



Press Release

Farmers to receive compensation for damaged agricultural property in Gaza US\$ 270 million to the agricultural sector to provide direct compensation, business development services and rehabilitation of infrastructure

Jerusalem, 26 February 2009 – Close to fourteen thousand farmers will benefit from the initial phase of the agreement signed today between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and UNDP, which provides a total contribution of US\$ 270 million to fund compensations for damaged agricultural property in Gaza. With its initial phase, totalling US\$ 109 million, the project aims at compensating farmers in the Gaza Strip for their direct losses as a result of the 22 days of military operations which targeted Gaza most recently.

The project will cover all major sectors of agricultural production including: the cultivation sector (fruit orchards, open field vegetables and crops and Green Houses); the animal sector (livestock, poultry, fisheries and beehives); supporting services (agricultural equipment, marketing and storage facilities) and infrastructures (irrigation and agricultural roads).

To account for variations between the sectors in terms of size; property ownership; production processes; and impact of compensation on sustainability, the initiative includes three compensation schemes: 1) Cash grants to compensate farmers for the loss of productive assets; 2) Projects to rehabilitate damaged infrastructures; and 3) Activities to strengthen farmers' business capacities and to enhance their management of natural resources.

Implementation will depend on a unified database that will inventory all agricultural losses based on rapid needs and damages assessments conducted by relevant UN agencies, private sector institutions and civil society organizations. The household level assessments will start next week and will be completed in two months. Upon completion of individual damage appraisals by sector experts and under the supervision and guidance of a Steering Committee comprising representatives of the PA, relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations, UNDP will then disburse compensations over a period of 9 months, The capacity strengthening component will commence in a few weeks and will extend over a period of two years.

"The agricultural sector is a pivotal sector to the Gazan economy. It employs 11% of Gaza's labour force and represents the cornerstone in providing food security for the families of Gaza," commented UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, Jens Toyberg-Frandzen. "Rehabilitating this vital sector is critical in assisting Gaza's recovery," he added.



The agricultural sector has sustained major damages as a result of military operations according to initial damage assessments. More than 33,000 dunums of fruit orchards, 14,000 dunums of vegetable farms and 14,500 dunums of field crops have been razed and access continues to be denied to arable lands in the Buffer Zone comprising 30% of all arable land in Gaza. Over 35,000 heads of cattle, sheep and goats were killed and the poultry and fisheries sectors sustained losses in the order of 1 million. Additionally, close to 14,000 dunums of irrigation networks and pipelines have been destroyed.

This is the second agreement that UNDP has signed with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of supporting Early Recovery in Gaza. The first agreement focused on providing urgent cash assistance to 10,000 non-refugee families in Gaza to enable them to deal with damages to their homes.

For further information, please contact:

In Jerusalem: Dania Darwish, Communications Officer, Tel. +972-2-6268229 – e-mail: dania.darwish@undp.org. In New York: Sausan Ghosheh Communication's officer, Tel. +1 (212) 906-5382 – e-mail: sausan.ghosheh@undp.org. For more information on UNDP/PAPP see <http://www.undp.ps>.

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.