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Press Release

Under the Auspices of H.E. Prime Minister Al Hamdallah

The Ministry of Local Government, Italy and UNDP Celebrate Completion of projects in Area C

Jericho, 08 February 2017 – In the presence of the H.E. Prime Minister Rami Al Hamdallah, and representatives of various ministries, missions and organizations, the Government of Italy and UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People marked the completion of 14 infrastructure projects in support of communities and institutions located in Area C and East Jerusalem.

During the event, H.E. Dr. Al Hamdallah reiterated the importance of strengthening the resilience of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem and Area C as a national priority. He highlighted that the government's vision in essence is based on "the citizen first" and interventions are targeted towards providing services to all citizens, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem. "We launched the FAIR programme in partnership with UNDP and some European donors. Four years later, we were able to meet the needs of over 130,000 Palestinians, as part of our determination to support the resilience of the population and improve their living conditions," H.E. Al Hamdallah added.

The completed projects were funded by the Government of Italy for the amount of Euro 3 million and implemented through UNDP's Facilitating Access to Infrastructure Resilience in Area C and East Jerusalem programme (FAIR). With Italian financing, the programme was able to improve access of 90,000 people in the West Bank through public transportation infrastructure, provide better living conditions for 1,500 Palestinians through the rehabilitation of housing units in East Jerusalem, create 17,400 job opportunities for Palestinian labourers and provide a better learning environment to 200 students by utilizing an inclusive early childhood development facility.

The Consul General of Italy in Jerusalem, Fabio Sokolowicz, underlined the Italian commitment in Area C and East Jerusalem, including interventions in Nablus, Qalqilia, Ramallah Bethlehem, Hebron, Salfeet, Jenin, with prime focus on vital and productive sectors for Palestinian communities.

By the same token, Cristina Natoli, Representative of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Jerusalem, highlighted the importance of this partnership with the Palestinian Government and Italy in the provision of basic services. "*Those are vital projects for enhancing the livelihoods and resilience of the Palestinian population,*" she added.

H.E. Dr Hussein Al Araj, Minister of Local Government, acknowledged the important role international partners play and emphasized the importance of this programme in supporting Palestinian national plans in achieving local development in Area C and East Jerusalem.

The ceremony also included the signing of an agreement between UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People and the Mosaic Centre for the amount of USD 14,000 to reinforce cultural identity and social cohesion, through design and implementation of special



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workshops at the Mosaic Center in Jericho for gifted students from the beneficiaries and communities supported within the FAIR Programme.

UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, Roberto Valent highlighted that the partnership with the Palestinian Government and Italy provided basic services and economic empowerment for marginalized communities and improved their livelihoods. “Building the resilience of people is key to UNDP’s strategy and mandate. The population living in those marginalized communities are a cornerstone of Palestinian resilience and future potential development opportunities. I am pleased to see that these initiatives have put a smile on the faces of hundreds of Palestinian children and youth living in Area C and East Jerusalem,” he added.

The ceremony was held at the Mosaic Centre in Jericho and was attended by H.E. Prime Minister Rami Al Hamdallah; H.E. Dr Hussein Al Araj, Minister of Local Government; H.E. Sufian Sultan, Minister of Agriculture; H.E. Majed Al Fitiani, Governor of Jericho, Mr Adnan Husseini, Governor of Jerusalem; H.E. Dr Fabio Sokolowicz, Consul General of Italy; H.E. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa; Ms Cristina Natoli, Representative of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation; Mr Roberto Valent, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, and representatives from partner organizations and community members.

The FAIR programme is a multi-donor platform which aims to empower and strengthen national institutions to plan and deliver essential public and social Infrastructure in Area C and East Jerusalem through providing increased access to sustainable, equitable and affordable infrastructure. The Italian contribution will directly feed into a pool fund to support FAIR initiatives in East Jerusalem and Area C. The project is also supported by Norway, Bahrain and OFID, for projects worth over USD 13 million.

For further information, please contact:

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