatives could still visit but their frequency decreased as their situation did not improve.

In 2008, he heard that a Gazan non-governmental organization, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee, was looking for candidates for a pilot poverty reduction programme and he volunteered. The programme aimed to help families become self reliant by finding out their desires and abilities to earn an income and then supporting them as they work their way out of poverty.

Sameer said: "We worked out what was the best way that I could provide for my family. We decided that the repair of washing machine with my son-in-law was the most feasible project."

He told the committee he needed a high pressure vice, a generator, a compressor, grinders and other work

tools. Everything had to be available in Gaza because Israel rarely allows goods other than bare essentials to enter.

The total bill was \$7,872. Sameer was also trained in project management and book keeping. He shows pages of handwritten accounts. One week's profit was 2,040 shekels, another only 996 shekels.

The new equipment allowed Sameer, with the help of Mohammed, to take on much more work; some process which would have taken hours would now take minutes. They repair washing machines and re-furbish old ones for re-sale. Sameer also employs a man with a donkey cart to pick up and deliver machines and another man to carry out repairs on site. He has bought himself one of the many motorbikes that have been smuggled from Egypt.

Sameer is now looking to expand his business in Egypt and Israel, if their borders open but at the moment they don't believe there is enough of a market in Gaza for further expansion. At the moment, Sameer is happy to be earning a proper income for the first time since 2004.

"Income earned by own hand is much better than any other kind of money. When you work everything tastes better. You can send your children to school and you do not feel like a beggar," he said, "I have regained my self esteem."

Root and Branch Revival: **Land Reclamation**

A small tractor is ploughing along a terraced field on a steep hillside north of Hebron. The neat lines of the retaining walls rise from the valley floor like steps and contrast to the rock and scrub on adjacent hillsides.

This plot of 208 dunams is about to yield its second crop of fruits and nuts after seven years of work to transform rock and scrub into fruit-bearing orchards.

Mahmoud Alqam, the tractor driver, said that he had worked on the land for five years before the trees were mature enough to produce a viable crop. "Before there was a road this was completely impossible. Even before the land was reclaimed it was only good for grazing. The first five years are hard but then we can make a living. Last year we had our first harvest and this year should be better," he said.

Mahmoud is one of the farmers who work this plot of land which was reclaimed by UNDP and its local partners. The first step was the building

of two kilometre road which allowed access to the valleys which had previously been used for grazing goats and sheep. Next the land was cleared of rocks and vegetation and then the slope was "terraced" divided into horizontal strips held up by retaining walls. The terracing prevents soil erosion and prevents water from seeping to the bottom of the valley.

In addition, twelve cisterns were built to harvest rain water to irrigate the crops at the height of summer. The Hebron area receives around 650 millimetres of rain per year so fruit trees can grow from ground water alone for almost all of the year.

The plot is owned by 26 families, consisting of 180 people. Each family nominated one member to manage the family plot for 11 years after which they will decide who will take on the work.

The work was funded by a grant of \$150,000 from the government of Japan and \$50,000 from

the landowners. On average, reclamation costs \$900 per dunam, way beyond the means of the residents of Beit Umar.

Good land management can enhance an important sector in the Palestinian economy. It can provide jobs and improve livelihoods for those that work on the land and earn money for the larger economy through efficient use of resources and export. The process of reclaiming land also provides work and incomes from those most in need.

UNDP in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Italian Co-operation Agency and the Land Research Centre, recently completed an aerial study of the agricultural land in the West Bank. The main goal of the study is to assist Palestinian policy makers and practitioners by giving them additional knowledge on how land is being used and the opportunities for expansion and growth.

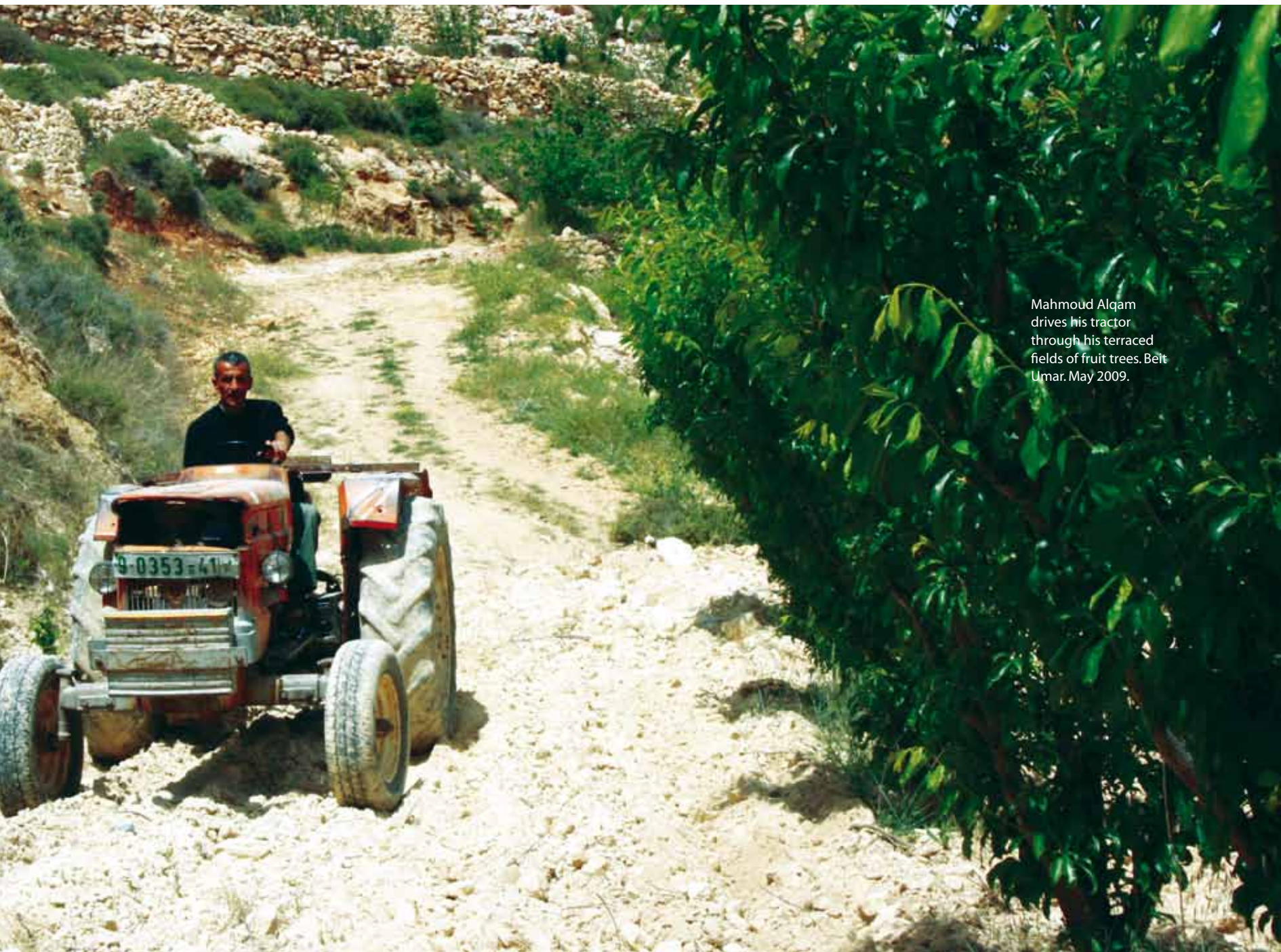
The view from the air, combined with the study of other indicators, demonstrates that Palestinian agriculture and land use has a major potential for growth. The estimates that around 1.6 million dunams are either under used or not used at all. With proper investment, this land could become a major source of economic growth either through increased agricultural productivity, tourism or environmental preservation.

Although agriculture is one of the oldest forms of human economic activity it is constantly changing as new challenges arise. Population growth, limited access to water and climate change are some of the challenges facing farmers all over the world.



Terraced fields near Beit Umar. May 2009





Mahmoud Alqam
drives his tractor
through his terraced
fields of fruit trees. Belt
Umar. May 2009.

From New York to Jerusalem: The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People since 1978

On December 20, 1978, the 90th plenary meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations called upon UNDP to intensify its efforts to improve the social and economic condition of the Palestinian people.

"In consultation with the specialized agencies and other organizations within the UN system," UNDP was tasked to improve

Palestinian conditions, "by establishing concrete projects to that end, and to provide adequate funds for that purpose."

Thus began UNDP's 30-year engagement with the Palestinian people which has seen more than \$750 million invested in the occupied Palestinian territory. Major donors include Japan, Germany, the Islamic Development



Palestinian dancers at the Ramallah Cultural Palace shortly after its opening in 2004.

Bank, Italy, the United States, Norway and Sweden.

Initially the Programme was based in New York. The then-administrator, Bradford Morse, took direct charge of initiatives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which removed layers of bureaucracy, allowing operational and managerial flexibility for his successors as head of the Project of Assistance of

the Palestinian People.

UNDP decided that the Programme could go beyond the organisation's normal technical assistance and build much needed infrastructure such as closing open sewers in refugee camps and connecting households to water.

It was also decided that the Programme should be largely self-financing



Prospective buyers survey Gazan art at UNDP's annual art auction in Jerusalem. December 2009.



The renovation of the old city of Hebron. Completed in 2008.



Gaza City's fish market

because at the time, it was unclear how durable it would be. The 1980s saw modest expansion which saw a solidifying of relations with the Israeli Civil Administration and Palestinian civil society and by the time of the first Intifada in 1987 UNDP had opened offices in East Jerusalem and Gaza.

By 1993, the time of the Oslo Accords, the Programme had 45 staff

and a budget of \$15 million provided by UNDP, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and the USA.

Everything changed with the arrival of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.

Resources and staff tripled between 1993 and 1994.

Since 1978 UNDP has built 355 educational facilities, from playgrounds to colleges, 236 community and sports centres, 340

roads and paved areas and 35 health facilities. We have also undertaken 270 environmental projects, from water networks to solar energy, 36 agricultural projects from disease control to land reclamation, 58 rehabilitation and construction projects, reviving old communities and building new ones, 110 capacity building



Representatives of the Israeli Shas political party meeting United Nations Treaty Supervision officers near the Lebanese border as part of a UNDP peace-building initiative.

and institutional support projects and 22 employment generation schemes.

All these projects have generated employment and pumped money into the Palestinian



United Nations volunteers teach music in Ramallah.

economy. They have provided modern facilities were previously none existed and supported communities in their efforts to help themselves.

A photograph showing two women in a fig orchard. The woman on the right, wearing a white headscarf and a black and white patterned dress, is reaching up to pick a green fig from a branch. She is holding a clear plastic bag filled with harvested figs. The woman on the left, wearing a red headscarf and a black dress with a red and gold patterned vest, is holding a small yellow bowl and looking towards the camera. The background is filled with the bare branches of fig trees and some green leaves, with a few figs hanging from the branches.

Participants in the
Global Environment
Facility fruit and herb
drying and marketing
project in Tel, near
Nablus, December
2009.



Environment

“Today, World Environment Day, is a reminder to us all to treat our planet better and lighten our carbon footprint. Climate change is a threat to everyone. But without action, the brunt of the impact would be felt by poor and vulnerable people in developing countries. With little capacity to cope, many more would become malnourished and in some circumstances struggle to find water, and even be displaced. This highlights just how intertwined the tasks of addressing climate change, reducing global poverty, and reaching the Millennium Development Goals are.”

Statement by Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP on the Occasion of World Environment Day , 5 June 2009

Improving the environment has always been a central part of UNDP's work in the occupied Palestinian territory. Since 1979, more than one-third of UNDP's resources have been invested in environmental projects. This has resulted in more than 270 projects ranging from water networks to sewage treatment plants.

The aim of UNDP in the occupied Palestinian territory has been to give Palestinians as much control over their natural resources as possible in spite of the complications caused by the occupation, the division of the West Bank by the Oslo accords and Israel's continued blockade of the Gaza Strip.

UNDP's work in environment is guided by the Palestinian Authority's Reform and Development Plan and hopes to support the Millennium Development Goal of enhancing environmental sustainability. Improving access to water supply and sanitation, environmental protection and climate change adaptation remain key challenges.

Less than 10 per cent of running water in Gaza is safe to drink according to World Health Organisation standards and sewage pollutes large areas of land and coastline. This damages the environment and has the potential to cause health problems as well as further damaging the aquifer.

In the West Bank there are different problems with 13 per cent of the population without a connection to water mains in 220 communities. People rely on harvested and tankered

water which leaves them vulnerable to water-borne infections and holds back economic development. In Area C, the area under Israeli control, Palestinians are particularly affected by water shortages and drought.

UNDP has also contributed to improving the lives of around 500,000 residents of the West Bank by providing rubbish collection disposal equipment. In 2009, UNDP completed a pilot project in medical waste management in Ramallah, the first comprehensive attempt to introduce specialized medical waste management practices and training.

In the last four years UNDP has improved access to water in 20 communities in the West Bank by building water networks and rehabilitating wells. On average, water availability has been more than doubled rising from 30 litres per capita per day to 65 litres.

Work is currently underway to upgrade Hebron's water network which will increase the amount of water available to residents to more than 100 litres per day and reduce the price. Similar projects in Rafah and North Gaza have been suspended because of Israel's refusal to allow the import of building materials and equipment into Gaza.

In Gaza work was restarted on designing the Khan Yunis waste water treatment plant after it was suspended due to safety considerations. The creation of modern sewage plants in the Gaza Strip is vital to protect the environment and manage the aquifer





Children play by part of a sewage lagoon on the outskirts of Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip in October 2009.

which is under threat of collapse.

The plant will serve 300,000 people many of whom currently rely on cesspits and a misused storm water collection system. The result is that residential areas stink of sewage and flood in the winter. Water wells near Khan Yunis contain dangerous levels of nitrates.

The dangers in Gaza were further highlighted by an environmental report produced by the United Nations Environment Programme, with UNDP support, which called for drastic action to save the water aquifer in the Gaza Strip from irreparable damage. Measures recommended include the construction of a large desalination plant and a series of modern sewage treatment plants.

In 2009, UNDP, in conjunction with the Palestinian Authority's Environmental Quality Authority produced the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the occupied Palestinian territory, which formed the basis of the presentation of Salam Fayad, the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference which started on December 7, 2009.

UNDP also administers the Global Environment Facility's Small Grant Programme, distributing funds for environmental projects such as solar power, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Turning the Taps on: New Water Networks in the West Bank



Nader Kashua cuts stone in Allar near Tulkarem. An operation made possible by the construction of a water network by UNDP which was funded by Japan. December 2009.

Rising nineteen metres above the ground, Allar's new water tower has changed the skyline of the West Bank village in much the same way as it has transformed the lives of its 6,500 villagers.

From the top, it is possible to see a new sports ground, new workshops and farm buildings and hundreds of young trees.

All the new development would have been impossible without the construction of a water network by UNDP with funds from the Government of Japan.

When Allar and the neighbouring village of Saida had no access to water, the residents spent a large part of their time and money on collecting water. This left limited time and resources for other investment.

The villages are on hilltops, far from the wells in the valley below. Residents harvested rain water and relied on water efficient crops such as olive and fruit trees.

However access to a water network has reduced the price of water by 70 per cent and opened up previously impossible business opportunities.

Sufian Shadid, the mayor of Allar, said, "Every day we had to get water, either ourselves or wait for the tanker to arrive. Now we just turn on the tap. We all save money and now we have access to as much water as we need to lead normal lives and run businesses."

The municipal council of Allar has employed ten extra people to run the finance and maintenance of the water network and it has also made \$250,000 profit which it has invested in local services.

Mr Shadid said that the chlorinated water was much healthier for residents than harvested or tankered water. As a result, he said, stomach and skin infections among villagers have reduced dramatically.

Allar was connected to the electricity network in 1989. Its economy is based on work in Israel, farming, public services and remittances from expatriate workers.

According to the mayor, the village has used 600,000 cubic metres of water since it began using mains water. Previously that would have cost 6 million shekels but now it costs the village 1.8 million shekels, leaving the remainder for other investment.

The village now has an olive press, a new turkey farm, a new chicken farm and stone cutting workshops, thanks to the availability of water and investment.

Nader Kashua, 45, a stone cutter, said, "I used to travel for 40 minutes to get to work. Now everything is cheaper. I don't need to travel so I have more time to work and the water is much cheaper. As my prices are lower, I have more customers."

The project was started in 2006 and cost \$1.8 million. It required a mainline to the well in the valley and then pumping stations to raise the water 331 metres to the water tower from where it is distributed to Allar's 6,500 residents and the 3,500 residents of the neighbouring village of Saida.

Karni Shadid, 25, a construction worker who helped build the network, said that the villagers can barely remember how they managed without running water. "We cannot imagine how it was before. There is something new every day. We can grow more and better fruit and we don't need to stop washing when the water runs out."

Mr Shadid said that the next project he hopes to work on with UNDP is connecting his village to a sewage network. UNDP is currently working, also with Japanese funding, on a sewage mainline designed to connect Palestinian villages in the west of the West Bank to sewage treatment plants in Israel.

Preserving an Income: Solar Ovens to Help Farmers

It is around noon and Fatheya el Braim is taking dozens of cookies from a clay oven in her back yard.

The cookies are coated in sesame seed with dates inside. They have been baked in an oven fired by garden waste.

Fatheya has a husband and 17 children to feed. The family has no other income so Fatheya has to provide everything from the plot of land that surrounds her house.

Most of what Fatheya produces is consumed by the family but she also sells dried herbs and fruits to earn cash for clothes and other essentials.

In 2004, Fatheya received a solar oven from the United Nations Development Programme, which allowed her to double her income and gave her extra time to look after her family in other ways.

Fatheya's husband worked for 30 years as a labourer in Israel before his permit was revoked. His earnings paid for the family home, a plot of land and the maintenance of a large family. When he could no longer work, there were no savings to provide for a new business.

Fatheya, now 46, became the main breadwinner for the family, growing food, rearing animals and baking bread in the family home at Khuza'a, between Khan Yunis and Gaza's border with Israel.

The solar oven allows Fatheya to dry far more products, more quickly and to a higher quality, at a lower cost. Gaza may be sunny and hot but it is also humid which makes drying more difficult. The solar oven maintains heat even at night.

"I cut the za'atar from my backyard, wash it and dry it and I go sell it in the market – many people buy my za'atar. I use the drier to dry it and I grind it and prepare it for selling it in the market. I have sheep and I sell its milk," she said.

"I also grow rosemary and lemon grass for making tea and for relieving stomach pains, and I also sell some of it."

Fatheya was selected by Beit Mustaqbel, the house of the future, a Khan Yunis-based non-governmental organization which aims

to empower women by training them in techniques which enhance their business, save time and earn them more money.

Around 75 women use 15 solar ovens funded by the Global Environment Facility.


The solar oven maintains a steady temperature of around 60 degrees centigrade and keeps moisture out. Fatheya can dry ten racks of herbs or fruits in three days without constant attention.

With her spare time and money, Fatheya has built a greenhouse with plastic sheeting in which she grows vegetable and herb plants for sale to neighbours and at the market.

"We live from that. It is a lot of work. You know I have 17 children and my husband doesn't work. It has been more than 6 years since he stopped working in Israel," she said.



Fatheya el Braim and the products of her solar-powered drying oven. July 2009.



People waiting in
Nablus Courthouse.
April 2010



Governance

“The Palestinian National Authority aspires to establish a system of democratic governance characterized by respect for the rule of law and separation of powers, capable of protecting and managing natural resources and delivering public services efficiently, effectively and responsively, and supported by a modern and stable legal framework, a robust legislative process and accountable, honest and transparent institutions which protect the rights of all citizens.”

Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008-2010

Voting, peaceful protest, taxation, and delivery of basic social services are just a few of the disparate elements that constitute governance, or the interaction between governments and citizens.

UNDP's work in governance is guided by the principle that "good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained economic

growth, sustainable development and human development". In practice, that means ensuring that people have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, that state institutions like the judiciary and police force are capable of responding to people's needs and that international standards on anti-corruption, human rights and

gender equality are met at the national level.

In the occupied Palestinian territory, UNDP provides support to all three branches of Palestinian government; executive, judicial and legislative as well as local government and civil society.

Internationally, and in the occupied



Tony Blair, the Representative of the Quartet tours the West Bank. UNDP provides operational support to the Office of the Quartet Representative.

Palestinian territory, demand for UNDP's democratic governance expertise has shifted over the years from a focus on election assistance to include support for areas such as public administration reform, anti-corruption and transparency initiatives, access to justice and rule of law, civic engagement and inclusive participation, local governance and , decentralization.

For example, UNDP is working to develop the capacities of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labour, and several other ministries as well and has created a leadership training programme for senior civil servants. The purpose of these initiatives is to support the development of the institutional, organizational, and human capacities needed to execute core public management functions required to sustain the building of national public services, within an environment of open, structured, reliable and accountable government.

Another aspect of building capacity is the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals, a programme which seeks to encourage Palestinians working abroad to return home to share their knowledge. There are currently ten people working in the Palestinian territory under this programme.

This year, UNDP has supported local government by creating an enabling environment for re-assigning the administration of property tax from the Ministry of Finance to

local authorities. The Support to Local Property Tax Reform project has examined ways to modernise property taxation to increase revenue for local government to help them provide better services for their constituents.

To further improve local government, UNDP led the Jenin Master Plan to promote better interaction between different levels of government, civil society organisations and citizens. The aim was to create a model of how the different roles of stakeholders could be understood and carried out in an open democratic way in order to improve the effectiveness of local government in Jenin and elsewhere in the Palestinian territory.

UNDP has also worked to improve citizen's access to justice by improving the legal and institutional infrastructure under the Palestinian Authority. Projects have included building courts, introducing computerised record keeping and building the capacities of the High Judicial Council and the Attorney General's Office.

Service provision is not the monopoly of government and civil society organisations such as youth groups, women's centres and professional association play a vital role in Gaza and the West Bank in protecting human rights and responding to the needs of citizens. The Emergency Support to Civil Society Organizations project aims to help these groups improve their



Children playing at the Atfaluna School for the Deaf in Gaza City, supported by UNDP as part of its support for civil society organisations. October 2009.

capacity to serve their communities. One example was the provision of 181 hearing aids to the Atfaluna Society for the Deaf in Gaza City which was funded by the United Arab Emirates.

While UNDP works extensively with the Palestinian Authority, we recognise that progress in governance will not solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in itself. UNDP provides operational support to the Office of the Representative of the Quartet and promotes a range of peacebuilding projects. These projects facilitate Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and dialogue between different sectors within Palestinian society and Israeli society.

Room to Judge: A New Courthouse for Jenin

Attending court in Jenin used to be a struggle. Crowds thronged in the hallways of the former apartment that served as the courthouse and the constant noise made concentration difficult.

Judge Mahmoud Shafir Jamous said the opening of Jenin's new courthouse in January 2009, had transformed the administration of justice in the city.

"Before, the staff could not hear themselves think. The judges could hear each other speaking in the next courtroom. Because there was no separation between the public, judges and suspects, there was the potential for trouble," he said.

The court cost \$1.4 million and was built by UNDP on behalf of the Government of Japan. The United States Agency for International Development also contributed to the furnishing of the court.

The court consists of two stories and four courtrooms. The public enter the building via a spacious marble lobby under a glass dome. Judges and suspects enter through separate entrances at the rear of the building. The building also includes offices for the payment of fines and public information.

"There is space and peace for everyone to do their work. Everyone has their own computer. It's a much more productive atmosphere," said Judge Jamous, "Before there was no privacy for work. Now, the public have access to the public

areas and not the private offices. Everyone is searched before entering, so it's a more secure environment."

The construction of Jenin courthouse is part of a series of measures to improve the Palestinian legal system supported by UNDP. Courthouses have been built in Nablus and Khan Yunis, also with the support of the Government of Japan.

UNDP has worked with the Palestinian Authority to improve the rule of law, as a major part of its work in supporting governance reform. In addition to building courthouses, UNDP seeks to improve the skills of staff and introduce modern technology into Palestinian legal proceedings.

UNDP has completed a project to automate the keeping of court records and build staff capacity in the West Bank. As a result proceedings are now typed simultaneously and minutes are produced at the close of the hearing. All proceedings are archived in a database where they can be searched from other offices.

Judge Jamous said that the new building and new ways of working had improved efficiency and increased respect for the law in Jenin.

"Before, people resorted to elders and gangs to sort out their problems. Since the improvement of the security situation, people are now coming to the court to solve their problems and conflicts," he said, "There has never been greater access to justice in Jenin."



Judge Mahmoud Jamous in his new office in Jenin court. April 2009.

Bringing it Back Home:

Tapping the Resources of the Palestinian Diaspora

*Palestinian expatriates have a lot to offer the building of a state, according to **Sam Bahour***

The website of the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme starts with the sentence, “Be part of the development of the occupied Palestinian territory.” This is an understatement. When someone joins TOKTEN, they immediately become part of much more than the development process. They become part of an entire society—their society. The opportunity for Palestinian professionals from around the world to re-connect with their homeland is not merely a professional assignment, but a platform which lends itself to the creation of a new reality in Palestinian development and within Palestinian professionals.

As a TOKTEN consultant, I had the good fortune of being assigned to support Palestine’s sovereign wealth fund, the Palestine Investment Fund, at a time when it was being restructured to be the catalyst in preparation for a future state economy.

The TOKTEN programme proved to be instrumental in facilitating my professional engagement, as well as dozens of others across governmental agencies and civil

society. TOKTEN upholds the UNDP’s mission of supporting “economic and social development of the Palestinian people.” This recognition of assisting on the economic front as well as the social front sets UNDP, and the TOKTEN programme, apart from many other players in the donor environment. It is this mix that views the Palestinian people as a whole and comprehensive people.

As more and more Palestinian expatriate experts living abroad take advantage of the TOKTEN programme to work in the occupied Palestinian territory, Palestine is becoming whole once again—one person at a time—while benefiting from the expertise and skill sets within our Diaspora community across the globe. It is these individual TOKTEN experts that have a vested interest in building a future Palestine that is free from military occupation, foreign dominance, and poor governance that allows them to excel when embedded within Palestinian organizations. Each TOKTEN expert brings, not only their diverse knowledge and skills, but a set of values, that when meshed with the existing work environment, create a dynamic which lends to upgrading our collective efforts to be more effective and more sustainable.

Palestine’s reality is a bitter one. There are no false expectations that a single programme



Sam Bahour

will bring about the ground shift required to move Palestinians to where they deserve to be – independent and free. However, it has become abundantly clear that the key to creating a new reality lies in the ability for Palestinians to tap their human resources—all of their human resources—inside Palestine and out.

We are a people that are nearly 10 million strong. We must spare no effort to get everyone involved in building for a new and dignified future. The TOKTEN programme is part of the foundation that contributes to this future.

Training for Government: The Civil Service Leadership Programme

Groups of students huddle around a large piece of paper. The papers are adorned with bright colours and complex diagrams. One teacher praises the students for their hard work. Then another walks around the room and tears up the students' work.

The students are amazed and upset but this was the point of this part of UNDP's Civil Service Leadership Development Programme. The game is used as a starting point to understand crises as part of the conflict management section of the training.

The teacher from Birzeit University's Centre for Continuing Education goes on to demonstrate how interventions can lead to good relations between staff or escalate tensions.

The Civil Service Leadership Development Programme is funded by the Government of Italy and implemented by UNDP; the programme aims to train 1,200 senior civil servants in 10 general areas which also include legal awareness and strategic planning. The training is carried out partly on-line and partly in the class room.

The Palestinian civil service has 80,000 staff and 6,000 senior managers. The Programme is the first step in establishing a common training programme. It started delivering training in February 2009 and will finish in 2011 when the courses will be continued by the Palestinian Authority directly.

Hanadi Abu Bakr, 35, is the head of recruitment at the General Personnel Council which

oversees the recruitment of all Palestinian Authority civil servants and has just undergone training which takes one day per week for 14 weeks.

She said that in the past there was no standard civil service training and what was offered by individual ministries varied in quality. "There was no quality control. Here we are constantly being asked to assess the quality of the training. I like these courses because they contain theory and practice and are rooted in the Palestinian context," she said.

Mrs Abu Bakr said her favourite courses were communication skills and human resource management. "In communication skills I learnt how to deal better with colleagues, from supervisors to ministers and different audiences such as the general public. It gave me a lot more confidence. Human resource management is central to my work and I learnt many new interview strategies which have been very useful," she said.

The Programme is managed by Maha Abusamra who says she monitors the courses constantly. "In the training centre, I have a book for all the trainees to make criticisms, comments, feedback or recommendations. I look at it each evening and reply to each



Hanadi Abu Bakr, a graduate of UNDP's civil service leadership programme, funded by Italy.

point the next day. It's vital that the training responds to the needs of the civil servants," she said.

Fadwa Sha'ar, 47, has also just completed the Leadership Development Programme. She has had several jobs with the PA and is now a director-general in the Ministry of the Interior in Ramallah, dealing with international non-governmental agencies.

She said the training helped her organize some of the knowledge she had built up in her career and gave her new insights in other areas. "I learnt many new things. The legal awareness course gave me extra power in dealing with the ministry's lawyers. The training focused on the most important aspect without getting lost in details," she said.

Mrs Sha'ar added that improving civil service training would help "to build a strong, independent civil service."

Lines of Communication: Building Peace

Before peacemaking can take place, it can take years of peace building to bring warring parties to negotiations.

If there was a sense of optimism that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be solved in the 1990s, that has been replaced by pessimism and an entrenchment of positions.

Regular negotiations between Hamas and Fateh have yet to produce any rapprochement, adding to the collective political chaos.

When divisions are deepest, international organizations, with their perceived neutrality and credibility can offer discreet fora for rapprochement.

UNDP in conjunction with groups such as the Carter Centre and Interpeace, has created channels of communication and organized meetings between different Israeli and Palestinian parties to help kick-start a process of dialogue.

Inevitably, there are many subjects that are difficult to broach, but the focus of UNDP, the Carter Centre and Interpeace is to find areas of agreement which can help build confidence and pave the way for further discussion.

One major initiative that has been happening in 2009 in the West Bank and Gaza is "Building Consensus on Electoral Issues" which is organized by UNDP, the Carter Centre and the Arab Thought Forum.

With the aim of discussing electoral issues, UNDP and its partners have brought together all Palestinian parties, even those who have engaged in confrontation and helped them establish relationships and build confidence in the only forum of its kind in the occupied Palestinian territory. The agreements made have been shared with the Palestinian Electoral Commission and helped reduce differences between Hamas and Fateh in the Palestinian negotiations in Cairo.

UNDP has also worked with Interpeace in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. Interpeace in the Palestinian

territory has established 15 community groups to diffuse tension between different factions to reduce political polarization and facilitate local agreements.

In Israel, Interpeace has worked to raise awareness of the Palestinian issue among groups outside of the traditional "peace" movement. These groups include, former settlers from the Gaza Strip, the religious right and army officers. Interpeace has also worked to diffuse tension between Arab citizens of Israel and other Israelis by promoting dialogue about the future position of Arab citizens in the State of Israel.

Jimmy Carter and the participants of a joint UNDP and Carter Centre peace building initiative in Jerusalem. March 2009





Children playing in Wadi
Gaza, October 2009