

## United Nations Development Programme

Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي / برنامج مساعدة الشعب الفلسطيني



## PRESS RELEASE

### Italian Cooperation, the Ministry of Education and UNDP/PAPP Launch

### New Phase of the Support to the Palestinian Education Programme (SPEP)

**Jerusalem, November 21, 2005** — His Excellency Dr. Saeb Erakat, Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member for Jericho; Mr. Nicola Manduzio, Italian Consul-General; Mr. Antonio Aloï, Head of the Italian Cooperation; and Mr. Timothy Rothermel, UNDP Special Representative, will today take part in a groundbreaking ceremony in Jericho at the Terra Santa School at 12 noon. Mr. Basri Saleh, the Director General for International and Public Relations and Mr. Fawwaz Mujahed, the Director General of Buildings and Projects, will represent the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE).

Italian Cooperation have pledged US\$7 million to UNDP/PAPP's Support to the Palestinian Education Programme (SPEP), which will go towards a range of different activities and projects in support of the Palestinian education system, aimed at promoting increased enrolment and providing quality education to Palestinians students. SPEP is currently funded by several donors including the governments of Canada, Japan and Luxembourg, as well as the Islamic Development Fund and the Saudi Fund. Current projects total around US\$16 million.

With over 1/3 of the Palestinian population enrolled in either schools or universities, SPEP is regarded as an important partner in the development of the Palestinian education system.

This phase of the programme aims to provide expanded capacity that will cater for 1,880 students in the West Bank through the construction of 4 new schools and the expansion of 3 existing schools with 17 additional classrooms. The 4 new schools will be located in Jericho, Ramallah, Qabatia and Qalqilya and include single-sex and coeducational schools.

In addition, SPEP will also provide educational material and equipment to 190 existing schools throughout the West Bank and Gaza. This will include science and computer lab equipment and books, as well as the provision of technical assistance through cooperation between Bologna University and a local Palestinian university.

“Through the generous support of Italian Cooperation, many more young Palestinians will be able to benefit from greater access to quality education,” said Mr. Rothermel. “This investment in the Palestinian education system will arm young people with greater skills and knowledge to prepare them for their future.”

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