



UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF Joint Programme: Promoting the Rule of Law in the State of Palestine

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SAWASYA PROGRAMME BOARD ENDORSE WORKPLAN FOR 2023

The Sawasya Joint Programme Annual Board Meeting is the keystone event that takes place every year in January to highlight the last year's achievements and endorse the new year's workplan.

Ramallah, 17 January 2023 | The Annual Board Meeting of the Sawasya II Joint Programme was held today in Ramallah, under the Chair of the UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF Joint Programme's Board, UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Lynn Hastings.

This year the Board meeting convened to bring together Programme counterparts to provide an overview of the progress made during 2022, discuss the strategic direction, and to endorse the year 2023 work plan of the for the Sawasya II Joint Programme.

The meeting was attended by the Programme five national partners - Ministry of Justice, Supreme Judge Department, High judicial Council, Ministry of Social Development, and the Attorney General Office - as well as the Sawasya Programme respected donors, the Government of the Netherlands, Sweden, the Spanish Cooperation for Development, and the European Union in addition to the implementing United Nations agencies: UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF.

In her address, the Chair of the Joint Programme Board, UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Hastings praised the efforts and hard work of justice sector partners that has consolidated principles of access to justice and increased the reach of law for Palestinians. She remarked ***"I am proud to see what can be achieved when the UN family works together, I do believe that it is the great spirit of cooperation and the hard work that our national partners have demonstrated that has taken justice institutions on the transformative route they now find themselves on."***

Ms. Hastings also gave an overview of the obstacles faced by Palestinians and emphasized the national and international cooperation in overcoming these challenges, namely working step-by-step, to increase the effectiveness, accountability, and inclusiveness of rule of law



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institutions with focus on better service provision to the most marginalized communities in the State of Palestine and pioneering activities such as Palestine's first court dedicated to the adjudication of cases involving violence against women where more than 100 cases were adjudicated and the expansion of the One-Stop Center model to Gender Based Violence survivors in Nablus and Hebron that provides urgent psychosocial, forensic, and judicial care, all in one location.

She added "Despite the gains secured, more efforts are needed to tackle challenges around judicial credibility, accountability, and access to justice, including for women survivors of violence. This includes the adoption of the Family Protection Bill".

Subsequently, interventions by the national Board members focused on the key role that the Sawasya Programme has been playing over the past five years in enhancing capacities, infrastructure, and environment of the Palestinian judicial institutions in the face of the various challenges at hand in the justice sector. Board members capitalized on the great investments made by the international community in its support to establishing the State of Palestine that respects and protects and fulfils the rule of law principle, Human Rights, and international treaties.

The development partners on the other hand, affirmed that the great partnerships between the international community and the State of Palestine is a textbook example of where the implementation of SDG 16 and SDG 5 meet and create synergy. They also marked the importance of the Sawasya Programme in improving access to justice, especially for women and children and expressed their gratitude for the fruitful cooperation over the years between the national and international community.

On the annual workplan, the Joint Programme Manager, D. Christopher Decker provided an overview of Programme progress and gave a presentation of the 2022 AWP Sawasya II reflecting that in 2022 ***"600,000 beneficiaries profited from legal aid services in its different forms across the West Bank and Gaza. Also, inclusive service provision was possible due to e-services for instance, around 200,000 court documents were processed digitally, in addition institutionalizing IT knowledge and environment to enhancing the e-justice portal and ongoing merging of Mizan platforms."***

It is worth mentioning, that within its work on institutional development, Sawasya supported more than 500 justice actors in training on mainstreaming integrity, transparency, and accountability for enhanced access to justice, furthermore HR and gender and child-friendly



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justice principles were mainstreamed within key justice sector institutions.

D. Decker added ***"we are proud and excited to have pioneered this past year the launch of the legal aid incubator, first of its kind in the Middle East for newly practicing lawyers aimed at helping young professionals establish their legal practice and most importantly serve the vulnerable Palestinians. We are particularly proud that out of 15 lawyers, two thirds are women. Similarly, we have provided 100% of female counselors working with inmates to provide services in line with Human Rights standards and protocols"***.

Following the discussion, the Board members approved the 2023 workplan.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Lyn Hastings endorsed the workplan and thanked the members for their dedication, cooperation, and fruitful discussion, stating ***"I want to take a second to appreciate the high level of representation we are witnessing today, I believe this speaks volume to your commitment to this Programme and its results. I also want to reflect on the spirit of partnership that UNDP, UN Women and UNICEF continue to demonstrate over the years"***.

- End -

For more information, please contact

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About the Sawasya II Joint Programme:

Sawasya II is the UN's primary vehicle for promoting rule of law, gender-based justice and human rights in the State of Palestine from the year 2018 to 2023.

The Programme brings together the main United Nations bodies working in this field -- **UNDP, UN Women** and **UNICEF** -- as part of an integrated programme in which support is provided to the Palestinian Government to arrive at a system of rule of law that is



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progressively applied, increasingly inclusive which protects, respects, and promotes human rights, gender equality, peace and security.

Sawasya II aims to work on the challenges that arise from the provision of justice and security services. Justice and security institutions are supported to enhance the quality and efficiency of the services they provide to the Palestinian people. *Sawasya II* supports all relevant Palestinian governmental institutions and civil society organizations in their endeavors to provide legal assistance to the Palestinian people. This support is being developed and allocated to meet the specific needs of each area of the State of Palestine (West Bank, including Area C, Hebron 2, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip).