



# UNRWA

## PRESS STATEMENT

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**STATEMENT BY JOHN GING  
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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY  
5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**

Good morning. Thank you all for attending.

My theme this morning is education, as educating the next generation is key to the future of Gaza, its prosperity and its stability.

We at UNRWA recognize this and so I would like to unveil a new education action plan. This concentrates on Arabic and Mathematics because a recent survey of our schools has shown alarming failure rates in these two subjects, central to those most basic skills: literacy and numeracy.

What we are seeing is the collapse of education standards due to the cumulative effects of the occupation, closures, poverty, and violence.

In Mathematics, we have found an average failure rate of nearly eighty per cent in grade four to grade nine students. The highest failure rate was among grade four students, ninety per cent of whom failed their maths exams.

In Arabic, there was an average failure rate of over forty per cent among grade four to grade nine students. So what is UNRWA doing about this? Our action plan has four basic elements.

Firstly, we have set up a programme of remedial teaching in Arabic and mathematics. We have hired over fifteen hundred teachers for the second semester of 2007 to teach Arabic and mathematics to students in grades one to three. In addition, we are now hiring a further fifteen hundred teachers, one to be placed in every classroom in the elementary grades two, three and four.

Secondly, the results in Prep boys schools were worst, so we have decided to reduce class sizes to no more than thirty students.

Thirdly, there will be two additional classes per week in Arabic and Mathematics.

Fourthly, to improve the quality of teaching, a teaching training, college of excellence will be built.

I hope that these measures will go a considerable way to reversing the collapse of Gaza's education system. As ever in conflict situations it is the most vulnerable who pay the highest price, in this case the children. But we must recognize that children are the future and their education is crucial. It offers an exit from poverty through self-sufficiency. It creates opportunity and prosperity. These are some of the basic building blocks from which a more stable and peaceful future can be built.

Thank you.

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