

**Speech by UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator
Mr Frode Muring**

**Launch of the Palestinian Human Development Report
04 May 2015 – Ramallah**

Ladies and Gentlemen: Good morning (Sabah El Khair).

On behalf of UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, I am pleased to launch the sixth Palestinian Human Development Report 2015 - Empowerment for Development.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all contributors to the report, including the research team, national experts, reviewers, civil society and not least the Palestinian people, who contributed to the participatory writing process.

A special thank you goes to the lead author of the report, Dr Salam Fayyad, whose insight depth and keen knowledge of the Palestinian context made the production of this report a flagship of development reporting in Palestine.

The Human Development Report (HDR) has become a primary tool for measuring progress in human development in many parts of the world. In Palestine, the report has become an essential instrument for development on several levels.

The report affords policy makers an opportunity to assess progress over time in human development. In addition, it serves to suggest future directions for development by introducing new concepts and policy options for the attainment of development objectives and readjusting existing policies to ensure better and deeper reach of development interventions.

The report also provides local government, civil society, private sector, and community leaders with information regarding the current state of human

development in Palestine, as well as options available to enhance the impact of development efforts on their constituencies.

The theme of the 2004 Human Development Report was “empowerment”. Ten years later, the same theme was chosen again. This offers an opportunity to taking stock of the path to Palestinian empowerment since that time, and taking into account the continued relevance of this theme in the Palestinian context.

The production and content of this report recognise that people are the most important and precious asset.

Evidently, the Israeli occupation deeply dominates the Palestinian condition, and prevents it from delivering on its full potential. Hence, the relevance of the empowerment theme in the Palestinian context.

The State of Palestine’s HDI score for 2014 was 0.686. This placed it in the “medium human development” category and at 107th out of 187 countries and territories indexed overall. This ranks Palestine near the top of the “medium human development” category.

It scored higher than the calculated average for the Arab country region in health and education, but it fell significantly below other Arab countries in the “decent standard of living” measure of GNI (average of \$15,817 per capita).

A few days ago was International Labour Day. According to PCBS, over 338,000 Palestinians are unemployed, with 195,000 of them in Gaza.

The previous Human Development Report on Palestine had described the Palestinian people as suffering from a “poverty of disempowerment”.

So, despite of being home to the most literate population in the Arab world, for example, a deficient labour force and an undiversified economy continue to limit the ability of many Palestinians to rise out of hardship.

UNDP has engaged for decades in the pursuit of sustainable human development. In the process, we have learned valuable lessons about what does and does not work.

Building on these experiences and lessons, people and their true empowerment must be at the centre of any nation's endeavour that aims to achieve lasting, holistic and sustainable peace and development.

Therefore, empowerment requires

- Greater inclusiveness
- Provision of basic services
- Improved local governance
- Improved national governance
- Pro-poor market development and job creation
- Access to justice and legal aid to reduce inequalities

These key elements are intertwined and complementary. Though not exhaustive, they are virtually all encompassing for the purposes of this report.

I now leave you with Dr Fayyad to present you with his views and ideas about the importance of empowerment and how to attain it in the State of Palestine.

Allow me again to thank all those who contributed to the production of this report under the leadership of Dr Fayyad and thank you for your interest and attendance.

Shukran