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PRESS RELEASE

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2017 Arab Idol Winner Yacoub Shaheen and UNICEF run for children at the Palestine Marathon

The singer and 13 children coming from marginalized communities across Palestine performed a new song before joining the race in support of children's rights.

BETHLEHEM, State of Palestine, 23 March 2018 – 2017 Arab Idol Winner Yacoub Shaheen and children and adolescents coming from across the State of Palestine joined forces today to give the sixth international Palestine Marathon a rousing send off.

The children, who had travelled from different communities of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, sang the new song 'Dreams alone are not enough' together with Shaheen on the stage of Manger Square in Bethlehem minutes before the Marathon started. Shaheen, who grew up in the city, came to show support to children's rights and promote healthy lifestyles.

"Everyone knows that exercise is good for you," said Shaheen. "Today is also about having fun, singing and running with children and many other people, it is a great experience," he added.

Many Palestinian girls and boys lack the chance to access quality learning and grow through sport and play, robbing them of some of the most important experiences of childhood. Insecurity, lack of adequate facilities and structured activities all impact on children's opportunities to be more active.

"We're here today with our own children to run for children in the State of Palestine," said Genevieve Boutin, UNICEF's Special Representative State of Palestine. "For children and young people still developing, the physical and mental benefits of sport and play set the foundation for healthy development and life-long learning. It also gives them an opportunity to express themselves in a positive setting," she added.

The song, 'Dreams alone are not enough', which was composed especially for the event, includes lyrics written by 19 children in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Its concept was developed by the pop star, Shaheen.

The six children living in Gaza were not able to travel to Bethlehem and meet their Idol due to permit-related issues.

"I felt important when I came to this studio to record the song," said Obada, a 16-year old boy from Hebron. "When I grow up, I want to be like Yacoub Shaheen."

After performing the song, Shaheen, the children and UNICEF staff joined the race to express their support for children's rights.

About UNICEF
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For further information and photos / video footage, please contact:
Catherine Weibel: cweibel@unicef.org or+ 972 54 778 7604

Monica Awad, mawad@unicef.org or +972 54 778 7605