Canada

Ministry of Women's Affairs

ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

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Ministry of Women's Affairs and Government of Canada Launch a Flagship Programme to Eliminate Violence Against Women in the West Bank and Gaza

Ramallah, May 08, 2018 – In an official ceremony yesterday, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the Government of Canada launched a new flagship programme, *"**HAYA**: Eliminating Violence Against Women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (2018 – 2022)"* along with four partner UN agencies, UN Women, UNFPA, UN Habitat, and UNODC. The ceremony took place at the Mahmoud Darwish Museum in Ramallah, under the patronage of her Excellency Minister of Women's Affairs, Dr. Haifa Al-Agha, and the Canadian Deputy Minister of International Development, Ms. Diane Jacovella, as well as the representatives of the four partner UN agencies. More than 100 guests attended the ceremony representing ministries, diplomatic missions, UN agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and other development partners.

Her Excellency, Dr. Al Agha, the Minister of Women's Affairs noted that the Palestinian women have accomplished milestone achievements over the past years of which we are very proud. The "***HAYA***" programme is one of these achievements that we hope to continue and strengthen for the benefit of all Palestinian women. The launch of this programme is due to the integral and tremendous efforts exerted by all partners. It is one of the achievements of the collective work of the Palestinian women's movement which has been working on setting the strategic priorities and necessary mechanisms to eliminate violence against women.

The Deputy Minister, Ms. Jacovella, emphasized the Government of Canada's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In the context of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, Canada is deeply committed to working with both international and local partners to eliminate gender-based violence. Canada has a strong history of supporting the Palestinian people, with significant investments in ongoing multi-year projects focused on inclusive governance, growth that works for everyone, and humanitarian assistance. Deputy Minister Jacovella stated: "the ***HAYA*** initiative is a great example of international and local organizations working together to have a lasting impact on the lives of those affected by violence."

Ms. Ulziisuren Jamsran, the acting Special Representative of UN Women, thanked the Government of Canada on behalf of the UN Agencies for its long-term commitment and investment in this noble cause and for the Palestinian Authority for its bold decision to take a leading role in the programme to advance the rights of women so that no one is left behind, marking the beginning of the 5-year joint programme. She added "***HAYA*** programme will be led by a consortium of four UN agencies. Through novel and innovative approach, ***HAYA*** aims to tackle the root causes of violence through changing harmful practices deeply rooted in the society, while assisting the Palestinian Authority to reform existing prevention, protection and response systems jointly with affected women".

The ***HAYA*** programme is a five-year, CAD 17 million programme which focuses on changing harmful practices and attitudes that contribute to violence against women and girls within targeted households and communities. Specific target groups include women from rural communities, Area C, East Jerusalem, as well as women from low income households, while men and boys will also benefit from the programme by engaging in various outreach and awareness raising activities.

The programme will also help women and girl survivors of violence to have increased access to necessary services such as livelihood training, forensics services, medical and psychosocial treatments, and access to security and shelter. Furthermore, it will strengthen the PA's institutional capacity to develop and implement legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect the rights of women and girls who are subject to violence.

The ***HAYA*** programme will be jointly implemented by UN Women, UNFPA, UN Habitat and UNODC. Key national partners include the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Ministry of Health (MoH), and other relevant national counterparts such as municipalities, community associations, and civil society organizations actively working on eliminating violence against women and girls.

Violence against women and girls is the most prevalent human rights violation globally, and is an issue of serious concern in the Palestinian society. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 30% of married women in the West Bank and 51% in Gaza have been exposed to violence, while less than 1% of them seek the support of the government or civil society organizations due to the fear of stigma, social exclusion or reprisal.

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