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Press Release

The Ministry of National Economy, Jericho Municipality, and UNDP Sign an Exchange of Letters for a Project Funded by the Government of Japan

Jericho, 08 February 2016 **–** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of National Economy, and Jericho Municipality signed an exchange of letters related to an on-going project, worth USD 320,000, with the Palestinian Ministry of National Economy and Jericho Municipality to improve access to the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP) in order to facilitate the movement of materials and products geared for export.

The contribution from the Government of Japan is part of the Rapid Support for Small Infrastructure in the West Bank in support of the High Impact Micro Infrastructure Initiative (HIMII) projects (RSSI-HIMII), the implementation of which has already started.

H.E. Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy highlighted that the JAIP project has so far provided nearly 600 jobs and is expected to create atleast 5,000 direct and indirect job opportunities after its completion. "The Palestinian Government is developing laws and incentives that will encourage investors in the State of Palestine and investing in Palestinian industrial zones will put investors in close proximity with clients across the Middle East, Europe and Africa" she added.

The project includes a 700-meter expansion and upgrading of the Mahmoud Darwish Road – Kitaf El Wad (USD 250,000) leading to the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP), in addition to the removal of high voltage power poles in the vicinity by the Jerusalem District Electricity Company (JDECO) and replacing them with underground connections (USD 70,000).

Mohammad Jalayta, Mayor of Jericho, emphasized that the JAIP will support the resilience of Palestinian farmers in the Jericho Governorate and Jordan valley, and provide job opportunities for young graduates.

"Japan is committed to develop JAIP which is considered a pillar project for the Japanese "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative," said H.E. Takeshi Okubo Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and the Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority. "The Government of Japan has provided approximately USD 95 million for the implementation of various JAIP-related infrastructure projects including USD 20 million directly funded for the development of this industrial park" he added.

The project builds upon the Government of Japan's long and historical assistance to the Palestinian People in various sectors. To date, the Government of Japan has invested over USD 14.8 million worth of assistance in JAIP through UNDP. The Jericho Agro-industrial Park, once completed, is expected to transform the Jordan Valley into a thriving area with a strong private sector and economic and social importance.

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"The Government of Japan is a true strategic partner for the future," said Narjess Saidane, UNDP Deputy Special Representative. "We consider this partnership with Japan and Palestinian institutions as a long-term investment in Palestinian development, with a sustainable economic and social impact on people's livelihoods," she added.

The signing ceremony was held on Monday 08 February 2016 at the JAIP Administration Building in the presence of Dr Saeb Erekat, Secretary General of PLO, H.E. Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy and Chairman of PIEFZA, Mohammad Jalayta, Mayor of Jericho, H.E. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, Dr Ali Shaath, Director General of PIEFZA and Narjess Saidane, UNDP Deputy Special Representative of the Administrator.

It is worth noting that the Government of Japan is considered one of UNDP/PAPP's largest partners and over the years has provided more than USD 420 million for project implementation in the areas of infrastructure, rubble removal, health, education, agriculture, access to justice, and others.

For further information, please contact:

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For more information on UNDP/PAPP see http://www.ps.undp.org.

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