



Jerusalem - 8 December 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**1st Annual East Jerusalem Hospitals Conference
"Building a Network, Improving Patient Care"**

The East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN) is holding its first annual conference on December 8 and 9, 2011, in Jerusalem. The aim of the conference is to raise awareness about the EJHN and the services provided by the six-member health care facilities. The conference also looks into the role of the EJHN within the Palestinian health system.

This conference is organized in the framework of the ongoing EU-funded project "East Jerusalem Hospitals: Network for Quality". Participants include leaders from the local and international community, and staff from the East Jerusalem hospitals, as well as staff from the hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza. Dr. Arafat Hidmi, chair of the board of directors of Maqassed Society, opened the conference on behalf of the EJHN. Other keynote speakers included the Minister of Health, Dr. Fathi Abumoghli, and Dr. Rafiq Hussein. Hospital leaders presented their facilities and various clinical and research specialties in an effort to strengthen the Palestinian health network.

During the conference opening sessions, Dr. Arafat Hidmi said, "The East Jerusalem hospitals play a crucial role in the Palestinian health system, providing services that are not available in other facilities across the West Bank and Gaza."

The EJHN was established in 1997 under the leadership and guidance of the late Feisal Hussein, with the strategic vision of unifying the health facilities in East Jerusalem and emphasizing their critical role within the Palestinian health system. In 2003, the EJHN began efforts to officially institutionalize the Network as the first hospital network in East Jerusalem. The work focused on developing its institutions, improving the quality of the services provided and assuring a continuum of care.

The EJHN includes six facilities: Princess Basma Rehabilitation Center, August Victoria Hospital, Maqassed Hospital, St. John Eye Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital, and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hospital. The East Jerusalem Hospitals serve as the main centers for specialized care within the Palestinian health system. Patients needing services and procedures that are not available in the West Bank and Gaza are referred for treatment in the EJHN facilities by the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Over half of the EJHN workload comes from referred patients from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As such, the EJHN plays a critical role in providing health services to the Palestinian people.

"The EU is very happy to see this conference taking place. It showcases the achievements of the East Jerusalem Hospitals in medical terms. But it also highlights the need for close coordination and partnership - not only among East Jerusalem Hospitals, but also between the East Jerusalem Hospitals and the rest of the Palestinian health sector in the West Bank and in Gaza", said Sergio Piccolo, EU Head of Operations.

The EJHN and its six facilities have been supported by the European Union and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the last four years. Through the latest phase of this programme the EU

provided EUR2,4 million which allowed the hospitals to improve the quality of their health services, upgrade their status to the highest international standards (ISO certification and most recently, Joint Commission International¹ accreditation) and engage in joint initiatives and activities (e.g.: risk management, legal representation). In the last few months, the EJHN has established a network coordination office based in the Palestinian Red Crescent Society Hospital.

Contacts:

WHO – Ms. Aisha Mansour, 02-540-0595



This project is funded by the EU

¹ The JCI is a US based organization that has established patient safety and quality service standards and goals for health service facilities