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For immediate release

## **ILO expands portfolio of technical cooperation in the occupied Palestinian territory**

*Four projects and a National Employment Fund unveiled at Geneva gathering while Kuwait grants additional US\$500,000*

**Beirut (ILO News)** – The International Labour Organization will announce plans to expand its portfolio of activities in the occupied Palestinian territory on Monday (November 15), before representatives of the Palestinian Authority, governments, employers' and workers' organizations, as well as UN agencies.

Convened on the sidelines of the ILO's Governing Body, discussions will focus on strategies and proposed action for strengthening labour market governance, job creation, private sector development, workers' rights and social dialogue in the West Bank and Gaza.

The ILO, with its tripartite and UN partners, is seeking to broaden the scope of its activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, building on the achievements of the Palestinian Employment Programme launched in 2008.

"We are moving beyond employment and recovery to a more integrated response that speaks to the heart of the ILO's mandate – decent work and social justice – and addresses some of the most pressing socio-economic needs of the Palestinian people," said ILO Regional Director for Arab States Nada al-Nashif.

Four projects on skills development, job creation and reconstruction in Gaza; improving micro, small and medium enterprises; supporting Palestinian cooperatives; and institution-building for social dialogue will be presented at the event together with the revitalization of the Palestinian Employment and Social Protection Fund for workers.

A prime objective of the ILO and the Palestinian Authority's labour market sector strategy, the Fund will support the Palestinian Authority's reform agenda by assisting in the management and monitoring of employment-related programmes and mobilizing essential financial resources.

"This meeting launches effective and tangible initiatives in support of Palestinian Decent Work, reflecting the strategic partnership between the ILO and the Ministry of Labour in the Palestinian National Authority. This initiative lays the ground for a new phase - we hope the international community will extend the support required for its success", said Palestinian Minister of Labour Ahmad Majdalani.

Kuwait is the first country to have committed funds to the expanded programme, donating US\$500,000 on Thursday (November 11, 2010), marking its third contribution to the ILO's activities in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"The State of Kuwait and the ILO have had positive cooperation in the Palestinian territory with a view to alleviating poverty through job creation and economic development initiatives," said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Dharar Abdul-Razzak Razzooqi.

ILO's engagement in the occupied Palestinian territory dates back to the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Palestinian Authority in 1994. Since then, the UN's only tripartite agency has worked with the Ministry of Labour, the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and other social partners to promote decent work, institution-building and workers' rights for Palestinians.

Other ILO development partners in the occupied Palestinian territory include the Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Turkey, UNDP/Spain MDG Fund, and the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People.

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