



Press Release

Bethlehem Municipality inaugurates Road Rehabilitation Works with support from the Government of Italy and UNDP

Bethlehem, May 26th, 2017– The Bethlehem Municipality, the Government of Italy and UNDP’s Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People inaugurate the Caritas Road at the northern entrance of Bethlehem City, under the Facilitating Access to Infrastructure Resilience in Area C and East Jerusalem (FAIR) programme, a multi-donor platform which aims to empower and strengthen national institutions to plan and deliver essential public and social services in Area C and East Jerusalem. The program is supported by Italy, Norway, Bahrain and OFID, for projects worth over USD 11 million.

The event took place in the presence of Ms. Vera Baboun, the exiting Mayor of Bethlehem, the Consul General of Italy, Mr. Fabio Sokolowicz, Ms. Cristina Natoli, Representative of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency Jerusalem Office, Mr. Shukri Radaydeh, Director General of Bethlehem Local Government Directorate, Mr. Roberto Valent, UNDP Special Representative and Mr. Jibreen Al Bakri, Governor of Bethlehem.

Started in September 2016, the rehabilitation and upgrading works of the main northern entrance of Bethlehem City - located in Area C with 10 m wide and 1 km length and worth USD 525,000 - will allow safer transport and efficient mobility of people and goods, and enhance the hospitality potential of the city through the support of the tourism sector, added Ms. Baboun.

The Consul General of Italy in Jerusalem, Fabio Sokolowicz, underscored the strength and the importance of the partnership between Palestine and Italy in the provision of basic services and improving the livelihoods and resilience of the Palestinian population, through the involvement of UNDP. He thanked Ms. Vera Baboun, for serving the city of Bethlehem with love and commitment, with the aim of empowering and strengthening the resilience of the Bethlehem population. He also congratulated the new elected Mayor - Anton Salman – confirming Italy’s readiness to continue the historical cooperation with the city and wishing him success in managing the Bethlehem Municipality in support of the Palestinian people.

UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, Roberto Valent, while thanking Ms. Baboun for the excellent partnership, highlighted that the FAIR Programme aims at empowering and strengthening national institutions to plan and deliver essential public and social Infrastructure in Area C and East Jerusalem; thus, providing increased access to sustainable, equitable and affordable infrastructure. “*UNDP is determined to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian population, with focus on creating jobs, improving livelihoods, and providing enabling infrastructure for enhanced service delivery,*” he added.

Finally, Cristina Natoli underlined that Italy has approved USD 3 million for national-driven initiatives addressing municipalities and Local Government Units’ priorities, notably roads, infrastructure, rehabilitation of housing units and development activities located in Area C and East Jerusalem, including interventions in Nablus, Qalqilia, Ramallah Bethlehem, Hebron, Salfeet, Jenin, with prime focus on vital and productive sectors such as health, education, housing, transportation, agriculture and energy.

