Consolato Generale d'Italia
Gerusalemme

AGENZIA ITALIANA
PER LA COOPERAZIONE
ALLO SVILUPPO

Press Release

Ramallah, November 23rd 2017. HE the Minister of Health, Jawad Awad, opened today the Conference "**Healthy food - better health: from producer to consumer**", held in Ramallah under the auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Jerusalem represented by the Consul General, Fabio Sokolowicz. At the event, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), HE the Deputy Minister of Health, Asad Ramlawi, intervened together with the Representative of the AICS in Jerusalem, Cristina Natoli, and representatives of various ministries, international missions and organizations. The Conference highlighted the demographic, social and epidemiological transition that Palestine is experiencing, with a parallel increase in life expectancy, decrease in infant and maternal mortality, and a rapid growth of non-communicable chronic diseases accounting for more than 70% of overall mortality. The priority of the promotion of health and primary and secondary prevention, with special attention to nutrition, was at the center of the discussions.

The Minister of Health Jawad Awad highlighted the heavy burden of non-communicable chronic diseases in Palestine and the importance of nutritional risk factors with this regard, outlining the MOH strategy to improve nutrition and acknowledging the important contribution of the Italian Cooperation. It is for this reason that the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) has identified "reinforcing primary prevention interventions to promote healthy lifestyles", including healthy diet, among the priorities in the National Health Strategy 2017-2022.

The Consul General of Italy underscored the leading role of the Italian cooperation in the health sector and the importance of a healthy diet to help prevent a range of non-communicable diseases. He recalled that the Conference took place in the framework of the events for the 2nd Week of the Italian Cuisine in the World.

The Representative of AICS in Jerusalem, Cristina Natoli, highlighted that Italy has supported and will further support the MOH efforts to control the spread of non-communicable diseases in different areas, such as health promotion and health education, control of quality of food, and promotion of a healthy diet.

The Director of the Office for Human Development in AICS - Rome, Enrico Materia, mentioned that different initiatives of the Italian Cooperation, such as POSIT and CRONO, as well as the next three-year Program RING - Integrated Strengthening of the Palestinian Health System - focus on integrated actions addressing several building blocks of the system. In this framework, Italy will ensure continuity of the previous programs that have supported policies and strategies of the MOH.

The Deputy Minister of Health Asad Ramlawi mentioned the support provided by Italy in establishing the resolution on reduction of the salt content to 1.3 grams of salt per 100 grams of flour. Palestine has then become the first Arab country to establish a mandatory program for salt reduction, a significant step toward the reduction of risk factors in the prevention of noncommunicable diseases.

For the future, sugar and trans fats will be the next.....