



**EMBASSY OF ITALY IN BEIRUT
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OFFICE**

Beirut, 5 May 2010

More than forty students from Saida and surrounding areas have received a final degree after completing a six-month vocational training course at the Saida Technical School. A graduation ceremony was held on Monday 3 May 2010 in Saida in the presence of Deputy, Ms. Bahia Hariri, the Italian Ambassador to Lebanon, H.E. Mr. Gabriele Checchia and ILO's Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States, Mr. Maurizio Bussi.

The courses have been offered as part of a three-million-dollar project on skills development, employment services and local economic recovery for the construction sector funded by the Italian Development Cooperation - Embassy of Italy in Beirut. The project launched in October 2008 is implemented by the International Labour Organization in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education as well as with municipalities and vocational education institutions in Bint Jbeil, Hasbaya, Marjayoun, Nabatiey, Tyre, Sarafand and Saida.

“To expand access to employment-relevant training and use those skills in securing productive employment for all is the key to deliver job-rich inclusive growth” said Deputy Hariri while congratulating the students and praising this initiative which “addresses one of the core socio-economic priorities of Saida and south Lebanon”.

“Skills development and the creation of employment opportunities, particularly for young people, is a key objective of the Italian development cooperation in Lebanon. This initiative contributes to national and local efforts aimed at stimulating socio-economic recovery and creating sustainable jobs linked to labour market needs” Ambassador Checchia stated in front of the audience attending the ceremony.

“Establishing partnerships between central authorities, vocational training institutions, municipalities, employers’ and workers’ organizations is the main strategy of this project. New graduates who have acquired vocational skills in key sectors such as carpentry, plumbing and electricity should be ideally placed in satisfying the increasing demand for Lebanese skilled workers in a fast-growing economic sector such as construction.” Mr. Bussi added.

During this phase, the project has trained almost four hundred students, equipped several vocational training institutions, promoted entrepreneurship culture by providing specific training in micro-business development, and promoted linkages with employers through partnership agreements with the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) and local Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. A new round of vocational courses will be launched in June and will involve an additional six hundred beneficiaries from different municipalities in South Lebanon.