

CHF International / West Bank and Gaza

Local Democratic Reform Program (TAWASOL)

تواصل - TAWASOL

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Sixth Quarterly Report

1 January – 31 March 2007



Voting in Bani Zeid Project Planning Workshop (8 February, 2007)

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ARD	Associates for Rural Development, Inc.
CEP	Center for Engineering and Planning
CHF	Community Habitat Finance International
CoP	Chief of Party
EPLA	Empowering Palestinian Local Authorities program (renamed TAWASOL)
LDR	Local Democratic Reform program
LGU	Local Government Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PPW	Project Planning Workshop
TAWASOL	Arabic name for TAWASOL (meaning regular communication between stakeholders)
TWG	Technical Working Group also referred to as a Local Action Committee (LAC)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBG	West Bank & Gaza

GLOSSARY

Civic Groups	Organizations, institutions, or other organized bodies representing citizens and their interests.
Civil Society	The totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions including organizations such as registered charities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, social movements, business associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups.
Community	A city, town, village, or other populated area, including the local governing authority.
Community Representatives	Individuals, NOT including elected officials, who hold recognized positions of leadership in a particular community and who can represent the needs and concerns of the community or of particular sectors of that community.
Community Stakeholders	Individuals or institutions who have a vested interest in the development of a particular community including but not limited to community leaders, heads of local institutions, investors, and citizens.
LGU	Local Government Unit, referring to any local level governing authority including municipal councils, village councils, or other.
Eligible LGUs	LGUs that are eligible for engagement by TAWASOL given USG policy prohibiting contact or support to the Hamas government or other designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations.
TAWASOL Consortium	The group of institutions working as partners on the implementation of the Local Democratic Reform Program. They are CHF International, ARD, and the Center for Engineering and Planning.
Municipality	Elected local governing body for population centers over 5,000 people.
Tier I LGUs	Under the TAWASOL Two Tier Technical Approach, Tier I LGUs will comprise a Core Group of 15-20 municipalities receiving maximum technical assistance and will qualify to have a combination of capacity building, basic service improvement, and community development projects.
Tier II LGUs	A second group of 15-20 LGUs that are within the same geographic cluster and share similar capacity building needs and priorities with Tier I LGUs. Tier II LGUs will qualify to have capacity building support under TAWASOL.
Village Council	Elected bodies governing population sites between 2,000 and 5,000 people.

Local Democratic Reform Program (TAWASOL)

TAWASOL – تواصل

SIXTH QUARTERLY FIELD REPORT

1 January – 31 March, 2007

I. QUARTERLY OVERVIEW

This sixth Quarterly Report for the Local Democratic Reform Program (Tawasol) covers program activities during the period of 1 January – 31 March 2007.

Upon USAID's request and in line with the instructions and draft Program Description (PD) received on 8 September, 2006, CHF prepared and submitted a new 18 month Implementation Plan (IP) on 17 October, 2006. Following several revisions, a final IP was submitted to USAID on 30 October, 2006 that received provisional approval from the mission and a verbal notice to proceed with implementation. The list of potential sites to be targeted by the program submitted to USAID on 17 August, 2006, was reviewed by the mission to ensure the final group selected meets the agreed upon criteria between USAID and the Tawasol team. On 8 December 2006, the Mission approved a list of twenty proposed LGUs for Tawasol in which to start the implementation of program activities. Several changes were made to the list following initial visits on the ground and are detailed within this report. The Tawasol team immediately started conducting initial visits to all approved sites and undertaking a comprehensive mapping process of the LGUs and civil society activity in each target community. CHF has recently submitted the list of proposed Tier II LGUs to USAID for vetting. It is important to note that due to pending elections in Rafah, the LGU has been on hold for Tawasol intervention. Recognizing that with the addition of Qireh in the Salfit cluster, the total number of Core Group LGUs being targeted by Tawasol remains 20 as stipulated in the Implementation Plan.

This quarter saw the completion of all Project Planning Workshops (PPWs) as well as the start of project selection for Tawasol intervention. Fifteen community development projects have been selected and are currently in the design and tendering process. Municipal technical assistance and capacity building assessments have begun and projects are being identified. In addition, under Activity 4, the third Local Government Sector Update has been developed and is near completion, a concept and methodology was designed for the Sentinel Site Surveys and a workshop took place to develop the first Technical Briefing Note/Report which is also near finalization.

The first of three Anti-Corruption Trainings took place from the 29th-31st of March, 2007 in partnership with The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity – AMAN. Preparations have been ongoing throughout the quarter for the upcoming Tawasol Mayors' Conference which will take place from 9-10 May, 2007.

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The following outlines administration and management related progress during this 6th Quarter:

1. Mr. Nidal Hasan hired as the Program Democratic Governance-West Bank Coordinator, to begin work as of 8 April, 2007 replacing Mr. Isam A'kel who resigned his position during the last quarter.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The following implementation steps have been undertaken in this Quarter:

1. Program Mobilization

This quarter saw rapid start up of activities with the completion of PPWs in all 20 target communities as well as the selection of most of the priority Community Development Projects, the start of design and tendering, initial Municipality Capacity Building Assessments, selection of Tier II LGUs and the start of Sentinel Site Surveying and the development of the first Technical Report. The program is now fully mobilized.

A Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP see Annex A) was prepared and a draft has been submitted to the USAID CTO on 20 March 2007. The Tawasol team is awaiting initial feedback. It is important to note that CHF must officially submit the PMEP to USAID 30 days from the signing of the CA, the modified version of which has yet to be signed.

GIS indicators were identified and finalized with USAID's GIS officer following a meeting at CHF's Country Representative Office (CRO) on 20 March, 2007 as follows:

- 1) Any Infrastructure related activity will be reported in the relevant sector.
- 2) Capacity Building/citizen participation could be reported under a new activity type (D400) with the following language and indicators:

308	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400A	No. of LGUs benefiting	1
309	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400B	No. of training sessions/workshops	2
310	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400C	No. of LGU individuals trained	3
311	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400D	No. of meetings held with LGU/citizens	4
312	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400E	No. of meetings participants/citizens	5
313	D400	Enhancing Local Government Units (LGUs) capacity and citizen participation	D400F	No. of CSOs participating in LGU work	6

2. Select Tawasol Target LGUs/Sites

The list of 20 LGUs approved by USAID was slightly modified this Quarter. Qireh was added to the East Salfit Cluster since the town was recently added to the Joint Services Council of East Salfit and Wadi Gaza was replaced by Fukhari because of internal problems in the community and the inability of the mayor to guarantee the cooperation of all community stakeholders in the implementation of the program activities. Rafah still remains on hold due to the cancellation of municipal elections; another election round is scheduled – yet it is not expected that Rafah will be able to be included in Tawasol's core group.

Table 1: TAWASOL Program Sites

	LGU	DISTRICT	LGU	DISTRICT
1.	Arrabeh	Jenin	12. Abu Dis	Jerusalem
2.	Tubas	Tubas	13. Beit Fajar	Bethlehem
3.	Illar	Tulkarem	14. Al-Thahrieh	Hebron
4.	Azzoun	Qalqiliya	15. Al Zahra	Gaza
5.	Sabastia	Nablus	16. Al Musader	Gaza
6.	Hares	Salfit	17. Abassan Al Jadideh	Gaza
7.	Kifl Hares	Salfit	18. Fukhari **	Gaza
8.	Deir Istia	Salfit	19. Qarara	Gaza
9.	Marda	Salfit	20. Abessan Kabira	Gaza
10.	Qireh*	Salfit		
11.	Bani Zeid	Ramallah		

*Added

**Replaced Wadi Gaza

3. Contact LGUs

Contact with LGUs and relevant stakeholders is maintained on a near daily basis.

4. Conduct Community Mapping Exercise

The mapping exercise has been completed and the data is currently being entered into the program developed database.

5. Conduct Participatory Planning Workshops (PPWs) to develop LGU Action Plans

The PPWs are complete. Please see section IV – Activity 3 for full details.

6. Sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

No MOUs have been signed at this stage. MOUs will be prepared following the finalization of project identification and LGU action plans in cooperation with the LGUs and the community representatives.

7. Technical Working Groups (TWGs)/Local Action Committees (LACs)

No TWGs or LACs have been developed at this stage. TWG (or in some locations Local Action Committees (LACs)) will be formed by the LGUs and the Community Representatives following PPWs and project prioritization starting in early May 2007. However, during the PPWs, community participants nominated members to the TWGs/LACs, and LGUs are presently, in cooperation with Tawasol team, deciding on the final members' list.

8. Municipal Technical Assistance (Capacity Building) and Community Development Projects

Community Development Projects (CDPs) have initially been identified following prioritization of projects in the PPWs and through additional consultation with each LGU. A status update as of 31 March, 2007 can be found in Annex B. A Municipal Technical Assistance (Capacity Building) package is currently under development through in-depth discussions and rapid assessments with each LGU. However, the first technical assistance activities were initiated by the Center for Engineering and Planning (CEP) and the CHF technical team focusing on providing on-the-job training for sound project

design and tender document preparation, including preparation of detailed bills of quantities, particular and general specifications in accordance with international and local standards, and transparent tendering processes. Standardized documents were provided to LGUs in hard and soft copies to enable utilization for any future project design and implementation.

9. Implement Ongoing Assessment of Local Governance Trends

A concept and methodology for carrying out the Sentinel Site Surveys was developed with the first Site Survey planned to be conducted in mid-April, 2006. A brainstorming workshop for the first technical briefing note was held with the senior LDR team on 12 March, 2007 and the final draft of the technical note is currently being revised. The third Local Government Sector Update is also under preparation with ongoing collection and analysis of all relevant developments in the sector.

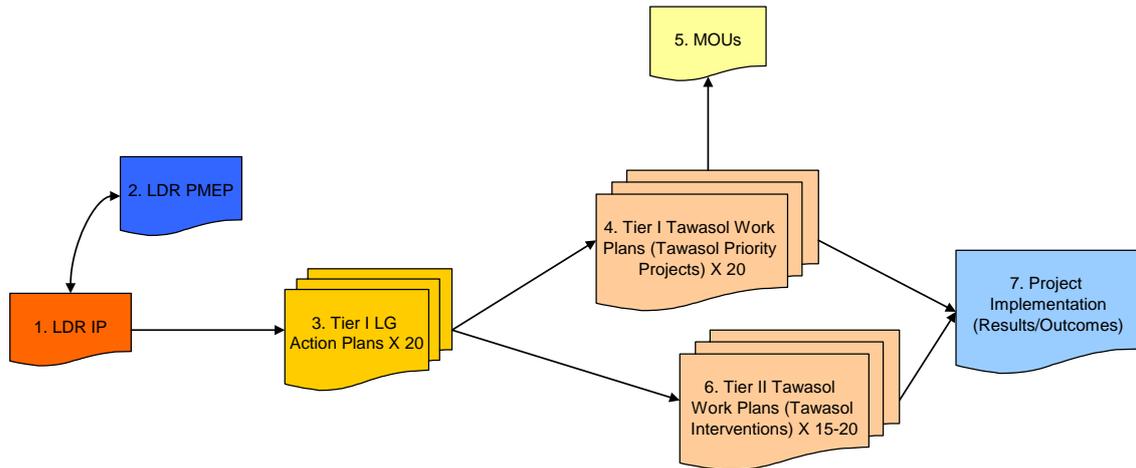
IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: Enabling Environment & "National Level"

This Activity shall not be implemented at this time. Proceeding with its elements requires the written approval of the Agreement Officer.

ACTIVITY 2: Strengthen the Capacity of LGUs to Provide Basic Services

The project selection process to strengthen the capacity of LGUs to provide basic services is being pursued on two tracks in accordance with the SOW and implementation plan. The first track is the Community Development Project (CDP is also referred to as Service Improvement) which is limited to the Core Group LGUs and includes funding for a priority small scale development project such as paving of internal roads, purchase of waste containers, building a small community center, etc. The second track is the Municipal Technical Assistance (Capacity Building) project which will be offered to Tier I Core Group with maximum effort exerted to expand the benefit to adjacent Tier II LGUs. These projects will focus more on communication systems, financial systems, human resource restructuring, provision of planning tools to facilitate master plans development, staff skill upgrading/training, etc. Once project prioritization has been completed, an LGU Action Plan, Tawasol work plans, and MOUs are developed as the framework for work in each target LGU. These plans will be monitored alongside the broader Tawasol program. Fig. 1 below illustrates the LGU project selection and follow up documents:



Following the PPWs, the prioritized projects of each LGU were reviewed and discussed in more detail through follow-up meetings. Community Development/Service Improvement Projects were subsequently selected to be implemented by Tawasol for most of the LGUs. Community Development Projects (CDPs) have been selected in 15 communities (for full details see Annex B for the Project Status Update Matrix). Several municipalities are still in the process of selecting a Community Development/Service Improvement Project that fits within the budgetary scope of the program.

The five Salfit cluster communities and Tubas are thinking to completely focus on municipal/cluster capacity building due to higher need and priority. These projects are still under discussion with the relevant LGUs. Other donors continue to provide support to basic municipal and social infrastructure without major restrictions. These donors are also providing greater funding that is available under Tawasol, putting the program at somewhat of a disadvantage. To overcome these budgetary constraints, Tawasol continues to emphasize the process of project identification, prioritization, tendering, contracting, project implementation, and monitoring as the main goal of the projects to help improve the technical capacity of the relevant municipal departments.

As in the past quarter, most visited sites expressed the need for larger investments in CDPs than could be provided through the available resources under Tawasol. The LGUs referenced the deteriorating conditions of municipal and other social services due to the prevailing economic crisis and the need by the elected municipalities to demonstrate responsiveness to their community basic needs. CHF and Tawasol are looking for potential opportunities to address some of the more pressing, larger investment needs expressed by the target communities, while also coordinating with other USAID-funded programs to leverage additional investments in Tawasol target communities. For more details on leveraging activities please see Section V below, Coordination and Leveraging.

Designs and tendering preparations continue for Beit Fajjar, Thahriyyeh, and Bani Zeid Gharbiyyeh. During this period preparations for Arrabeh, Sabastya, A'zzon, and Illar in the West Bank were initiated. As for Gaza, preparations for the CDPs in Abassan Kabira, Qarara, Zahra, and Abassan Jadida were initiated immediately after the completion of the PPWs. The technical teams are facing some difficulties due to municipalities starting long negotiations on budget availability. Tawasol technical experts engage in lengthy technical advice processes with the municipality and community representatives to finalize a project that is within the program resources.

ACTIVITY 3: Civil Society Participation and Oversight

To launch the Civil Society Participation and Oversight component, 15 PPWs were held for 19 of the 20 targeted communities. A PPW is not required in Tubas as they have recently completed a similar exercise to identify their LGU priorities. Individual LGU Action Plans are currently under development in consultation with the LGUs. The PPWs were held in all communities on the following dates:

	LGU	DISTRICT	DATE
1.	Arrabeh	Jenin	13 February 07
2.	Tubas*	Tubas	Not Held
3.	Illar	Tulkarem	19 February 07
4.	Azzoun	Qalqiliya	25 February 07
5.	Sabastia	Nablus	26 February 07
6.	Hares	Salfit	14 March 07
7.	Kifl Hares	Salfit	14 March 07
8.	Deir Istia	Salfit	14 March 07
9.	Marda	Salfit	14 March 07
10.	Qireh	Salfit	14 March 07
11.	Bani Zeid	Ramallah	8 February 07
12.	Abu Dis	Jerusalem	5 February 07
13.	Beit Fajjar	Bethlehem	22 January 07
14.	Al-Thahrieh	Hebron	1 February 07
15.	Al Zahra	Gaza	7 March 07
16.	Al Musader	Gaza	14 March 07
17.	Abassan Al Jadideh	Gaza	8 March 07
18.	Al-Fukhari **	Gaza	22 March 07
19.	Qarara	Gaza	1 March 07
20.	Abessan Kabira	Gaza	28 February 07

*Tubas had previously undergone a similar exercise to identify LGU priority areas thus a PPW has been deemed unnecessary.

** Al-Fukhari replaced Wadi Gaza due to internal problems in the community.



Group work in Arrabeh PPW

The PPW followed a comprehensive participatory process (see Annex C for the PPW Facilitation Plan) involving municipal staff, council member and community civil society representatives and leaders. The process allowed the participants to identify strengths and weaknesses in the community, identify and detail priority projects needed by the community, and vote on the projects they identified as the most urgent. A summary of proceedings has been prepared in Arabic in the form of a full PPW report to be sent to each LGU for their records and to assist them in

conducting similar workshops in the future. Attached in Annex D are the translated English summaries of these reports which highlight the priorities identified by each community. 685 participants in total participated in the 15 PPWs, of which 167 were women, 172 were municipal staff and 513 were community/civil society representatives. The following table breaks down the number of participants by location:

	LGU - PPW	Municipal Staff Members		Community Representatives		Total Participants
		M	F	M	F	
1.	Arrabeh	29	0	11	6	46
2.	Illar	12	2	14	16	44
3.	Azzoun	9	0	34	5	48
4.	Sabastia	4	3	30	9	49
5.	East Salfit Cluster	9	0	12	8	29
6.	Bani Zeid	4	2	16	5	27
7.	Abu Dis	5	2	23	6	36
8.	Beit Fajjar	9	1	17	13	40
9.	Al-Thahrieh	7	3	19	8	37
10.	Al Zahra	10	1	32	3	46
11.	Al Musader	12	0	23	10	45
12.	Abassan Al-Jadideh2	0	0	29	12	43
13.	Al-Fukhari	19	8	40	13	80
14.	Qarara	11	2	28	19	72
15.	Abassan Al-Kabira	5	1	43	9	58
TOTAL		147	25	371	142	700

The PPW process is outlined in Fig. 2 below:

Session 1:
Community
Situation
Assessment and
Individual
Brainstorm

Participants undertake an initial assessment of the major socio-economic trends, local resources, recent accomplishments, current challenges, and emergency needs in their LGU. Individuals write down ideas and share them with the group. Individual participants brainstorm through a four box model similar to a community SWOT analysis.



Beit Fajjar PPW – Individual Brainstorm on Community Situation Assessment

Session 2:
Common
Strategies and
Group
Brainstorm
followed by
Clustering and
Tiling

The group discusses general common strategies that will allow for a pro-active response to address community needs identified in the Community Situational Assessment. The participants break into small groups of 6-8 and identify potential specific, realistic, and priority actions to develop municipal capacities, support civil society institutions and address emergency needs. Following the group work, the participants come back to the



larger group where their ideas are clustered and grouped together under common themes.

Session 3:
Group Action
Planning and
Project
Prioritization

The participants then break again into smaller groups to address the identified themes through action planning to set steps to address 1. Municipal Capacity Building and 2. Community Needs through a template provided to develop a mini action plan. Each group then presents to the larger group their plans and justifications.

Cluster of ideas in East Salfit Cluster's PPW.



Qarara participants in group action planning.

Session 4:
Voting

The participants are then given the opportunity to vote for the projects they feel are most suitable for the community and receive two votes – one for municipal capacity building, including enhancing citizen-LGU engagement, and one for community basic needs.

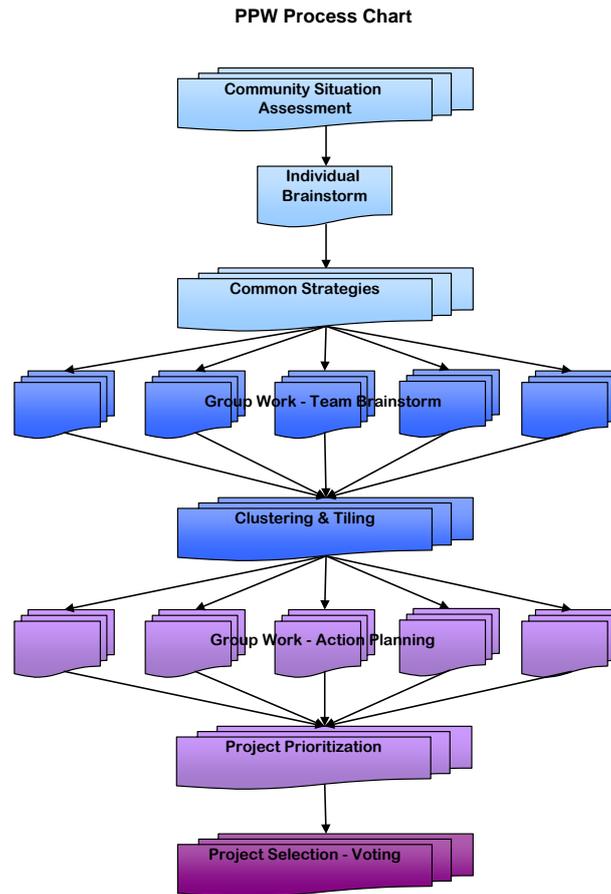


Woman from Azzoun Voting for a Priority Project.

For the East Salfit Cluster, the Tawasol team redesigned the workshop structure and objectives to be more appropriate for a joint council setting and to ensure the focus on joint planning, needs assessments, and identification of priority interventions for the entire cluster of communities. The PPW was a success and all five LGUs and all participants addressed the workshop as one group with minimum attention to individual community interests. The aim was to enhance the lines of cooperation between the five communities based on the commonalities rather than differences.

Follow up visits to assess the technical assistance needs were postponed for the next period so the team could focus on finalizing the workshops, preparing for launching the community development projects, and preparing the ground work for component four of the program related to analysis of the local governance sector.

Fig. 2 PPW Process Chart



ACTIVITY 4: Ongoing Assessment of Local Governance Trends

The Tawasol program will conduct regular in-depth analysis of local governance as a sector to highlight trends and challenges. The following has been completed this quarter:

- **Local Government Sector Updates:**

Preparations for the third Local Governance Update took place including meetings with several relevant parties and donors to collate information on developments in the sector. The write up and review is currently underway.

- **“Sentinel” Site Surveys:**

Several Concepts for the Sentinel Site Surveys were developed with the Senior Technical Advisor and the Tawasol team. A workplan has been set out and the first Survey will be undertaken in the community of Bani Zeid in mid-April with a final write-up to be completed by early May.

- **Special Technical Reports Addressing Key Issues:**

An internal workshop for the Tawasol team and the Local Governance advisor (Dr. Al-Araj) was held to discuss the most important thematic areas to be covered by the Technical Briefing notes to be prepared by Tawasol. The first Technical Briefing Note Draft was reviewed by the senior Tawasol team. The second draft is currently under finalization.

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Program impact will be monitored against set performance indicator targets as listed in the PME and further through the monitoring of cross cutting governance and democracy themes. Every effort will be made to maximize opportunities and partnerships with local stakeholders to promote these Good Governance themes to increase the overall impact of the program. Cross cutting themes will include (but are not limited to):

- Support to Emerging Democratic and Moderate Leaders
- Democratic Participation
- Transparency and Accountability
- Reform Initiatives
- Civic Awareness
- Donor Leveraging and Partner Support
- Local Government Dialogue
- Employment Generation

Anti-Corruption Training for Tawasol Mayors and Municipal Staff:

Two workshops on Anti-Corruption Awareness and Practical Strategies were held in partnership between CHF Tawasol and the AMAN Coalition on 29-31 March and from 6-7 April, 2007. The workshops were perceived by most of the participants as the first step towards creating a zero tolerance culture for corruption among the council members, mayors and staff of LGUs in the West Bank & Gaza.



First Anti-Corruption Training for Tawasol LGUs (29-31 April, 2007)

"Despite the fact that the principles and systems that have been introduced to us during the workshop cannot be completely adhered to under current regulatory and political situation, the workshop has helped me a lot in terms of identifying forms of corruption that I used to consider as being part of the culture and not wrong to do" Mr. Ahmad Buzia, Mayor of Kefal Haras, stated as his point of view when referring to "favoritism" as being one of the forms of corruption most prevailing in the Palestinian Community. Mr. Buzia, also stated that "despite the importance of the workshop and the issues covered, he feels that more advocacy is needed on the issue among not just with LGU mayors and staff, but most importantly among members of local community". On the other hand, not all the participants felt that this training touched upon current sector priorities and that it should have been postponed to a latter stage. Mr. Iqab Dragmeh mentioned that "the problem with LGUs at the moment is their inability to pay for its staff members, and I don't think that my top priority at the moment would be ensuring that I am transparent with my community, despite me realizing its importance... because honestly my municipality has "nothing" to be transparent about".

Other participants also reflected the need for AMAN and CHF to follow-up with the LGUs in order to work together to determine what the anti-corruption requirements and needs are of individual municipalities. The commitment towards the Anti-Corruption Code of Conduct developed by AMAN and the Arab Thought Forum in 2006, in partnership with 22 municipalities in the West Bank & Gaza, was considered by most participants as being the

second step to be taken by Tawasol LGUs towards leveraging civil society anti-corruption efforts in the Palestinian society. All 20 Tawasol LGUs are expected to sign the Code of Conduct at the upcoming Tawasol Mayor's Conference in May 2007.

Tawasol Mayor's Conference Preparations (9-10 May, 2007)

Preparations are underway for the upcoming Mayors Conference to be held from 9-10 May, 2007 in Jericho (see latest Draft (1 April, 2007) schedule in Annex D). The workshop aims at fostering cooperation between the participating mayors/LGUs, discuss common areas of concern, share knowledge and experiences and provide recommendation for the improvement of the Local Governance sector in general. The workshop itself will involve several technical LG resources to help facilitate the group discussion which will be focusing on thematic areas of the LG Sector. The conference is expected to touch upon all cross cutting themes.

A Tawasol representative attended one of AMAN's preliminary trainings of LG anti-corruption held on 9-10 March, 2007, and determined some changes were required to meet the unique needs and focal areas of the Tawasol program. These changes were made by AMAN and the Tawasol consultant, resulting in a more practical and interactive workshop. The first Anti-Corruption Training workshop for Tawasol LGUs was held for 18 participants from five LGUs (Illar, Al-Thahriyeh, Sabastia, Azzoun, and Bani Zeid). The workshop took place from 29-31 March, 2007 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Jericho and was viewed as a great success. The second training took place from 6-7 April, 2007 and the third workshop for Gaza LGUs is scheduled to take place by end-April.

In February, the Tawasol team contributed to the USAID DG bulletin to be published monthly.

VISITS & VISABILITY

A visit to the Abu-Dees LGU was organized for USAID and the Consulate on 12 March, 2007. The meeting was attended by the mayor, council members, and civil society representatives. The discussion covered the general situation of Abu Dees, the cooperation between the LGU and civil society, other USAID programs targeting the area, community needs in general and Tawasol's role in responding to part of the needs within the available resources and criteria for support.

Tawasol continues its visibility through press releases in local newspapers (see Annex E for copies of press releases from this quarter). A Tawasol Profile has been developed and is updated monthly as part of the program's viability. The profile is currently only in English but will be translated and maintained in Arabic as of 1 May, 2007 (See the profile in Annex F).

V. COORDINATION AND LEVERAGING

Leveraging with other USAID and Donor Programming (Avoiding Duplication while Maximizing Impact)

Some donors are remobilizing the provision of support to the Local Governance Sector including the KFW, the World Bank, France, Belgium, Japan (mainly through UNDP and JAICA), and the Arab and Islamic funding organizations mainly through PECNDAR and the Welfare Association. Most donors continue to provide direct support to non-restricted municipalities, some to "restricted municipalities," and have minimal contact, if any, with the Ministry of Local Governance. LDR continues to monitor donor activities in the sector while

working to capture any new developments in the Local Governance Sector Update provided to USAID. LDR is looking into potential areas for cooperation with other donors and is hoping to assist LGUs to reach out to donors to help them fund priority project (identified in their LG Action Plans) which cannot be covered by Tawasol alone. CHF is currently developing a proposal in Arabic for the Arab Fund for Development related to larger scale investments in Tawasol LGUs.

CHF has begun discussions with other USAID programs, such as EWAS-ANERA, RAFEED-ARD, and RUWWAD-EDC, to see how best we can leverage resources to meet some of the needs identified by the LGUs. Under the auspices of the USAID D&G team leader and Water and Infrastructure team leader, CHF-Tawasol and ANERA-EWAS met at USAID and agreed upon the basis for cooperation and coordination between the two programs. CHF forwarded several requests for emergency water assistance for the Tawasol target LGUs to the EWAS CTO. The cooperation will continue throughout the life of the two programs. A preliminary meeting with the RUWWAD EDC team was held and potential cooperation areas were agreed upon (an email was sent on the meeting to Tawasol CTO). A formal meeting will be held in the presence of USAID in the near future. A third meeting was held with the RAFEED program implemented by ARD Inc. in the presence of the CTOs for each program. Tawasol agreed to share all emergency needs identified in target LGUs with RAFEED, in the hopes that the program would assist the LGUs or CSOs respond to emergencies.

In April, Tawasol will meet with the Belgium Technical Cooperation, JICA, and Palestinian CSOs, including Panorama, Civic Forum, and the Arab Thought Forum, working in the local governance sector.

VI. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND SECURITY ISSUES

During this quarter the closures and checkpoints, governmental cash flow problems, and political changes resulted in increasing social problems, particularly in Gaza. The most serious security concern during this period was the escalation in internal violence between rival Palestinian parties. The Tawasol senior management team postponed visits to additional sites in Gaza due to the security situation and the Gaza Office was closed on a couple of occasions to ensure staff safety. Following the formation of the new Unity Government, factional violence has decreased.

ANNEX A – PMEP

ANNEX B – Status Update

ANNEX C – PPW Facilitation Plan

ANNEX D – Mayors Conference Schedule (as of 1 April, 2007)

ANNEX E – LDR Press Releases

ANNEX F – Tawasol April 2007 Profile Update