

West Bank, 20 November 2013

05:30	Departure from WBFO
06:00 – 07:00	<p>Arrive Gilo CP for access briefing</p> <p><i>Each day thousands of Palestinians pass through Gilo checkpoint in order to access work and services in East Jerusalem and Israel. This briefing provides an opportunity to directly observe the daily reality of life for these workers, and the briefing will elaborate on how the Barrier and permit regime has affected the daily lives and livelihoods of Palestinians and Palestine refugees, and the social and economic consequences.</i></p>
07:00 – 08:00	Breakfast at Bethlehem
08:00 – 09:15	<p>School visit and roof top brief on Aida RC</p> <p><i>Aida Camp provides an overview of Palestine refugee camp life as well as UNRWA services, and in particular those related to protection. It provides an excellent overview of the landscape, geography and impact of the Barrier on the population. In addition, it is frequently subject to Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) incursions, and provides a picture of urban poverty.</i></p>
09:15 – 10:15	Travel to Al Jabal view point
10:15 – 10:45	<p>View point briefing on al Jabal from Qedar</p> <p><i>E1 – Plans for the construction of the E1 settlement development project have been frozen since 2005 as a result of international pressure - led by the US - on the Israeli authorities. But on the 06th December 2012 Israeli planning institutions (the Higher Planning Council of the ICA) provided initial approval to advance planning for the construction of 3,426 housing units in the E1 area.</i></p> <p><i>The E1 development project, should it go ahead, has been internationally recognized as having potentially grave humanitarian and political implications, including the transfer of thousands of Palestine refugees and severely jeopardizing the viability of a two state solution. Attention has therefore refocused on the E1 planning process and UNRWA is keen to ensure that the humanitarian impact of the proposed construction is kept at the forefront of the debate. One example of the transfer of Bedouin Palestine refugees against their will from their rural communities into a centralized urban environment exists today in the West Bank; its name is al Jabal.</i></p>
10:45 – 11:00	Travel to al Jabal

- 11:00 – 12:00 Meet the al Jabal committee and walking tour of community (Al Jabal , Eizariya)
- From 1997 onwards, some 150 families of livestock dependent Bedouin Palestine refugees living in Area C of the West Bank have been transferred by the Israeli authorities. The majority of the families - all from the Jahalin tribe - were evicted by the Israeli authorities from their dispersed traditional rural kinship groups to make way for the expansion of the Maale Adummim settlement in the Jerusalem periphery. The relocation site is today an urban satellite to the Palestinian town of Eizariya, formally known as the Arab al Jahalin Village or simply 'al Jabal' – the mountain. The land from which the Bedouin were evicted is now the newest neighbourhood of the third biggest Israeli settlement in the West Bank. A recent UNRWA report on the current situation for the Bedouin residents of the forced village has found al Jabal to be both socially and economically non-viable for its Palestine refugee residents who were severed, against their will, from their social, economic and commercial universes and centralized into an urban setting, in order to make way for the building of settlements. Today, the Israeli authorities have once again resumed their study of potential sites for the relocation of other Bedouin Palestine refugees and confirmed to the UN their intention to transfer the remaining rural communities out of the Ma'ale Adummim 'Bubble'.*
- 12:00 – 12:30 Travel to Shufat RC
- 12:30 – 14:00 Shufat RC brief and walking tour
- Shufat Camp provides a second view of a Palestine refugee camp. Surrounded by the Barrier, the population of Shufat has been effectively cut off from Jerusalem, with residents being forced to pass through a single checkpoint to access their daily business and work. Today, approximately 12,500 Palestine refugees are registered as living in the cramped and overcrowded camp, although the actual number of residents is estimated to be around 22,000. This visit provides an opportunity to see firsthand the impacts of marginalization and urban poverty.*
- 14:00 – 14:30 Martha Myers – Director of RSS
- Briefing on the evolving poverty strategy, summing up some issues in the West Bank from the day's visit, and pointing the way forward to the issue of poverty in Gaza, the subject of the next day's visit.*
- 14:30 Travel to WBFO

Gaza Strip, 21 November 2013

06:30	Departure from Jerusalem
08:00	Arrival at Erez
08:15-08:45	Meet UNRWA at Hamsa Hamsa
9:00-09:30	Visit to Toufah Distribution and Packing Center Briefing on food insecurity and UNRWA food assistance in Gaza <i>Ms. Siobhan Parnell, Senior Program Manager [TBC]</i>

Food insecurity – economic access to food: Political change and insecurity in Egypt is resulting in a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The tunnel economy that spurred construction and the accompanying economic growth is operating at a fraction of the peak capacity. For example, the volume of construction materials entering through the tunnels has decreased from about 7,500 tonnes per day to about 1,500 tonnes per day in July 2013, and is down to an estimated 100 tonnes per day. The shortage in construction materials has already triggered sharp increases in the prices of building materials. Contractors were forced to lay off an estimated 20,000 laborers in the construction sector – the only sector of the economy currently generating jobs in the Gaza Strip. The tunnel closure is hence expected to result in a significant decline in the construction sector’s output, and even higher unemployment, and, as a consequence, increased food insecurity. Food insecurity, primarily caused by lack of economic access to food - due to high unemployment, low wages and high food prices - was already on a steep rise before the Egyptian crisis. The share of food insecure households had surged from 44 percent in 2011 to 57 percent in 2012, a trend accompanied by an increase of households’ cash income spent on food to 50 percent, deterioration in dietary diversity and severe erosion of existing coping mechanisms, such as purchasing food on credit. In the long term, traders will be forced to shift their supply chain from Egypt and its inexpensive goods towards more expensive goods legally imported via the only border crossing with Israel, Kerem Shalom, which in turn will result in shortages of affordable fuel and food. Food prices have increased since the June 2013 tunnel closures, with sugar (14%), rice (26%) and sun flower oil (13%) increasing the most.

09:45-10:30	Meeting with Mr. Robert Turner, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza
10:30-11:15	Briefing on and tour of the Gaza Training Center (GTC) <i>Mr. Jamil Hamadd, GTC Principal</i>

Development in context of the blockade: From 2000 - 2013, UNRWA in Gaza expended over 912 m USD on UNRWA cash, cash-for-work and food alone. None of our essential humanitarian interventions lifts anyone out of poverty. To support employment and skills building, UNRWA in Gaza continues to operate two Vocational Training Centres (Gaza Training College and Khan Younis Training Centre) that offer gender sensitive programming including coeducational courses as well as separate courses for males and females in fields ranging from business management to nursing. The two training centres provide 85 per cent of all the two-year vocational training programmes in the Gaza Strip.

11:15-12:00

Briefing on the Gaza Gateway Social Enterprise Project and discussion with Gateway Project Team & young Gazan Enterprise Resource Planning associates

Mr. Robert Turner, Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza

Ms. Marilyn Garson, Social Enterprise Consultant

Development in context of the blockade: Gaza's young ICT (information and communications technology) industry is the object of many hopes. With soaring unemployment as a result of the seven-year blockade that has dismantled import and export structures, ICT is among Gaza's few industries able to grow despite the blockade, as it is not limited by restrictions in the physical movement of people and goods. UNRWA is in the midst of executing a multiyear project to implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system based on SAP (Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing). UNRWA's Headquarter will outsource some SAP support services to Gaza, thereby providing targeted training and hands-on experience to bridge the gap between graduate skills and UNRWA/SAP support needs. SAP will serve as a seed project for the enterprise. The recruitment of up to 18 young Gazan Enterprise Resource Planning associates is currently underway, and business training will start around November 10, followed by SAP technical training.

12:15-12:45

Visit to Safadi clothing factory

Briefing on the Job Creation Program in Gaza

Mr. Maher Safi, Acting Job Creation Program Manager [TBC]

Impact of blockade – economy: UNRWA, through its Job Creation Programme and with support of the European Union, targets private businesses (wood and furniture, garment and textile, leather and food processing) with the greatest potential to re-establish their markets inside Gaza and, should the blockade be lifted, their external markets.

Due to proximity and economic integration, West Bank and Israel absorbed 85 per cent of the products sold outside the Gaza Strip before the closure. Israel allows Gaza goods to transit through its territory en route to other countries, but does not allow exports to Israel and to the West Bank – Gaza’s traditional markets. Since March 2012, and in an exception to the rule, 47 truckloads of goods exited Gaza for the West

Bank: 43 truckloads of date bars for a WFP project and 4 truckloads of school desks and chairs ordered by the Palestinian Authority. Gaza also exported palm leaves to Israel in August 2013. Difficulties in exploring new markets as well as high transaction and transportation costs associated with other destinations cripple the competitiveness of Gazan products. Volume & destinations remain limited and most of Gaza products traded outside the Gaza Strip are currently subsidized through foreign funding.

Further, Israel had recently allowed a maximum of 70 trucks per day to enter Gaza for the private sector, a welcome development, but short of the real requirement to allow freedom of movement. However, on Sunday 13 October 2013, Israel froze shipments of building materials to the Gaza Strip – both for the private sector and for the International Community – after discovering a tunnel entering its borders from the adjoining territory within Gaza. If this decision is not reversed, the consequences on Gaza will be significant. In 2012, UNRWA accounted for 16 per cent of the GDP of the Gaza Strip and generated almost 21,000 jobs and short-term positions, including regular jobs, 3,000 JCP positions and 5,000 jobs through UNRWA’s construction projects. Combined, these jobs represented 8.2 per cent of all employment in the Gaza Strip, and contributed to reducing the unemployment rate by almost six percentage points.

13:15-13:55

Visit to a farm located in the Access Restricted Area
 Briefing on issues related to access to land
 FAO or OCHA Representative [TBC]

Access to land (context): The November 2012 truce included the easing of restrictions to the access restricted areas (ARAs) imposed by Israel on land. There is a lack of clarity on the scope of current restrictions. Farmers reported to OHCHR that they were able to cultivate land up to 300 metres from the fence, although in some cases restrictions were perceived to be enforced beyond 300 metres. Some farmers noted access had not changed after the November understanding. Farmers are reluctant to invest due to the unpredictability of the situation. 35% of Gaza’s agricultural land has been affected by access restrictions at some point.

13:55-14:05

Transport to Erez

14:05

Departure via Erez