UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF Joint Programme: Promoting the Rule of Law in the State of Palestine

Press Release
Promoting the Rule of Law in Palestine
UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF Launch Sawasya II Joint Programme

Ramallah, 20 September 2018 – In a concerted effort to advance the rule of law across the State of Palestine, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in partnership with the Palestinian government, launched the Sawasya II joint programme. Sawasya II seeks to support the building of a progressively functioning and increasingly inclusive Palestinian rule of law system that respects, protects, and fulfils human rights and gender equality and promotes peace and security.

In his opening address, Mr Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Resident coordinator highlighted that the rule of law is at the heart of the UN's work around the globe and is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals. "Without achievements in rule of law, advancements in other SDGs will be severely impacted. I am particularly proud of how this programme focuses on three distinct, yet inherently linked issues of gender, juveniles and rule of law. We look forward to this continued partnership with justice sector institutions, civil society and development partners who have all shown tremendous support in moving this joint programme forward".

Funded by the Governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, and Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Sawasya II has the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core. The programme will focus on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the realization of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16), and the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5).

His Excellency Dr Ali Abu Diak, Minister of Justice thanked UNDP, UN Women and the donors for their support and welcomed UNICEF to the second phase of the programme. "This true partnership has resulted in the justice sector making numerous achievements, despite the challenges. We will continue to work achieve further developments with focus on improving the efficiency, performance and quality of justice services. It is important that we commence the implementation of the 2018 plan and finalize the 2019 workplan in the process in order to respond to the development needs of the justice sector," he added.

The joint programme also builds on a number of development projects and programmes previously implemented by the three UN agencies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to it being fully aligned with the Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2017-2022.

"Sawasya is a critical programme and a key partner in the development of the justice sector. The judicial authority is persistently advancing its services, developing the capacities of judges and staff, improving courts' infrastructure and promoting the utilization of ICT in the provision of efficient and transparent judicial services," said H.E. Iman Saleem, Chief of Justice.

Sawsaya's joint programme will also work towards strengthened and reunified rule of law institutions by legal, regulatory and policy frameworks in line with international standards; effective, accountable and inclusive service provision by rule of law institutions; improved women access to justice and security through gender-responsive service delivery and empowerment, and finally access of all Palestinians, especially children and vulnerable groups, to justice, security and protection without discrimination.

Ms Anna Regina Nuiten, Deputy Head of Mission at the Netherlands Representative Office, highlighted "We as development partners are joining efforts in support of enhanced rule of law and access to justice, in particular for women, children and vulnerable groups in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Sawasya is a people-centred programme and we look forward to team up with the UN and all stakeholders in order to achieve progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to deliver on commitments made for the benefit of the Palestinian people".

The launching event celebrated the official beginning of the 5-year journey of Sawasya II, by bringing together Palestinian ministries, UN agencies, diplomatic missions, international development partners, as well as civil society organizations. Among the attendees were H.E. Dr Ali Abu Diak, Minister of Justice, H.E. Imad Saleem, Chief Justice, H.E Dr Mahmoud Al-Habbash, Supreme Judge, H.E Dr Ibrahim Al-Shae'r, Minister of Social Development, H.E Dr Ahmad Barak, Attorney General, Mr Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Roberto Valent, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator, Ms Maryse Guimond, UN Women Representative, and Ms Genevieve Boutin, UNICEF Special Representative.

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