

**Statement by United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper, and UNFPA Representative, Anders Thomsen,**

**on the occasion of International Youth Day**

**Jerusalem, 12 August 2017**

On 12 August 2017, the United Nations (UN) in Palestine celebrates International Youth Day and this year's theme on "Youth Building Peace". In 2015, the UN adopted the first Security Council resolution (UNSCR) on youth; UNSCR 2250 advocates for youth's active role as ambassadors for conflict prevention and social justice.

In Palestine, youth are gradually climbing the ladder towards decision and policy making processes. Youth (aged 15-29) comprise 30% of the total Palestinian population, however they remain a largely disempowered group many of whom lack certain rights and access to economic opportunities and quality education.

With the right support, youth's position in the current socioeconomic dynamic within the Palestinian community can shift to a vital and vibrant role in the process of shaping peace in Palestine. "I believe youth are true agents and ambassadors for establishing and supporting solid and positive grounds for peace" says Mr. Anders Thomsen, UNFPA Representative. "Peacebuilding can be a long and difficult process. Nevertheless, if the right agents are recruited to build peace, the process will be nourished immensely" he continued.

A recent UNFPA Study: *Palestine 2030* indicated that the population of youth in Palestine will double by 2050. This can be an opportunity to equip and empower youth to pave the road for peace.

However, only 40% of youth indicated their interest to participate in democratic electoral processes according to a recent survey by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, suggesting a relatively high sense of disenfranchisement.

"Integration is a key word for youth, so let's help integrate them in the socioeconomic and political spheres of Palestinian life through civic engagement, partnership and awareness" said Mr. Piper, the UN's Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities on the occasion of International Youth Day.

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