



PRESS RELEASE UNDP Provides Legal Assistance for Vulnerable Groups in Gaza

Gaza, April 08, 2011 – The United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People launched the “Legal Aid and Empowerment for Vulnerable Groups” project in the Gaza Strip. The project is funded by the Government of Japan for the amount of USD756,276 and will be implemented during the period of eight months.

During the ceremony, eight cooperation agreements were signed under the project with Al-Azhar University, Palestinian Bar Association (PBA) and six civil society organizations across the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Abdel-Rahman Abu-Elnasser, Dean of Al-Azhar University law school, expressed his appreciation to UNDP/PAPP and the Government of Japan for supporting the University in enhancing clinical legal education and taking a step further in serving the vulnerable groups of the society. “The project will allow the students to deliver legal awareness sessions and provide legal advice services under the supervision of practicing lawyers,” he said.

The project aims to strengthen the rule of law and improve access to justice for vulnerable groups by setting up twelve legal aid clinics at Al-Azhar University, Women’s Union Programme Centers supported by Al-Azhar University; branches of the Palestinian Bar Association in Gaza and Khan Younis; and different civil society organizations across the Strip. In addition, the project will set up a Legal Aid Network that will bring together an array of different legal aid providers.

Mr. Salama Bssaiso, Vice-chairman of PBA, highlighted the active role the PBA will play in improving coordination and collaboration amongst legal aid providers by setting up a legal aid database and an effective referral system.

Recognizing the importance of the project to the people of Gaza, Mr. Sascha Graumann, head of UNDP/PAPP Gaza office stated “Our goal is to build the capacities of our civil society partners to be better equipped in providing sustainable legal services, including legal information, legal advice and legal representation, to vulnerable groups”.

It is worth noting that access to justice is one of the critical areas of need in the occupied Palestinian territory, and specifically in the Gaza Strip. The existence of different legal frameworks in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Israeli occupation have contributed to the challenges and complexities of the justice sector.

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