



Polish aid

IN 2011

POLISH AID IN
OPT

FOCUSES ON:

- Good governance, esp. enhancing capabilities of public workers
- Migration and border management
- Development of rural areas & agriculture; enhancing access to water
- Youth activism & development

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POLISH DEVELOPMENT AID IN PALESTINE

ISSUE III

APRIL 2011

Assistance to UNRWA



The Representative of Poland, Mr. Bogusław Ochodek, makes an annual contribution to UNRWA. This year's commitment, transferred to Mr. Fabian McKinnon, went towards the UN Consolidated Appeal

- December 2010, UNRWA

During her visit, the Commissioner General also met with the government officials, the Parliamentarians, and the representatives of the civil society.

Ms. AbuZaid found the time to speak with 74 children from Gaza who were at that time visiting Poland at the invitation of the Polish President, Mr. Lech Kaczyński. The visit of Gazan children was organized as a means of physical and mental rehabilitation offered to victims of the Operation Cast Lead (2008-09). All selected children were direct victims of violence: they lost either their house or a family member during the war.

UNRWA (UN Relief & Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) has been Poland's partner in assisting the Palestinian refugees living within the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Since Poland's accession to the OECD in 2005, Poland has contributed to UNRWA on annual basis to further support their mission.

Since 2007, Poland's contributions have been allocated primarily to the Gaza Strip which faces a humanitarian crisis due to the severe isolation and blockade.

The highlight of the partnership was the unprecedented visit of the Commissioner General, Ms. Karen AbuZaid, to Warsaw in 2009, at the invitation of Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Children from Gaza performing dabkeh in the Presidential Palace during their visit in Poland

Polish Order of Merit awarded to a former Palestinian Ambassador



Mr. Ochodek bestows the Order of Merit on Mr. Hijazi



The Commandor's Cross awarded by Poland's President

March 31, 2011 marked a special event in the already outstanding Polish-Palestinian relationship. The Representative of Poland to the PNA, Mr. Bogusław Ochodek, awarded a former Ambassador of Palestine to Poland, Mr. Abdullah Hijazi, with the Commandor's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland granted to him by His Excellency, Mr. Bronisław Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland. The Commandor's Cross is an honor awarded to very few individuals. Only two Palestinians before Mr. Hijazi received such a recognition, while Mr. Hijazi is the first recipient of the Order in the Palestinian Territories.

The Order came as a seal of appreciation for Mr. Hijazi's efforts to strengthen cooperation between Poland and Palestine in the past few decades. As a long-term ambassador to Poland (in 1976 and 1983-94), Mr. Hijazi played a very important role in strengthening the Polish-Palestinian connections after the Oslo Accords.

Besides his political achievements, he has been a pivotal figure in cooperation in the sphere of culture. He spent relentless months establishing an exhibition of Palestinian artists in Poland and has been trying to open the first international gallery in Ramallah.

Most recently, Mr. Hijazi spearheaded the establishment of the Association of the Palestinian Graduates of Polish Universities which brings together more than 50 individuals who over the past decades had a chance to live and study in Poland. As the Chairman of the Association, he is actively engaged in organizing bilateral cultural and educational events in the Palestinian Territories.

The last month's celebration was attended by the representatives of the local authorities, dignitaries and the members of the Polish community. The head of the President's Office, Mr. Tayyeb Abdul Raheem, the Governor of Ramallah District, Ms. Leila Ghannam, and the Mayor of Ramallah, Ms. Janet Michael were among the most distinguished guests.

The city of Ramallah has recently started cooperation with the Polish city of Lublin. In addition, in 2010, the Representative Office together with the Municipality established an outdoor sports park, Qaddura Park, near downtown Ramallah.

"Now, I have even more motivation and enthusiasm to strengthen the ties between Poland and Palestine"

A. Hijazi

Polish Humanitarian Action finalizes a project in Jabalia, Gaza Strip

The aim of the project “Building Sanitary Network in Jabalia” funded by UNOCHA and implemented by the Polish Humanitarian Action is to reduce the health and environmental hazards caused by improper sewage collection and discharge system through the construction of efficient sewage network.

Parts of Jabalia City in the Gaza Strip suffer from the existing improper wastewater collection and discharging system, which result in sewage flooding the streets and sewage leakages to the existing water supply system and the groundwater. This situation leads to the environmental and health hazards. The sewer network is well undersized for the current population, thus forcing many inhabitants to use septic tanks and cesspits to collect and dispose of sewage. During the Operation Cast Lead (2009/10), the infrastructure was partially destroyed. The repairs carried out by the Municipality of Jabalia and partners in February 2009 did not improve the situation. The Ghassasib area of Jabalia and its inhabitants continue to suffer from the same health and environmental problems. The underground water is between 30-35 meters under the ground, while the average depth of the septic tanks is 15 meters. This places the sewage only 15 meters above the groundwater, compared with recommended minimum distance of 40 meters in order to prevent fast infiltration of the sewage to the groundwater and the groundwater contamination. The current situation poses another threat since most of the septic tanks, not to mention cesspits, are not properly insulated resulting in faster sewage infiltration to the groundwater.

The recent water tests indicated contamination coming from sewage infiltration: ammonia total coli form, fecal coli – further deeming the water unsafe for consumption and drinking. Recently, to minimize the impact of the above mentioned contaminants on the population, the Water Undertaking and Jabalia Municipality increased the chlorine dose in the water to 8 ppm (instead of the average dose of 2 ppm). However, the long term use of such a high dose is also deemed unsafe. The 5-month project resulted in a closure of all improper sewage connections and a discontinuation of the septic tanks and cesspits. Due to the installation of new sewers and the proper connection of the households to the system, sewage flooding and infiltration to the underground water source was eliminated. As such, clean and safe drinking water is supplied to the population; the environmental contamination and likelihood of waterborne diseases is reduced.

During the project implementation, PHA accomplished the following:

- 2756 meters of UPCV sewer constructed including construction of 134 concrete manholes with diameters ranged from 1,5 m to 0,60 m;
- 617 households (app. 4630 inhabitants) connected to the new sewerage system;
- Clean and safe potable water supplied to 50,000 inhabitants;
- Preventing sewerage flooding in the streets;



The last phase of construction works



The ongoing awareness and planning meeting with beneficiaries



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Polish Aid is provided by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the budgetary reserve. It is disbursed to the Polish non-governmental organizations through a public call for proposals or to the Representative Office of Poland in Ramallah, which in turn cooperates with the qualified Palestinian civil society organizations.

Listed below is the contact information for the Polish NGOs operating currently in the oPt.

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Development projects planned for 2011

Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has awarded three projects to be implemented by the Polish institutions in the Palestinian Territories in 2011. The projects—introduced briefly below—focus on the key priorities identified by the Polish Ministry and the Palestinian counterparts. As the implementing agencies embark on the journey, the progress of each project will be reflected in the future issues of the Newsletter.

Polish Center for International Aid	On the Milky Way to Hebron (II): the strengthening of networking between small ruminant farmers from Masafer Yatta and dairy production cooperative in the Hebron District (West Bank)	The main goal is to develop local dairy market, to increase producing capacity of small enterprises, and to open possibilities to access local and regional dairy markets through farm modernization and product improvement
Polish Humanitarian Action	Development of rural areas through cistern rehabilitation in the southern parts of Hebron Governorate (West Bank)	The main goal is to rehabilitate water cisterns for agricultural use and to raise awareness in communities about cistern maintenance and water preservation
Bureau of International Cooperation – Polish Border Security	Training and modernization of the Border Security Services of the Palestinian Autonomy (West Bank)	Training for teaching cadre and students of the Palestinian Academy of Security Sciences in Jericho