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Press Release

“Rebuilding Futures”: Palestinian employment initiative launched, Germany leading the way as the first donor to contribute

Today, the Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and Minister of Labor Enas Attari together with high-ranking representatives from Germany, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNRWA West Bank Field Office (WBFO) have launched the Palestinian Employment Initiative “Rebuilding Futures”. The Federal Republic of Germany is the first donor to contribute to the initiative with a total sum of 25 million Euro. This contribution will be implemented by UNRWA WBFO and UNDP, with both projects expected to create approximately 8,000 employment opportunities in the West Bank within the coming three years. The German contribution will be administered through KfW Development Bank.

Prime Minister Mustafa complimented the initiative and reaffirmed the Palestinian Authority's unwavering commitment to empowering and supporting the Palestinian people, particularly workers who have lost their livelihoods due to the ongoing war on Gaza and the West Bank, which has left over half a million newly unemployed.

He highlighted that by creating job opportunities in vital sectors, the initiative serves as both an immediate lifeline and a cornerstone for long-term economic recovery. With unemployment levels alarmingly rising, especially among women and youth, Rebuilding Futures stands as a powerful testament to the collective determination by all present here today to support the Palestinian people, especially in these difficult times.

Mustafa reiterated that the Palestinian Authority, in close cooperation with international partners and friends, is not only addressing urgent needs, but also paving the way for sustainable development in Palestine. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to Germany for being the first to contribute to this significant initiative and called on other nations to join and be part of this effort. Such efforts, he noted, are essential investments in building a sustainable pathway to a brighter, more resilient future for all Palestinians.

The Minister of Labor Dr. Enas Dahadha Attari, described Rebuilding Futures as a milestone in addressing the needs of the Palestinian people. “We are grateful that the German government has not hesitated to support us in this endeavor.” She also underscored that employment is not just a source of income, it is a fundamental pillar of economic sustainability, social cohesion, and personal dignity. In a society where job opportunities are scarce, particularly for women and youth, initiatives like this offer hope and a way to self-sufficiency and empowerment.



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Minister Attari further highlighted that Rebuilding Futures is a response to the current unemployment crisis, as well as, a proactive step towards building a robust and inclusive labor market. By investing in diverse sectors, the initiative aims to equip Palestinian workers with the skills and opportunities needed to thrive in an evolving economy. She reiterated the Ministry of Labor's commitment to fostering partnerships that prioritize sustainable development and called upon international donors to join in expanding this critical effort.

During the launch of the initiative, Volker Oel, Director for the Middle East at the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, emphasized the need to strengthen the Palestinian economy. "During my visit to the West Bank, I have met with well skilled people willing to work hard to make a living. What is needed are opportunities to do so. Sustainable economic development is at the heart of German Cooperation with Palestine. We are proud to be the first donor to contribute to this important initiative."

The first project of the German contribution will be implemented by the UNDP through the Investment Programme for Resilience (IPR). The programme focuses on enhancing economic opportunities - particularly for women -, strengthening access to gender-responsive social services, and fostering social cohesion in marginalized communities across Palestine. It is expected to create at least 1,235 employment opportunities, while provision of social services will directly benefit 33,000 people. Haoliang Xu, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNDP Associate Administrator emphasized the critical need for inclusive socio-economic development, stating "We have a responsibility to address rising unemployment while advancing gender equality by empowering women as leaders in resilience-building. Today's agreement reaffirms our commitment to addressing immediate needs and building a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Palestinians."

This position was also confirmed by Amal Khatib, Deputy Director for Operations at UNRWA WBFO. UNRWA will implement the second project under the German contribution. UNRWA plans to create up to 6,600 temporary employment opportunities across the West Bank, with a focus on 19 refugee camps. These jobs will be created through maintenance and infrastructure measures. Nearly 150,000 refugees will benefit from improved infrastructure, e.g. schools and health centers. The project will also offer training opportunities for Palestine refugee women. Young Technical and Vocational Education and Training graduates will receive on-the-job training opportunities to support their long-term employability on the job market.



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Background:

The Palestinian Employment Initiative “Rebuilding Futures” aims at delivering short, medium and long-term job opportunities in IT, agriculture, services and industries in the West Bank. Through financial support and counseling, it will enhance the productivity and sustainability of start-ups and enterprises. The initiative also focuses on improving training in Palestine in line with the labor market needs. Rebuilding Futures is a response of the Palestinian Ministry of Labor to the unemployment crisis in the West Bank, where unemployment rate has reached 32% in the second quarter of 2024, compared to 13 one year earlier. It is particularly high among women (30%) and young people aged 15 to 29 years (39.2%).

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