



Press Release

Stone laying at Terra Santa School in Jericho

Funded by the Government of Italy and Implemented by UNDP/PAPP

Jericho, October 05th, 2009 – Today marked an important step forward for children in the Terra Santa School as they celebrated the cornerstone laying ceremony for a multipurpose hall in the Jericho district. The project implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education by UNDP/PAPP, with a budget of US\$454,612, is part of the Government of Italy's support to the development of the education sector in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Among the guests of the official ceremony were Mr. Luciano Pezzotti, Consul General of Italy, Mr. Kamel Hamed, Governor of Jericho, Mr. Hasan Saleh, Mayor of Jericho, Dr. Saeb Erikat, Head of the Negotiations Affairs Department, and Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator.

This phase of the project aims to provide expanded capacity that will cater for approximately 460 students. It will include the construction of a new 530 m² multi purpose hall and internal finishing works at the kindergarten. The project will provide classrooms, and facilities in needy areas and a fully operational kindergarten, which will be built according to high quality construction criteria and will provide high quality care services to the children.

"Children are the future. Investment in children is crucial. We hope that the children educated here will return that investment with interest, by further developing this region", Mr Luciano Pezzotti, Italian Consul General in Jerusalem said. "Education provides long term basis for both, economic growth and human development. Furthermore, – he concluded - children are entitled to have a quality education. And that is exactly what we'd provide to Palestinian young students under this Programme".

"The kindergarten is the latest product of a fine partnership which has made a large contribution to education in the West Bank" said Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, Special Representative of UNDP. "This partnership of the government of Italy, the Palestinian Authority and UNDP has led to the creation of six schools and the extension of ten others" he added.

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. The US\$7 million SPEP programme includes the construction of schools, rehabilitation works, providing 200 schools with the needed equipment, in addition to technical assistance to the MOEHE and 24 schools. As a whole, SPEP promotes a developmental approach focusing on the school as the main player for self-improvement.

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