Launching Ceremony for the Census Indicators Website

Ramallah, 3.vii.19

Ladies and gentlemen

Let me start by thanking you Dr. Ola Awad for the invitation to present our joint work on indicators.ps. This morning I find myself in the familiar position of being asked to deliver a short speech on a subject where I am entirely sure that I am the least knowledgeable person in the room.

As many of you know the Office of the Quartet focuses a large portion of its energy on issues where the parties seek our support– for example – on enabling Palestinian Security Forces access in Area C, increasing supplies of energy and water or reducing the impediments to movement and trade.

But in addition, in each area of our work we seek a multiplier effect – that yields a financial, political or other benefit beyond the narrow outcome that is achieved. We see the work of PCBS as fitting well within this framework, including the establishment of indicators.ps as a means to gather and refine data in a manner that will allow for improved decision making by leaders and improved understanding by the public at large.

That includes both data produced by PCBS in partnership with international organisations, such as UNICEF's MiCs data or the FAO/WFP SefSec data sets but also data that is gathered by the PA's line Ministries. To that end, my colleague Ammar Nada and his team have been working with the Ministry of Agriculture on the farmers registry which will track horticulture, vegetable, livestock, and field crop data.

This is of practical use for planners and agronomists within the PA: overlaying this data set with geo-referenced data on water, topography and trade routes could help us improve the efficiency and sustainability of the sector. But it may also be used in less traditional ways – for example, helping start up companies working at the nexus of agriculture and technology to identify new opportunities and to field test their products on local farms.

The success of that enterprise, however, depends on the engagement of all of you, to not only help to build a system that is capable of sharing this information across PA institutions, but also supporting the efforts of PCBS to populate that system with high quality reliable and up to date.

Colleagues – let me conclude by thanking PCBS for inviting us and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for supporting this work, which we look forward to continuing with you.

Thank you very much.