



PRESS RELEASE

JERICHO MUNICIPALITY LAUNCHES NEW YOUTH FACILITY

As a part of continuing efforts to overcome record levels of unemployment, the Municipality of Jericho has undertaken the construction of a "Kids Club" which has been supported by the Government of Japan through UNDP/PAPP's overall employment generation efforts throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. These efforts, which have been financed in part by the Government of Japan, have resulted in thousands of employment opportunities. The Jericho "Kids Club" is a part of a \$4.2 million contribution from the Government of Japan to UNDP/PAPP, which has been earmarked to create jobs for unemployed municipal and agricultural workers throughout the West Banks and Gaza.

Employment opportunities at the Jericho "Kids Club" generated through UNDP/PAPP included the construction of an additional floor for expanded activities, the construction of retaining walls to protect the facility from water runoff from the Wadi Al-Qelt Valley and the creation of a garden around the building. Through its bilateral activities, the Government of Japan also generously contributed funds to purchase equipment for the Club, and two additional floors were constructed by the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom. In addition, a substantial financial contribution to the "Kids Club" was provided by the Municipality of Jericho.

The "Kids Club" will be a multi-functional activity centre for the youth of Jericho with activities centred on the arts, emphasizing painting and traditional dance, a reference library, cultural heritage and training in information technology.

In inaugurating the new facility at a ceremony on 12 March 2003, Jericho Mayor Abdel-Karim Sidre noted that "this beautiful facility, in addition to creating jobs, also represents valuable partnerships that have been developed by the Municipality of Jericho with Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, and UNDP/PAPP, working together, to build a brighter future for the young women and men of Jericho."

Participants at the inauguration ceremony for the "Kids Club", in addition to Mayor Sidre, also included Mr. Sa'eb 'Erekat, Minister of Local Government, Mr. Takeshi Okubo, Head of the Representative Office of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, representatives of the British and Norwegian Governments, and Mr. Timothy Rothermel, Special Representative of UNDP/PAPP.

For more information, please contact Ehab Shanti or Dania Darwish in Jerusalem at 972-2-6268229 or by email at ehab.shanti@undp.org .



