

**Visit of the Advisory Commission to Gaza:  
 Opportunities and challenges of Palestine refugees  
 in the context of blockade and protracted crisis**

**20 and 21 June 2018**

*The field visit of the Advisory Commission (AdCom) will offer a comprehensive look at the situation of Palestine refugees in Gaza in the context of blockade – now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year – and the deteriorating humanitarian and socio-economic conditions. High unemployment and poverty, inconsistent payments of public sector personnel, the deteriorating energy crisis and growing shortages from clean water to essential medicines put a serious additional strain on Palestine refugees and affect nearly every aspect of life, increasing feelings of frustration, desperation and uncertainty about the future among Gazans. While the promise of political change had provided a silver lining, with the reconciliation process stalled, many Gazans have lost hope that their disastrous living conditions could finally improve. Approximately 80 per cent of the population (1.2 million) are forced to rely on humanitarian assistance to be able to cover their basic needs. UNRWA’s funding crisis has further increased uncertainty and fears of being abandoned by the international community. Despite these challenges, Palestine refugees in Gaza demonstrate the resilience and determination to create a better future for themselves and their children, as well as an astonishing potential to make use of the limited opportunities they have. Encouraging the active participation of youth, civil society, UNRWA staff and the wider refugee community in discussions, the AdCom visit will offer reflections from a number of angles on the situation and future of the 1.3 million Palestine refugees in Gaza.*

**Wednesday, 20 June 2018**

06:15	Departure from Jerusalem
08:00	Arrival at Erez and crossing as convoy
08:30	Meet at Hamsa Hamsa
08:30 - 08:45	<b>Transfer to A/V and forming convoy</b> <i>Location: Hamsa Hamsa</i>
08:45 – 09:00	Movement and Coordination at Arba Arba
09:00 – 09:10	Movement
09:10 – 10:35	<b>Welcome by the Director; overview of UNRWA’s operational challenges and opportunities; provision of primary education and supporting school parliament as basis for maintaining hope</b> <i>Location: Jabalia Elementary Boys C School, Jabalia</i>

*Every day, in Gaza UNRWA provides services on multiple levels incl. emergency, core services and reconstruction continuing to offer stable support in a context where state institutions have come under increasing pressure. Director Matthias Schmale will elaborate on the operational context which will be followed a discussion. Subsequently, UNRWA Chief, Education Programme, Farid Abu-Athra will brief on the scale and scope of UNRWA's education programme in Gaza as well as current challenges. The session will conclude by meeting with the central school parliament of the Gaza Strip to hear directly about the concerns and hopes of UNRWA students.*

10:35 – 11:00

Movement

11:00 – 12:45

**UNRWA health services and psychosocial support: coping with an emergency on top of a crisis**

*Location: UNRWA Rimal Health Center, Gaza City*

*UNRWA has successfully been implementing its family health team and e-health reform in all of its 22 health centers in Gaza. UNRWA remains committed to adapting its health services to new challenges and developing needs, such as the rise of non-communicable diseases, as well as in terms of immediate postcare after surgeries, short and longer-term physiotherapy needs, and psychosocial counseling, especially since 30 March and the events of 14/15 May. The visit will provide an opportunity to explore these and further elements of UNRWA health services as well as challenges in relation to coping with an ever-increasing caseload together with Chief, Health Programme, Ghada Al-Jadba, to tour the Health Centre, and to meet participants in counselling sessions by the Community Mental Health Programme.*

12:45 – 13:00

Movement

13:00 – 14:00

**The impact of the public health sector crisis**

*Location: Shifa Hospital, Gaza City*

Years of blockade, internal divide, a chronic energy crisis and shortages of medicines and equipment have left essential public health services in Gaza barely able to function. Especially since 30 March and the events of 14/15 May, Gaza's public health sector has struggled to cope with the mass influx of casualties and is now more than ever on the verge of collapse. Visit to the largest medical complex and central hospital in the Gaza Strip and briefing by management and WHO on the situation in the public health sector, emergency response capacity and UNRWA logistics support to deliver fuel to critical non-UNRWA installations in Gaza.

14:00 – 14:15 Movement

14:15 – 15:00 **Strategic outlook for UNRWA’s vocational training work in Gaza**

*Location: UNRWA Gaza Training Center*

Briefing on the UNRWA TVET programme in Gaza and strategies for the coming period to further improve the relevance of the programme, adapt to market needs, increase opportunities for graduates and enhance operational efficiencies, including meeting with TVET students/graduates. Subsequently, visit to GTC workshops and meeting with instructors, counselors and youth involved in UNRWA’s child labour prevention project which seeks to resolve or mitigate the protection concerns of children working around UNRWA distribution centres in the Gaza Strip, for example through support classes and re-integration into schools as well as ad hoc vocational training.

15:00 – 15:15 Short break with light lunch (and some delegations leaving to Erez)

15:15 – 16:00 **Addressing child protection issues in Gaza**

Briefing on child protection issues and presentation on project addressing the protection situation of a specific group of child labourers, including meeting with youth involved in the project.

*Location: UNRWA Gaza Training Center*

16:00 – 17:00 **The state of the private sector and efforts to revive the economy and improve livelihoods through microfinance and job creation**

*Location: UNRWA Gaza Training Center*

The Israeli blockade of Gaza continues to have a devastating effect as access to markets and people’s movement to and from the Gaza Strip remain severely restricted. The economy and its capacity to create jobs has been devastated, with the majority of the population becoming dependent on humanitarian aid to meet basic needs. UNRWA, through the Job Creation Programme (JCP), creates short-term employment while the Microfinance and Microenterprise Department provides loans and support for small businesses. Following a brief overview of the state of Gaza’s private sector by Naser Jaber, Head of Microfinance and Microenterprise programme, and Maher Safi, Head of JCP, and clients will present their work and be available to discuss perspectives for Gaza’s private sector with a focus on small businesses.

17:00 – 17:30 Movement

17:30 – 19:30 Check-in and downtime (incl. dinner) at Mashtal Hotel  
 (reminder: *delegations can order lunch packages for next day*)

19:30 – 21:00 **Panel Discussion with external participants**  
*Location: Mashtal Hotel*

### Thursday, 21 June 2018

08:00 Check-out from Mashtal Hotel

08:30 – 08:45 Movement

08:45 – 09:55 **Addressing food insecurity and other vulnerabilities**  
*Location: Tuffah Distribution Center*

*High levels of unemployment and poverty have forced an increasing number of Palestine refugees to rely on UNRWA for food. The Logistics team will be available to explain the food distribution at the centre and the Chief, Relief and Social Services Programme, Asem Abu-Shawish, will discuss the critical importance of the food assistance programme, provide an overview of UNRWA poverty assessment, and of other interventions to address vulnerabilities and needs of Palestine refugees.*

09:55 – 10:30 Movement

10:30 – 11:45 **Providing support and creating opportunities for Gaza's disabled**  
*Location: Deir e-Bala Rehabilitation Center*

Due to repeated rounds of conflict, there has been a sharp increase in the number of persons with physical disabilities in Gaza who are in need of specialized support, care and opportunities. Due to the high number of persons injured by gunshots since 30 March, it is expected that an unprecedented number of casualties will suffer from long-term physical disabilities that will require extensive physiotherapy management for extended periods of time and may need further assistance like artificial limbs and physical appliances. With support from UNRWA, the Deir el-Balah Rehabilitation Center employs disabled people, and has a physical therapy department, a rehabilitation center for the deaf, a school for the blind, a center for disabled children and a neuropathy department.

11:45 – 12:00 Movement

12:00 – 13:15 **Overview of water issues in Gaza, in cooperation with UNICEF**  
*Location: Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant*

Water resources are critically scarce in the Gaza Strip; 95 percent of the water extracted from the coastal aquifer is considered unfit for human consumption. Seawater desalination is one of the strategic options chosen by the Palestinian Water Authority to help provide 2 million Palestinians in the coastal enclave, including one million children, with safe drinking water. The UNICEF seawater desalination plant is providing safe tap water to communities that previously bought or imported their drinking water.

13:15 – 13:40

Movement

13:40 – 14:55

**Visit to GGateway and Gaza Sky Geeks***Location: Gaza Sky Geeks, Gaza City*

With the Gaza Gateway, UNRWA intends to harness the IT and English language capacity already existing in Gaza generating employment through the provision of IT services to companies all over the world. Gaza Sky Geeks is a co-working space, startup accelerator, and technology education hub that brings together online freelancers, outsourcers, and startup founders together under one roof to share ideas, learn, innovate, and code.

14:55 – 15:15

**De-brief with the Director***Location: Gaza Sky Geeks, Gaza City*

Concluding remarks by the Director will offer a reflection of various elements of the visit and an opportunity to answer questions from participants.

15:15 – 15:45

Movement to Arba Arba, Hamsa Hamsa and back to Erez