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Press Release

European Union and UNDP Sign a €2.4 million Agreement with Al Quds University to Preserve Palestinian Cultural Heritage

Jerusalem – 02 July 2013 – In the presence of Mr. Michael Köhler, Director for Neighbourhood at the European Commission's DG DEVCO and UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator Mr Frode Muring, the European Union and UNDP signed a contribution agreement worth € 2,4 million in an effort to safeguard cultural heritage in the old city of Jerusalem.

The programme will contribute to the development and protection of Palestinian cultural heritage in the old city of Jerusalem, in addition to the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of its citizens through quality housing and tourism services. The programme activities will include the rehabilitation and revitalization of Hammam Al Ayn and Hammam Al Shifa, Al Madrasa Al Kilaniyya and related housing units, and the development of a business management plan and training on the maintenance and management of rehabilitated sites.

"This is an ambitious project, with numerous stakeholders, and we praise UNDP's coordination work that allows us to be here today. Once completed, the project will unravel huge potential for the population of the Old City in terms of heritage preservation but also job creation and touristic growth", said the EU Representative John Gatt-Rutter.

The ceremony also included the signing of a cooperation agreement between UNDP and Al Quds University Centre to conduct historical research and organize workshops in relation to the targeted historical sites.

Huda Al Imam, General Director of Al Quds University Centre welcomed the guests and expressed her appreciation to the EU and UNDP for taking this initiative forward. " This programme is very important for Jerusalem. It will revitalize the city and create awareness for the community on the importance of cultural heritage and the preservation of our identity" she said.

Local capacities in conservation, rehabilitation and management of historic buildings and sites will also be enhanced through the programme. Short and medium term job opportunities will also be generated for young professionals in the fields of restoration, tourism and cultural management.

"The occupied Palestinian territory is rich in cultural heritage. UNDP and its partners will spare no effort to preserve and protect this treasure," said Frode Muring, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator. "The programme will have a long term impact that will benefit different segments of the society by providing job opportunities and sustainable income for local professionals" he added.

The signing ceremony was held on Tuesday 02 July 2013 in the presence of Mr. Michael Köhler , Director DG DEVCO, EU Representative Mr John Gatt-Rutter, Dr. Imad Abu Keishek, Executive



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Vice President of Al-Quds University, Frode Muring, UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator and representatives from civil society organizations in East Jerusalem.

Since 1997, UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People supported the tourism and culture sectors in the occupied Palestinian territory through the restoration and rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites and improvement of touristic areas and networks. UNDP is currently partnering with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities through a USD 34 million programme aimed at rehabilitating public infrastructure for culture and tourism. The programme encompasses seven components, including development of site museums, water springs, cultural landscape, with special emphasis on East Jerusalem, Gaza and Area C.

Through the work of civil society, and in coordination with the Office of the President of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the EU supports actions in East Jerusalem in the fields of health and social welfare, housing, urban planning, legal aid, education, and economic development - including the promotion of the tourism and cultural sectors. Special attention is placed on youth, women and the disabled.

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