Improving health system in the West Bank and Gaza to achieve health for all

With the generous support from the Italian Cooperation, World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territory is launching a two-year project to improve health systems towards universal health coverage. The health system in the West Bank and Gaza is afflicted by the continued occupation, prolonged conflict and deteriorating social-economic conditions. The funding from the Italian cooperation will help to implement a number of interventions to support the improvement and sustainability of the Palestinian health system.

Within the *Improving health systems towards universal health coverage* project, WHO, under the Ministry of Health leadership, will foster the continuity of service delivery based on evidence supported decisions. To strengthen the ability of the health system to deliver quality health services, WHO will also focus on addressing the remaining gaps in mental health care, the rollout and promotion of Early Essential Newborn Care (EENC) and strengthening referral pathways for vulnerable patient groups.

“We are grateful to the Italian Cooperation for their financial support that will help us to enhance the Palestinian health system on the road towards universal health coverage. This project will effectively complement other WHO and the Ministry of Health activities to support health development in the West Bank and Gaza”, said Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, Head of the WHO office for the West Bank and Gaza.

“Supporting and strengthening of the Palestinian health system is one of the priorities of the Italian development cooperation in Palestine. A system that can provide universal health coverage is essential for the wellbeing of its population. Italy is deeply committed to Palestine’s capacity and institution building, with the prospect of establishing a future Palestinian State within the framework of the Two States Solution” said the Consul General of Italy in Jerusalem, Fabio Sokolowicz.

“This initiative with WHO is part of our strategy for the enhancement of the Palestinian Health System and the Ministry of Health, that we are currently supporting with a general contribution of 36 million euro. We are also building two hospitals in Dura and Halhoul through a ten million euro soft loan and we are participating to the European Program PEGASE, which aims at supporting the 6 hospitals of East Jerusalem” stated Cristina Natoli, Head of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in Jerusalem.

The *Improving health system towards universal health* project will contribute to build the resilience and responsiveness of the Palestinian health system that is centred on people’s needs and circumstances. In the occupied Palestinian territory, WHO has consistently supported health system strengthening through leadership and governance, health information systems, health financing, human resources for health, essential medical products and technologies, and service delivery.