



## Special Newsletter – the Palestinian Local Authorities Faces Corona Pandemic

### APLA Provides Local Authorities with Protective Tools and Materials with the Support of GIZ and SDC

The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) has completed the distribution of protective equipments and materials to local authorities, as part of its efforts to provide the best conditions and precautionary measures to combat the spread of coronavirus by providing part of the needs of local authorities for cleaning, disinfection and preventive materials funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and Implemented by the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) in order to provide some tools and materials that will assist local authorities in their preventive measures to ensure the continuity of the provision of basic services to citizens and maintain safety of local authorities' staff.

"Local authorities face critical and unusual situations at all levels, and despite the huge burdens, additional duties and new challenges that have arisen from the Covid-19 pandemic in Palestine, local authorities have continued to perform their duties in the best methods and possibilities available," said APLA's Executive Director Mr. Abdallah Anati, stressing that APLA always seeks to support all local authorities while protecting front-line workers to provide optimal service to citizens.

Mr. Anati praised the cooperation of the local authorities through which the materials were distributed including Hebron Municipality, Dura Municipality, Yatta Municipality, Bethlehem Municipality, Aizariyah Municipality, Beit Anan Municipality, Jericho Municipality, Ramallah Municipality, Beitunia Municipality, Birzeit Municipality, Salfit Municipality, Tubas Municipality, Nablus Municipality,



Asira al-Shamaliyah Municipality, Tulkarem Municipality, Qalqilya Municipality, Jenin Municipality, and Araba Municipality. The distribution mechanism was carried out through 18 local authorities, which in turn formed central distribution points to ensure the ease of receiving materials allocated to each local authority by going to the closest distribution point, according to Mr. Anati. The equipment and materials that have been provided to local authorities include gloves, masks, protective dress, chloride disinfectant and automatic spraying machines. APLA has provided local authorities with leaflets of the mechanism of use of distributed materials and equipment, said Mr. Anati.

The Executive Director of APLA also thanked the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and GIZ for their contribution to the financing of protective materials and tools and their continued support to enable local government units and protect their staff in these dangerous situations to maintain intensive efforts to collect waste and maintain hygiene during the ongoing crisis and thus continue to provide optimal service to citizens.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, APLA has continued to communicate with local authorities to see their readiness and conduct a rapid survey of their needs in order to enable them to respond to emergency situations and to know the mechanisms to be adopted to provide support. The provision of basic protective equipment and materials to local authorities is one of the priority interventions needed to ensure the continuity of the work of local authorities, which has been referred to in APLA's Position Paper on Coronavirus Effects on Local Government Authorities.







### During Meeting of the Executive Committee of APLA with the Minister of Local Government The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities Calls for Speedy Transfer of Local Authorities' Dues to be Paid by the Government

The Executive Committee of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) reviewed a number of issues that concern the work of local authorities during the current period, especially after the three-month state of emergency throughout the country. APLA stresses that local authorities have not and will not fail to provide basic and vital services affecting the lives of citizens on a daily basis, during the meeting of the Executive Committee of APLA with His Excellency the Minister of Local Government Mr. Majdi Al-Saleh, with the participation of the President of APLA Mr. Musa Hadid and members of the Executive Committee of APLA and the Executive Director of APLA Mr. Abdallah Anati and Dr. Tawfiq Al-Budairi, Deputy of the Ministry of Local Government and Advisor to Minister Walid Abu Halawa.

Minister of Local Government Mr. Al-Saleh stressed the importance of the strategic partnership that brought together the Ministry of Local Government and APLA. He said, "the Ministry of Local Government is a partner and representative of local authorities in the Palestinian government." He praised the role of local authorities following the declaration of a state of emergency following the spread of the coronavirus and dealing with the utmost responsibility and national commitment to its citizens.

APLA's President Mr. Hadid stressed the need to take into account the financial situation of local authorities and speed up the transfer of their dues to be paid by the government and to start implementing the stalled projects in order to ensure that basic services continue to be provided to citizens in the best way. Mr. Hadid called on the Executive Committee to strengthen the principle of decentralization in the work of local authorities to expand their powers and develop their services and strengthen the national partnership with the government and its institutions to be able to respond to the requirements of the next phase.

The Deputy of the Ministry of Local Government Dr. Tawfiq al-Budairi explained that the Ministry of Local Government is fully aware of all the challenges and problems faced by local authorities during the previous phase, and that the ministry has begun to design a program to enable local authorities to go through the next phase by supporting the operational expenditure of local authorities on the one hand, and projects under the title "Labor Intensity," on the other. Dr. Al-Budairi Added that the Ministry looks forward to working with APLA to prepare a plan to deal with the next phase and its challenges.

During the meeting of the Executive Committee of APLA, which was held before the meeting with the Minister of Local Government, the Executive Director of APLA M. Abdallah Anati reviewed the highlights of the position paper prepared by APLA regarding the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Palestinian local authorities and how they dealt with this pandemic and the challenges they faced and the most important needs, requirements and interventions of priority to be worked on in post-coronavirus phase.





## Coronavirus Outbreak Repercussions on Local Authorities in Position Paper

The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) issued a position paper in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak in Palestine and the resulting significant losses to many sectors, particularly local government authorities, which were among the few institutions that continued working despite the scarcity of resources and growing needs. This position paper presented a monitoring of the efforts of local authorities in response to the needs of the Palestinian people since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, conducted a rapid survey of the needs of these authorities in order to prepare for the gradual post-coronavirus phase, conduct detailed studies of all the effects of this pandemic, and present the mechanisms to be adopted to deal with it.

According to the position paper issued in late May 2020, this crisis has negatively affected local authorities and led to a sharp reduction of at least half in revenues on the one hand and increased expenses on the other, requiring emergency interventions to enable local authorities to continue their tasks and get out of this crisis with minimal damage. These interventions have been summarized in the following aspects:

1. Accelerate the development and activation of the transferal mechanism between the government and the local authorities
2. Provide emergency operational budgets as a result of the decline in local economic activities and available revenues
3. Allocate part of the public budget to local authorities in Palestine.
4. Address problems associated to the debt accumulation of local authorities "net lending"
5. Provide support to Local Government Units, especially in the field of disaster management and response
6. Strengthen the Capacities of Local Government Units to deliver better services to citizens
7. Strive to find creative solutions to solve the solid waste problems.
8. Continue to amend the laws and legislations system that regulate the local government sector
9. To direct funding towards local economic development projects and partnership projects between the private sector and the local authorities
10. Develop the dependence on technological means in the provision of services and communication between citizens and local authorities
11. Launch community outreach programs and awareness campaigns targeting key and priority issues related to the work of local authorities

This position paper highlights the efforts made by local authorities through their rapid response to the unlimited needs that emerged in the wake of the declaration of a state of emergency following the spread of the coronavirus and their coping with utmost responsibility and national commitment to their citizens. The paper notes that the local authorities did not only exercise their functions in the pandemic, but also played additional roles beyond their tasks and functions and have spared no effort to provide all their capabilities and equipment to support the competent ministries, governors, medical staff and emergency committees through emergency plans and programs prepared by them to deal with the consequences of this crisis. Local authorities have intensified their efforts to collect waste and maintain hygiene and have continued to work to sterilize public places and institutions. The plans of local authorities also included mechanisms to provide support to citizens at various levels through the formation of voluntary support committees of individuals, institutions and community and national forces to provide all means of community support, and to provide guidance and awareness support to citizens, especially in so-called areas "C" where the burden is greater and responsibilities are more complex.







## Continuation of Gradual Return to Post-Coronavirus of Local Authorities



Sterilization and preparation of schools before the high school exam



Sterilization of places of worship



Opening of parks and public facilities



Services Continue







## Local Authorities Faces Corona Pandemic and Contributes in Achieving SDGs 2030

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and the response of nations around the world to the unlimited needs that emerged after its rapid spread and rapid infection growth rates give an indication of countries' readiness to achieve sustainable development in line with the global agenda 2030.

The coronavirus outbreak has forced governments around the world to take unprecedented actions to reduce the increase in infections and deaths caused by virus infection. Palestine, in particular, has been a leader among the nations of the world in addressing the pandemic by taking preventive measures and arrangements to curb its spread. The local authorities were among the few institutions that continued to work after the declaration of a state of emergency and instructions not to travel, move or leave the house unless necessary.



Local authorities have not faltered in providing all their capabilities and equipment to support the competent ministries, governors, medical staff and emergency committees to follow up on the needs of citizens and ensure their safety and provide them with optimal service.

Since the beginning of the crisis, local authorities have prepared contingency plans and programs to deal with the pandemic in Palestinian towns and villages. They have based their plans on the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination with all parties and support all parties to confront and deal with the emergency. For example, local authorities have been able to provide support to medical staff at various levels, from equipping quarantine centers, setting up health committees within local authorities in cooperation with volunteers, and preparing clinics and health centers to deal with any developments, setting up tents, rooms and centers to deal with suspected cases without access to hospital emergency departments to ensure the safety of medical personnel and patients. What local authorities have provided in this regard is part of the contribution of local authorities to achieving **Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages."**

Local bodies have demonstrated the importance of promoting policy coherence in achieving sustainable development. Their response to the emergency has proven that they are not mere implementers of Agenda 2030 and that their role goes well beyond Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." They also highlighted the unlimited local capacity to drive development and achieve this ambitious, integrated and comprehensive program.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, local authorities have not only exercised their functions and responsibilities but have also exercised additional roles beyond their functions and tasks. They have intensified its efforts in collecting waste and maintaining hygiene and have continued to work on the sterilization of public places and institutions, which is part of the contribution of local authorities to achieving Goal 3: "Good Health and Well-being" as well as **Goal 15: "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems."**





Local authorities have not ceased to provide support to citizens at various levels. Social responsibility has been at the top of their agenda. The initiatives they have launched support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda by contributing to **Goal 2: "End hunger, achieve food security,"** **Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality, and Empower all women and girls"** **Goal 6: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,"** **Goal 10: "Reduce inequality within and among countries,"** and **Goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development."** They have also launched several community initiatives targeting students through educational groups supporting high school students in particular and have carried out all the sterilization and preparation of schools prior to the high school exam to ensure the safety of students, teachers and staff. **They have played a clear role in preparing educational facilities (Goal 4) and providing a safe, comprehensive and effective environment (Goal 11).**

Local authorities have set up voluntary support committees for individuals, institutions and community and national forces to provide all means of community support, guidance and awareness support to citizens. These committees are part of the contribution of local authorities to achieving **Goal 3: "Ensure healthy lives,"** **Goal 6: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all,"** **Goal 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment,"** **Goal 10: "Reduce inequality within and among countries,"** and **Goal 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development."**

In so-called areas C, work is more comprehensive, more difficult and more complex. Local authorities there have to deal with exceptional needs, so the burden is greater and the roles and responsibilities are wider. Therefore, monitoring the work of local authorities in those areas shows that they contribute in one way or another to achieving eight Sustainable Development Goals, including **Goal 1: "End poverty,"** **Goal 2: "achieve food security,"** **Goal 3: "Ensure healthy lives,"** and reaching goals **5, 6, 7**, which are centered on ensuring water availability, ensuring universal access to modern energy services, promoting steady and inclusive economic growth, and goals **10** and **16**; reducing inequality and working together for development.

Local authorities have mobilized all available capacities to provide services to citizens and get out of this crisis with the least damage. They have developed new methods, methods and mechanisms to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. This is exactly what the Sustainable Development Agenda calls for in **Goal 3: "Ensure healthy lives,"** **Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality,"** **Goal 6: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water,"** **Goal 9: "Build resilient infrastructure,"** **Goal 11: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,"** and **Goal 12: "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns."**

In addition to all these emerging needs, local authorities have continued to provide basic services to citizens, which means that local authorities have active participation in achieving the ambitious **17** goals of the **2030** Sustainable Development Agenda, including their three dimensions — economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability — supported by good governance.

