Press Release
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The European Union celebrates the World Water Day 2019 in Palestine

The European Union and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) are celebrating the World Water Day celebrated on 22 March 2019 in Palestine through a one month campaign that includes a series of public events and activities. In Ramallah, the EU and the PWA hosted yesterday the "Threads of the Rain" operetta to raise awareness on water rights. Meanwhile, an animated song for children was launched, six theatre shows on water rights were organized in Tubas governorate schools, a children's story book about combatting water pollution was produced and distributed over several schools, and a photo competition under the theme ''our water, our rights'' was launched.

Yesterday, an audience of hundreds of spectators watched the Palestinian operetta "Threads of the Rain" that was produced by the Palestinian Water Authority in coordination with the Al-Kasaba Theatre. The operetta presents the daily suffering of Palestinians with regard to access to water and the challenges they face in that context. The operetta is a sing and dance show performed by a team of professional Palestinian singers and a group of children dancers.

''Access to water is a primary human need and a fundamental human right. Palestinians are not just facing a severe shortage of drinking-water but also limited quantities for agricultural use. This comes together with the issue of untreated waste water which has catastrophic consequences on the health of humans and on the environment. Therefore, water and land development are one of the focal sectors of EU assistance to the Palestinians. In the last five years, the EU has provided almost €100 million Euros to support the Palestinian Authority in this sector. We are happy to celebrate events leading up to the international Water Day with our Palestinian partners. Together we work under the theme Leave No One Behind to ensure that we contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal in this field, '' said the ***EU Deputy Representative Tomas Niklasson*** at the opening of the operetta.

The Head of the Palestinian Water Authority, Eng. Mazen Ghoneim, said in his speech that "through this operetta we deliver important messages to the world with new tools that have become more influential than stereotypes and slogans. Certainly, the guided art is one of these tools that can address political, national and society issues. 'Threads of Rain' operetta demonstrates the reality of water in Palestine in a new language that conveys the daily suffering of Palestinian citizens in obtaining water, and demands the world's justice, especially on the

occasion of World Water Day. This day was set by the United Nations this year for human rights and achieving the goals of sustainable development as well as recognising that the right to adequate and safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services is a human right and essential for the full enjoyment of life and all other human rights. We are all aware that the Israeli occupation is the main reason for our inability as Palestinians to catch up with the world in achieving this goal due to the water policies imposed on us, especially the control of more than 85% of our water resources, and the obstacle to the implementation of many projects and programs".

On the 21st of March, the theatre show "*Sami and the Spring*'' was played at Al-Haja Nabeha Al-Masre school in Tubas. 360 students attended the first out of six shows that took place at six schools in Tubas governorate. The play focused on the importance of water conservation, organic agriculture and recycling, which aims at raising the children's awareness about this imperative topic. The attending children received story books about water conservation and combatting water pollution.

On the 22nd of March, the animated song "*Sami and The Spring*'' produced by the EU was launched on various social media platforms in Palestine. The song targets children with catchy phrases that instil the spirit of water conservation and affirm water as a right for all.

Finally, on the 24th of March, the EU and the PWA launched the photo competition ''our water, our rights''. The contest will close of the 22nd of April, and the competing photos will be assessed by a panel from the EU and a number of professional Palestinian photographers. Three winners will be announced and awarded at the Europe Day celebration in May.

All the activities under this campaign are focused on the Right to Water in Palestine. The campaign is in line with this year's global theme for the World Water Day "*Leaving No One Behind*", based on the Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6), which aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030.

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