Hebron, 06 December 2017 – As part of Canada’s support to the development of the justice sector, the High Judicial Council and the Government of Canada laid the cornerstone for the new Hebron Courthouse complex on 06 December 2017.

The estimated budget of Hebron courthouse project is CDN $32.7 million, with the ultimate aim of strengthening the rule of law in the society and enhancing public confidence in the judiciary sector. The new building, scheduled for completion in 2020, will house the Courts of First Instance, Magistrate and Appeal courts, Public Prosecution Services, and the Judicial Police Services over a gross floor area of approximately 15,000 square meters.

H.E. Judge Emad Saad, High Judicial Council Chief/Chief of the Supreme Court highlighted that the Courthouse is a response to the needs and aspirations of the Hebron Governorate. “Through its strategy, the High Judicial Council aims to develop the Palestinian judiciary in accordance with international standards while taking the citizens’ sense of safety and security as a priority. The High Judicial Council will continue to develop its litigation measures and rehabilitate courts that serve the interests of the citizens in a dignified manner,” he added.

The project will allow the Hebron courts to handle more cases, and hence increase the efficiency of the justice system, and reduce the existing backlog, in addition to generating employment in the Hebron and southern area of the West Bank.

H.E. Douglas Scott Proudfoot, Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority notes that “the cornerstone which is being unveiled today is an indispensable part of the foundation of the building, but it is also symbolic of a justice system which serves as the foundation of a strong vibrant and democratic society that protects the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Canada is proud to support the Palestinian Authority’s efforts to modernize its justice system and promote rule of law, in accordance to international standards.”

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/PAPP) is the implementing agency for the construction of this courthouse, which will consist of three buildings, including the main lobby, the courthouse wing, and the prosecutor’s wing. The design includes spaces for 15 courtrooms, 10 Office Hearing Rooms, and offices for 26 prosecutors and seven judges. As an eco-friendly facility promoting environmental sustainability, the building will incorporate renewable energy, water harvesting, and green landscaping.
UNDP Deputy Special Representative for Operations, Khaled Shahwan, noted the honour of being responsible for construction of the courthouse and remarked on the positive collaboration between the Government of Canada, the High Judicial Council and Hebron Governorate. “The justice system is a fundamental pillar of our society and the integrity and functionality of the institutions of justice is of critical importance. The future courthouse will provide a dignified and specialized accommodation for the timely administration of justice to the Palestinian community,” he added.

The ceremony, which took place in the Hebron governorate premises, was attended by H.E. Judge Emad Saad, High Judicial Council Chief/ Chief of the Supreme Court; H.E. Dr Ahmad Barrak Attorney General, Palestinian Public Prosecution Office, H.E. Hasan Al Oury, the Legal Advisor of the President, H.E. Judge Mohammad Abu Sundus Ministry of Justice; H.E. Kamel Hmeid, Governor of Hebron; H.E. Douglas Scott Proudfoot, Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority; Mr Khaled Shahwan, UNDP Deputy Representative (Operations) as well as members of the bar association, Palestinian police, and the community.

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