



**Statement by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,
Mr. Robert Serry, on the occasion of his visit to Gaza**

Gaza, 8 June 2014

The United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Robert Serry, visited Gaza today for the first time since the signing of the Beach Camp Agreement and the formation of a Palestinian government of national consensus.

While in Gaza, Mr. Serry held a joint meeting at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing with the following newly appointed Ministers: Minister of Women's Affairs Haifa Al-Agha, Minister of Labor Mamoun Abu Shahla, Minister of Public Works and Housing Mufeed Al-Hasayneh and Minister of Justice Salim al-Saqqa.

"I congratulated the Ministers on their appointment and discussed with them the many practical challenges ahead. I assured them full support of the United Nations which is ready to increase its considerable programme of works in Gaza, including in the priority areas of water and energy. Gazans must, as soon as possible, feel the dividends of unity. Open crossings both for goods and people, access to construction material, re-establishing trade links between the West Bank and Gaza and exports are urgently needed to kickstart the economy and create job opportunities. I highlighted in this regard the critical importance for calm to advance this agenda," Mr. Serry said.

Serry also expressed hope that the obstacles on the Ministers' travel would soon be removed so that the new Government could carry out its duties unimpeded both in Gaza and in the West Bank. "We count on a constructive approach by all stakeholders, including Israel, and urge all to refrain from unhelpful actions," he said.

The United Nations has long underscored the need for progress towards Palestinian unity in line with existing resolutions, within the framework of the Palestinian Authority and the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The formation of the Government of national consensus is a first step and opportunity to address the serious political, security, humanitarian and economic challenges ahead.

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