



In Solidarity with Gaza



The staff of the United Nations in Beirut observed a minute of silence on Tuesday 13 January 2009 for all those who lost their lives in the ongoing violence in the Gaza Strip, and for the brave UN staff still working in the area.

A plenary meeting was held at the UN House, Beirut organized by the Staff Councils of UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Children Fund (UNICEF), UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), International Labor Organization (ILO) and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the

Near East (UNRWA).

The meeting was aimed at expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people in Gaza amid the ongoing violence. The UN lost two UNRWA staff in Gaza, while a number of students sheltering in UNRWA schools had been killed as a result of the conflict.

Speakers at the meeting included UNRWA Director in Lebanon Salvatore Lombardo, UNRWA Deputy Director Roger Davies, ILO Programme Officer and Chief of ILO Staff Union Committee in Beirut Rabia Jalloul, as well as representatives of the staff council and UN staff.

Representatives of staff in UN agencies addressed a memorandum to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in which they expressed support for his efforts, and condemned the brutal atrocities committed in the Gaza Strip that have to date claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Palestinians and more than 4,500 injured, mostly civilians, 50 per cent of whom are women and children.

The representatives of UN agencies urged the Secretary-General to exert every possible effort so the Israeli Government ceases its attacks on the people of Gaza, and to ensure the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1860, and the Human Rights Council Resolution of 12 January 2009 calling for a fact-finding mission to investigate war crimes in Gaza.

For his part, Lombardo briefed the par-

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Trade Policy Trends

Under the auspices of UN-ESCWA Executive Secretary Bader Omar AIDafa, and in the presence of experts in trade and economy, the expert group meeting on "Trade Policy Trends in ESCWA Member Countries and Their Respective Implications on Trade and Economic Performance" was held on 17-18 December 2008, at the UN House, Beirut,

Muhammad Abdul Razzak, Deputy Executive Secretary a.i delivered the opening speech on behalf of AIDafa, presenting the aims and importance of the meeting, which is held in the current regional and international developments that require a review of trade policies in developing, and namely Arab, countries. Abdul Razzak also gave an over-

Trade Policy Trends (Cont.)



view of some UN-ESCWA activities, affirming its continued technical assistance to member countries in matters of foreign trade, policies, as well as relevant regional and international negotiations.

The meeting aimed at recapping the main trends in trade policies that UN-ESCWA member countries adopted, alongside their aims and repercussions over trade and economic performances in them. The papers presented at the meeting and the ensuing discussions created the ground for future activities and projects on trade policies in the UN-ESCWA region. The Regional Commission intends to compile the meeting's working papers and the summary of the main trade policy trend in the UN-ESCWA region and their effect over economic performance and trade in a book.

The meeting discussed several topics, the main being trade policies and their impact over trade and economic performance; the opportunities and challenges of the multilateral trade agreement and regional agreements; trade policy trends and their impact over economic performance; trade policies and development priorities; and good practices and lessons learnt. The meeting concluded with a roundtable discussion of development issues stemming from trade policies in the UN-ESCWA region. Participants presented the best practices and lessons learnt in member countries. The meeting witnessed the participation of representatives of UN-ESCWA member countries concerned with trade, in addition to experts in trade and economy, and concerned Arab organizations and unions. ■

In Solidarity with Gaza (Cont.)



Participants about the situation in Gaza, saying that there has been no water in Gaza and very little access to electricity during these past tough days. He called on the UN staff to say "No" to what is happening in Gaza at the humanitarian level and to support UNRWA colleagues there.

It is worth mentioning that staff unions launched a donation campaign to raise funds for humanitarian aid intended for Gaza. The collection boxes have been set up in each agency: UNDP, ILO, ESCWA and UNRWA. The collection period for funds ends on Friday January 30th, 2009. ■

Facts and Figures: Economic and Social Repercussions of Israeli occupation

Home demolitions in the occupied Palestinian territory

Reason given for the demolition	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	By July 2008	Total
Punishment	10	252	225	177					664
No permit	227	321	405	243	94	94	104	41	1529
Military	No data	No data	No data	1404	17	318	43	37	1819
Total	237	573	630	1824	111	412	147	78	4012

Source: Economic and Social Repercussions of Israeli occupation, UN-ESCWA 2008

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