



occupied Palestinian territory

(From left: Anthony Laurance, WHO oPt Head of Office, and Stein Torgersbraten, Head of Development Section, Representative Office of Norway / WHO Photo)

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Press Release

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WHO Signs Funding Agreement with Norway for Establishment of Palestinian Public Health Institute

Jerusalem: The Head of the WHO West Bank and Gaza Office, Mr. Anthony Laurance, signed a funding agreement today with the Head of Development Section of the Norwegian Representative Office, Mr. Stein Torgersbråten, for a NOK 23 million (USD 3.9 million) project to establish the Palestinian National Public Health Institute (PNPHI). Also present at the signing at the WHO office in Jerusalem was Ms. Signe Marie Breivik, Program Advisor for Norway.

WHO will manage the two-year project, partnering with the Norwegian Institute for Public Health and the Palestinian Ministry of Health to develop the Palestinian Institute through staffing, training by international technical specialists and WHO expertise. Mr. Laurance said, “The aim is to improve the health of the Palestinian people through better use of data and better prevention. The PNIPH will provide science-based data-analysis and policy advice to improve decision making.”

The Institute is planned to have four core functions: evaluation and analysis of health statistics, public health surveillance, public health research, and capacity building to strengthen public health skills, knowledge and competence. A location for the institute has been identified in the expanded Public Health Laboratory in Ramallah. The project to create the Institute will start on March 1, 2012 and end on February 28, 2014, by which time the Institute will be established as a semi-autonomous body within the Palestinian Authority with its own governance structures.

Palestinian Minister of Health Fathi Abu Mugli thanked WHO and Norway for supporting the initiative and said, “The Ministry of Health believes in the importance of promoting health surveillance and research in Palestine. It is important to establish a Public Health Institute as a hub and a networking body for all research institutions and universities.”

Mr. Torgersbråten commented: “Norway sees the establishment of a National Palestinian Institute of Public Health as an important component of the state building efforts as it will contribute to strengthen the national efforts to protect and improve the health of the Palestinian people.”

WHO Head Laurance said that he expects the Institute to build relations with academic institutions in Palestine and anticipates “receiving seconded staff and commissioning research from academic bodies.”

The agreement follows a Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2011 by Mr. Salam Fayyad, Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, and Norway’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Store. Palestinian Health Minister Fathi Abu Mogli and Mr. Laurance will visit the Norwegian Institute in Oslo next week to discuss

detailed cooperation plans. The Norwegian Institute is a member of the 70-nation Federation of National Public Health Institutes.

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