



## Press Release

### **New UN report documents legacy of 10 years of isolation and crisis in Gaza**

Jerusalem, 11 July 2017

The UN Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory released a report today that reviews the socio-economic status of the Gaza Strip, a decade after the events of 2006-2007 that saw a violent take-over of the Strip by Hamas, the enforcement of strict closures by Israel and the administrative separation of Gaza from the West Bank. The new report, '[Gaza – 10 years later](#)' takes stock of some of the key indicators identified in an earlier 2012 [UN report](#) which predicted Gaza would become 'unliveable' by 2020<sup>1</sup>, unless underlying trends were reversed.

The report underscores that most of the earlier projections for 2020 have deteriorated further and faster than anticipated in 2012. Real GDP per capita in Gaza has decreased, the provision of health services has continued to decline, and the demand for additional health clinics, doctors, and hospital beds has not been met. Thanks in large part to the scale of UNRWA's services, Gaza has maintained high education standards but average daily classroom time for students remains as low as four hours. While an earlier projection that the coastal aquifer would become unusable by 2016 has been revised to the end of 2017, Gaza's only water source is predicted to be irreversibly-depleted by 2020, unless immediate remedial action is taken. Huge reconstruction needs provoked by the 2014 conflict triggered increased imports of construction material to Gaza, particularly through the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) however access to material necessary to allow the Gazan economy, infrastructure and basic services to recover and expand remains highly restricted.

With electricity supply reaching as low as 90MW in recent days (against demand in excess of 450MW), energy is the most visible recent deterioration in living conditions in Gaza but this comes on top of a host of other chronic and acute problems that have become part of 'normal' life.

"Gaza has continued on its trajectory of de-development, in many cases even faster than we had originally projected" said Robert Piper, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities. "Ongoing humanitarian assistance especially through UNRWA's services, are helping slow this descent, but the downward direction remains clear."

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<sup>1</sup> '[Gaza 2020: A liveable place?](#)'

Yesterday, UN and non-governmental organizations conducted a field visit to the Gaza Strip with nine members of the diplomatic community from Australia, Canada, the EU, Germany, Turkey, and the UK to witness first-hand the cumulative impact of ten years of closures and internal divide.

The visit highlighted the impact of the restrictions on access to basic services, freedom of movement and economic development on the lives and livelihoods of Gaza's two million residents. The delegation listened to members of the Gaza fishing community describing their struggle to maintain their livelihoods in access restricted areas. A visit to Ash Shuja'iyeh, one of the areas worst hit during the 2014 armed hostilities, highlighted the significant progress achieved over three years of housing-reconstruction but also the long-term social and psychological scars left by the fighting on families. A stop at the desalination plant in Deir al Balah illustrated the chronic challenges of water and energy. A visit to the UNRWA 'Gaza Gateway' initiative showcased the creativity and innovation of some of Gaza's young entrepreneurs.

The report calls on Israel, the PA, Hamas and the international community to take action towards more sustainable development investments, reinvigoration of Gaza's productive sectors, improvement of freedom of movement for both people and goods, as well as respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. "The alternative" warned Mr. Piper, "will be a Gaza that is more isolated and more desperate. The threat of a renewed, more devastating escalation will increase, and the prospects for intra-Palestinian reconciliation will dwindle – and with them, the prospects for peace between Israel and Palestine".

**ENDS**

Read the full report: [Link](#)