# Prime Minister Al Hamdallah, Government of Japan, Palestinian Water Authority and UNDP celebrate the closing of the cross boundary wastewater management project in the West Bank

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Prime Minister and Japan Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs revealing the project plaque

***Jerusalem, 11 April 2016*** – Under the auspices of H.E. Prime Minister Rami Al Hamdallah, the Government of Japan, in partnership with the Palestinian Water Authority and the United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People celebrated the closure of the USD 5.8 million cross boundary wastewater management project in the occupied Palestinian territory.

H.E Prime Minister Rami Al Hamdallah highlighted “This development project, through UNDP and the Palestinian Water Authority, was a gateway for the construction of sewage networks in the municipalities of Baqa al-Sharqiya, Habla and Barta'a, serving more than 90% of their population and directly benefited more than twenty thousand people".

Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority said:”Since the beginning of Japan’s official aid contribution to Palestine, our main focus has been to meet the real needs of the Palestinian local community. Japan is committed to supporting the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza with the focus on improving the standard of living in all fields at the juncture.”

The project, which builds upon the original agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian Authorities to promote cross boundary management of wastewater, aims to contribute to peace building between Palestinian and Israeli Authorities through the joint management of wastewater in order to safeguard the shared environment and protect water resources. The collected wastewater will be treated inside Israel according to a common agreement between both sides.

“The Palestinian Water Authority will continue to support the provision of water and sanitation services to meet the needs of the Palestinian population. We are moving ahead with our strategy in protecting water resources and identifying priority areas of intervention with the support of local communities and partners,” said H.E. Mazen Ghuneim, Head of the Palestinian Water Authority.

The project, which included the construction of three wastewater collection systems in the Jenin, Tulkarem and Qalqylia Governorates, enhanced the quality of life and improved the wellbeing of over 16,500 Palestinians, who will for the first time have an efficient wastewater collection system connected to their homes.

“International water law calls for all trans-boundary freshwater resources to be shared equitably and reasonably. Therefore, effective and inclusive water cooperation is essential to achieve sustainable development, and vital for life and food security,” said Roberto Valent, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator. “We have been able, through this project, to develop a protocol framework for wastewater regional cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli relative authorities to control pollution and ensure that residents have adequate livelihoods and attainable standards of health,” he added.

In addition, the project developed the capacities of service providers and the Palestinian Water Authority on waste management issues. Joint public awareness activities were also conducted, targeting Palestinian and Israeli youth, to create dialogue, trust and better communication in the affected communities.

The closing ceremony was held on Monday 11 April 2016 at the Baqa Al-Sharqiya Municipality, in Tulkarem. The ceremony was attended by H.E. H.E. Prime Minister Rami Al Hamdallah, H. E. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador of Japan; H. E. Mazen Ghunaim, Palestinian Water Authority; Mr Isam Abu Baker, Governor of Tulkarem; Mr Abderahim Ghanim, Mayor of Baqa El-Sharqiyah; Mr Mursy Abu Mukh, Mayor of Baqa El-Gharbiyah; Mr Ghassan Qabaha, Mayor / Barta'a; Mr Roberto Valent, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator; Mr Rida Odeh frm Habla Municipality; and Mr Hussein Mhameed from Myron Cooperation.

It is worth noting that poor management of wastewater and lack of its infrastructure development is considered one of the leading causes for environmental pollution and degradation of the natural resources in the State of Palestine. Increasing access to wastewater collection systems and to treatment facilities is an important step towards protecting public health and safeguarding the environment.

# Contact Information

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