

**ASSISTANCE TO THE
PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Quarterly Report No. 3
(1 April – 31 June 2000)**

Submitted to:

USAID/West Bank and Gaza

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QUARTERLY REPORT NO. 3

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This third Quarterly Report describes the activities of the Project Technical Unit (PTU) under the USAID contract, *Assistance to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC)* for the period 1 April to 31 June 2000.

The project is designed to strengthen the ability of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to draft, review, and approve legislation; effectively fulfill its mandate to provide oversight of the Executive Branch; improve constituent relations; and strengthen internal administration. Through strengthening the legislative capacity of the PLC, this project will contribute to the USAID Mission's broader strategic objective of supporting more responsive and accountable government.

During this period, the macro context of general political uncertainty and instability affected the priorities and activities of the Council. Much of the Members' attention was focused on the question of how to deal with the lack of progress in the negotiations with Israel and the domestic unrest resulting from this. Abu Ala's participation in the secret negotiations in Stockholm and the preparations for the final status negotiations focused the Leadership's attention, and, later, other Members on these international issues. Similarly, the hunger strikes by Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails, the associated demonstrations in support of the prisoners, and the resulting clashes with Israeli security forces during May consumed much of the attention of the Members, and resulted in a Plenary Session Resolution supporting the prisoners. That these significant political discussions were engaging much of the Council's attention meant that there was less emphasis on the legislative process and domestic oversight.

Despite these distractions, the PLC continued to make progress in their legislative and oversight tasks. During this time, the Arbitration Law and Labor Law were enacted by the President, and the PLC forwarded to the President the laws on Administrative Structure, Formation of Regular Courts, and the Palestinian Specifications and Standards. The second reading of the Statistics Law, the first reading of the Consular Fees Law, and the general discussion of the Leasing of Rental Properties and the Civil Aviation Law were conducted. Significantly, the Prohibition of Torture Against Prisoners and Detainees Law was rejected by the PLC - only the second time that the PLC has rejected a draft law - amid heated debate within and outside of the Council. In oversight, the Council continued to discuss the teachers' strike, about which an extraordinary session was called. The PLC requested that the teachers return to work and participated in a joint PLC-Ministerial Committee to investigate the proposed changes to salaries on the basis of the Civil Service Law, who delivered their report only one week late. The Health

Subcommittee submitted their report on the Pharmaceutical Industry to a plenary session of the PLC, which was the culmination of the series of public hearings and investigations conducted by this Committee over a period of six months. The same process also resulted in the drafting of the Pharmacists Law and the Medical Assistants Professions Law, and the initial review of the Public Health Law by the Health Subcommittee. This quarter witnessed significant progress in all project sectors. ARD has combined the work with Committees on legislative and oversight hearings, which has helped to streamline this assistance, and resulted in three committees preparing to conduct, for the first time, public hearings in the coming months. Another important sign of progress is the increasing degree of ability of PLC staff to conduct activities previously heavily supported by ARD. During this quarter, constituent offices conducted increasing numbers of Town Hall meetings, with decreasing technical support from ARD. Similarly, PLC staff are increasingly accessing the PLC IT Department, rather than directly contacting the ARD IT Department. This increasing capacity of the PLC staff to operate on its own is a tangible sign of USAID assistance.

II. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THIS QUARTER

A. Enhancing the PLC's Legislative and Deliberative Capacity

Birzeit Legislative Drafting Manual. Work continued on the legislative drafting manual, a project involving the Birzeit Law Center; Head of the Diwan, Ibrahim al-Dougme; staff members of the Diwan; Dr. Anis Kassim; and members of the PLC Legal Department. A proposed final draft was delivered to the parties for review. As part of this process, ARD supported a three-day training on the Legislative Drafting Manual at Birzeit University for five members of the Gaza PLC Legal Department.

Social Affairs and Education Committee Study Tour. Five members of the PLC Social Affairs and Education Committee and three staff members traveled to Cairo on Sunday, April 16 for a four-day workshop on the draft Copyright Law and the draft Social Insurance Law. This workshop was organized through the Arab Research and Training Center in Cairo to discuss these laws with Egyptian experts.

NCSL Annual Meeting. The arrangements for this July study tour to the National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL) were made. The delegation includes the following participants: Dr. Azmi Shauibi, Member of Legal and Economic Committee; Dr. Abdul Al-Kareem Abu Salah, Chairman of Legal Committee; Farouk El-Deek, Senior Coordinator; Nasha't Qalabi, Media and Public Information Office Director; Munera Mabrok, Director of the Training Unit in Gaza; and Assad Jodeh, Director of the Financial Unit in Gaza. On this study tour, the participants will first visit the Wisconsin State Legislature, then attend the annual meeting of the NCSL where they will participate in sessions on such topics as legislative ombudsman, legislatures and the press, performance budgeting, civic education, and library and information services. The conference will also allow the participants to network with other delegations from around the world. Preparations included developing the itinerary, logistical, and travel arrangements and providing the participants with briefing materials. In addition, ARD

staff coordinated with IRI, which is sending the Parliamentary Research Unit (PRU) Director, Adnan Odeh, and the PLC Librarian, Liana Quaidar.

Egyptian State Council Internships. In order to develop the legal drafting skills of the Diwan and PLC Legal Department staff, ARD organized internships for four staff in the Egyptian Council of State. On April 14, the Head of the Diwan and ARD staff traveled to Cairo for two days to organize these internships, which lasted for four weeks from early June until early July. Initially, the two staff from the PLC Legal Department and two staff from the Diwan met with the President of the State Council, received an orientation to the State Council and established their work plan for the remainder of the internships. During the internships, an ARD staff member traveled to Cairo to assess the utility of the program. Upon their return, an evaluation of the program will be conducted with the interns. The initial assessment indicates that the internships were useful.

Participation of the PLC Legal Department in the World Bank's Law Commissions. During the third quarter, final arrangements were made for the PLC Legal Department participation in the World Bank Law Commissions, including drafting policies and forms for expense reimbursements. This was the result of the discussion between the Director of the Law Commissions Project, Mr. Ibrahim El-Dougme, and the PLC Legal Department that was facilitated by ARD in the second quarter. Members of the PLC Legal Department participated in these commissions throughout the third quarter.

Training on the Al-Moqtafi Database. ARD consultant Mutaz Qafisheh held a two-day training session for the lawyers in the PLC Legal Department in Ramallah on both the hard copy version and the computer index of the al-Moqtafi database of Palestinian laws. This was followed up by one-on-one training of the staff.

Legal Resource and Equipment Needs Assessment. A needs assessment was completed to assess the legal resource and equipment needs of the PLC. This involved documenting the currently available resources as well as distributing a questionnaire to help determine the needs.

British Council Parliamentary and Legal English Training. ARD completed negotiations with the British Council to provide the training in Parliamentary and Legal English for lawyers from the PLC Legal Department and Legal Advisors from the Diwan. ARD staff also helped develop relevant on-the-job exercises, and additional legal and parliamentary terminology. There are two courses, one in Ramallah and one in Gaza each for 100 hours, with approximately 10 participants in each course. These courses began on May 14 and continued throughout the remainder of the third quarter.

Purchase of Miscellaneous Resource Materials. ARD purchased a small number of books and periodicals for the PLC that were requested by the library and staff members of the PLC. In addition, ARD staff member Mutaz Qafisheh visited several legal libraries, including Birzeit University, PICCR, and Hebrew University, to evaluate regional legal periodicals to make recommendations for periodical procurement for the PLC library.

Procedures for Receipt and Review of Legislation. During this third quarter, consultant Keith Schulz worked with the Legal Department to develop procedures for receipt and review of legislation. Working committees established as a result of this consultancy continue to meet with support from ARD staff members to finalize forms and checklists to be used by the Legal Department.

Assistance on the Civil Aviation Law. ARD received a formal request from the PLC to provide technical assistance on the Civil Aviation Law. Meetings were held with the Chairperson of the Interior Committee, Mr. Fakhri Shaqoura, to discuss this assistance. It was agreed that ARD would investigate the availability of Arabic-speaking consultants to assist with this law.

Arabic Translations of Israeli Laws. ARD received a request from Liana Quaidar, the Ramallah PLC librarian, to locate Arabic copies of certain Israeli laws. Ms. Quaidar has provided us with a preliminary list of laws. The Mosawa Center in Haifa, an Arab-Israeli center promoting Arab rights in Israel, has a wide selection of Israeli laws that have been translated into Arabic. ARD will coordinate with Mosawa to acquire these laws.

Diwan Legal Resource Materials Procurement. During this period, the books purchased at the Cairo Book Fair for the Diwan al-Fatwa wa al-Tashr'ie (the Diwan) were released from the Gaza Airport, delivered to the ARD office in Gaza, processed, and then delivered to both the Diwan offices in Ramallah and Gaza.

Administrative and IT Assistance to the Diwan. ARD staff member, Jawad Risheq, traveled to Gaza to work with the administrative officer at the Diwan to provide administrative assistance in the record keeping and filing systems. In addition, the approval for procuring five computers for the Diwan was received from USAID, and the computers have been ordered. A letter was also sent to the Diwan to request transfer of the title of the four old computers to the project for possible rehabilitation and assignment to a different use.

GCC Modifications to Bill Tracking System (Diwan). Scott Hubli met with representatives of the Diwan and the Government Computing Center in Gaza regarding potential improvements to the Diwan's database for tracking bills and correspondence. In the next quarter, ARD hopes to adapt these modifications for use by the PLC.

B. Developing Executive – Legislative Relations and Oversight

B1: Strengthening the PLC capacity to review the government budget

Negotiations Regarding MAS Subcontract. During this period, negotiations continued with MAS, a Palestinian NGO specializing in economic research and policy, to provide

technical assistance to the Budget Committee. Terms of reference were drawn up, and although no final decisions were taken, it appears that these conditions will ultimately prove unacceptable.

Consultants on the Draft Banking Law and the Income Tax Law. Mr. Hubli worked with the Budget and Finance Committee to identify and retain consultants to assist the committee in reviewing the draft Banking Law and the draft Income Tax Law. Dr. Nasser Abdul Kareem provided technical assistance regarding the draft Banking Law and Dr. Nidal Sabri provided consultant services regarding the draft Income Tax Law. Both consultants began work in early June. Dr. Sabri submitted a detailed report (50 pages) on the tax law to the Budget Committee and agreed to prepare amendments to the law that reflect the Committee's decisions on the law. Dr. Abdul Kareem also completed his report during this period and met with the Committee to discuss it.

B2: General Executive–Legislative Relations

Ongoing Support of Public Hearing Process. ARD continued its technical assistance for public hearings. During this quarter, ARD met with the Chief Clerk and the Committee Coordinator, and later with all clerks to brief them on ARD’s continuing assistance to the investigative public hearings and to assess their training needs in this area. A questionnaire was distributed to assess their needs after they reviewed the draft public hearing manual (see below). Any training will be coordinated with the Training and Development Unit (TDU).

During this quarter, technical assistance for public hearing focused on three committees – the Security and Interior Committee, the Refugee Committee and the Oversight and Human Rights Committee. Coordination with the Security and Interior Committee for the hearings on the Misuse of Firearms continued, although during this quarter the Committee postponed these hearings until after completing their work on the Civil Aviation Law. ARD continued to support the Refugee Committee’s preparations for a hearing on Development Projects in the Refugee Camps to be held in Gaza on 10-15 August. ARD also agreed with the Chair of the Oversight and Human Rights Committee to help support them in conducting a public hearing on freedom of expression. A meeting was also conducted with Dr. Hassan Abu Libdeh, the Director of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, to discuss how the PLC committees can make greater use of the PCBS publications, particularly when organizing public hearings.

Public Hearing Manual. A draft of the Public Hearing Manual was completed during this time and submitted to the Chief Clerk and the Committee Coordinator, as well as the Committee Clerks for their comments. Arrangements were also completed for an expert in the U.S. to review the Manual and meet with the Committee Coordinator while he is in the U.S. for the NCSL Annual Meeting.

Support to the Women’s Unit. During this quarter, ARD coordinated with the Women’s Unit of the PLC to offer technical assistance. In May, a draft work plan was developed, and submitted and discussed with the head of the Ramallah branch of the Women’s Unit. In late May, a Director of the Women’s Unit was appointed, Ms. Amal Hamed, who has authority over both the Gaza and West Bank offices. As a result, ARD resubmitted our work plan to Ms. Hamed, and initial discussions about areas of assistance were conducted. Some assistance was provided in translating the Unit work plans into English. Further discussion about the other assistance that ARD can provide will be conducted in the fourth quarter.

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. During this period, ARD conducted a number of meetings to determine how we could assist the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MPA). ARD staff met with Leila Sayegh, who has been delegated by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to coordinate with ARD. In order to clarify the role of the MPA, it was agreed that the Ministry will draft a concept paper on a research project

documenting the relationship between the Ministries and the PLC, and the role of the MPA in this relationship. This research would involve conducting surveys of relevant Ministry and PLC Members and staff. The results of this research would be presented at a workshop involving representatives from the Ministries and the PLC to discuss possible improvements. ARD will provide technical and financial support for MPA in this activity. Training opportunities for MPA staff, either within existing ARD trainings, or through specialized trainings, will also be investigated.

C. Increasing the PLC's Interaction with Constituents

Palestinian Democracy Day Campaign. During this period, the wrap-up for Democracy Day activities was conducted. This included finalizing financial accounts for some 20 town meetings, collecting wrap-up reports written by the constituency offices, compiling press clippings, and organizing an evaluation. A consultant has been hired to conduct the impact assessment.

Coordination with Civil Society Organizations. ARD organized two meetings with NGOs to discuss methods to strengthen information sharing and cooperation between NGOs and the PLC. The meetings were held in Ramallah on May 24 and in Gaza on May 25. These initial meetings allowed for information exchange on specific activities and discussion of potential future collaboration. Preparation for the follow-up meetings was conducted by analyzing the responses to questionnaires distributed in the previous meetings and through informal discussions with NGOs and ARD staff. A draft agenda was developed, which included improving linkages between the PLC Committees and NGOs, mechanisms for accessing draft legislation, and other possible areas of cooperation.

Constituent Office Computer Training. ARD conducted two 40-hour basic computer training courses for directors of the West Bank and Gaza constituent offices. The course began in the third week of May and focused on MS Word, Windows, e-mail, and the Internet. The West Bank training was conducted at the ARD offices in Ramallah, while the Gaza training was conducted at the PLC's Training Unit in Gaza. This training was necessary in order to provide constituent office directors with basic computer skills to conduct their jobs, as well as have them work on the Processing Constituent Inquiries software that is utilized in most constituent offices. A course evaluation conducted by the TDU showed that staff greatly benefited from this training and urged the TDU and ARD to continue with follow-up computer training.

After completion of this course, ARD began laying the groundwork for training on the Processing Constituent Inquiries Software and the use of the computer network. A course outline was prepared and was submitted to the PLC. This training will target constituent office secretarial staff and will be repeated for constituent office directors.

Constituency Relations Manual and Best Practices. An outline for a PLC Member manual and best practices guide was completed and submitted to the PLC for review. SUNY was contracted by ARD to produce this manual in close cooperation with ARD.

Support for Town Meetings. ARD is continuing to provide technical and financial support for constituent offices to conduct town meetings. ARD drafted a concept paper on mechanisms to support town meetings, whether organized by district or private constituent offices, and finalized plans with constituent offices to conduct regular monthly town meetings. According to the guidelines sent by ARD to constituent offices, these town meetings will be organized by the constituent offices and should involve all the Members in the district, even those that do not work out of the constituent offices. ARD is continuing to visit constituent offices, helping them organize and conduct town meetings. With ARD assistance, the Gaza City constituent office conducted a town meeting attended by four PLC Members, including the Minister of Health. Over 150 constituents attended this meeting. It was covered by all of the local papers and Palestine TV. The PLC Constituent Office Unit held a meeting for all the West Bank constituent office directors, and the issue of conducting town meetings was discussed at this meeting.

Constituent Office Training Needs Assessment. ARD staff worked with TDU Director Kamal Daibas to evaluate the training needs of constituent office staff. This was achieved by Mr. Daibas and ARD staff visiting the various constituent offices to ascertain individual and district training needs for the duration of the ARD contract.

Software Support to Constituent Offices. ARD's Information Technology (IT) Field Manager is continuing to visit constituent offices to train them on the Processing Constituency Inquiries Software and to help install the updated version of the software. During these visits, he also provided the constituent offices with technical training.

Public Information Distribution Racks. During this quarter, ARD worked with the Public Information Department to select and procure racks to distribute pamphlets and brochures. The racks will be located in the visitor's gallery at the PLC plenary session hall, outside the Speaker's Office for visiting delegations and in the Media Department.

D. Strengthening the PLC's General Administrative Capacity

Wide Area Network. During this quarter, the wide area network to link the Council's administrative buildings in Ramallah and Gaza was installed. In early June, equipment was delivered and installed in Ramallah, and the leased line between the two locations was installed and became operational. The necessary hardware was also installed in Gaza during this period.

Procurement Procedures. The final draft of the Procurement Procedures Manual and forms covering different levels of expenditure were developed in accordance with

standard procurement procedures as well as with the 1998 Palestinian Procurement Law. This manual was distributed to staff of the procurement departments in Gaza and Ramallah, and a workshop was conducted in which all staff came together to review the manual and procedures. All participants supported the idea of having single procedures and policies for both Gaza and Ramallah.

In order to assist with implementation of these new procedures, ARD used the procurement of goods associated with the ARD contract as an opportunity for on-the-job training. ARD reviewed PLC procurement of goods for Democracy Day. Similarly, some of the equipment provided by ARD will be procured in collaboration with the PLC according to this new manual. ARD will supervise the procurement process of the bid opening, bid analyses, selection of suppliers, delivery of goods, and issue of payment to vendor.

Equipment Procurement. An initial list of needed equipment was developed by ARD in conjunction with PLC computer and technical department staff in Ramallah and Gaza. This included support for the IT Department, the Chief Clerk's Office, the Hansard Unit, committees, the Technical Department, the Procurement/Supplies Department, the PLC Chamber, and the Diwan. Procurement will begin Quarter 4 of the contract.

Analysis of the bids for the Diwan equipment was completed. During this period, ARD began studying IT needs for the Legal Department and completed assessing the IT equipment needs in Gaza for the IT Unit, the Training Unit, and the Women's Unit.

ARD started the procurement process of switches through direct RFOs and received and analyzed offers.

Voting System. The security feature of the electronic voting systems by which the Members can register their presence through electronic ID cards was successfully installed.

Technical Department. Technical assistance was provided to the Ramallah Office of the Technical Department in organizing procedures for the Transportation Unit. Files for record keeping were set up for each Member's car as well as for the seven cars generally assigned to the Ramallah PLC offices. Forms were developed to cover Daily Maintenance Check, Mileage Car Log, Request for Car, Monthly Car Report (Individual), Monthly Report on All Vehicle Usage, Maintenance Register for Repairs, and Repair Authorization Form (for Finance Department to approve the maintenance expenditure). Discussions, review, and training will also be conducted in Gaza.

Personnel Department Assistance. After an initial needs assessment with the Ramallah and Gaza Personnel Department, an initial work plan was developed by ARD covering policies and procedures, staff training, equipment needs, development of a staff manual, and programming of a personnel database. This work plan was reviewed by the Personnel Directors in Ramallah and Gaza. Their comments were incorporated, and the plan was finalized and submitted to the PLC for approval. In the meantime, ARD IT staff began analysis of user needs for a personnel database. A local consultant will be hired for this project. ARD also met with the Training Unit Director regarding adding staff training information to this database.

IT Assistance. During this time, ARD provided ongoing IT assistance to the Council. ARD found that a UPS purchased for the PLC Chamber under SPLC2 was not being utilized properly. ARD arranged the necessary rewiring and the UPS is now connected and sharing the load for equipment and lights in the Chamber. Also, the Procurement Department and the Training Unit in PLC in Ramallah were not connected to the PLC local area network (LAN). ARD was able to provide the necessary equipment and technical assistance to connect these departments to the LAN within the Administration Building. Also, some training was given to the Procurement Department personnel on how to share files and printers within their own workgroup. Finally, at a meeting with

Mahmoud Labadi, it was agreed that ARD would coordinate its IT assistance with the newly appointed head of the PLC IT Department, Ahmed Miqdadi.

Stores and Supplies Division. Technical assistance was provided to the Ramallah Office of stores and supplies in organizing the stores setup. Everything was removed from the shelves and reorganized taking into consideration weight of items (heavy items placed on lower shelves) and health (keep cleaning items separate from coffee and tea). An inventory was taken at the same time. Preparations were made for the Gaza Stores staff to come to Ramallah in June to observe this assistance and work with their Ramallah counterparts. New forms were prepared to be discussed during this workshop. However, this workshop was delayed until early July due to scheduling problems. The provision of technical assistance, such as coding items, tags and numbers on shelves, and stickers on procured and stored items, is ongoing.

Supplies Database. A draft of the database of suppliers was developed for use by the Procurement and Supplies Departments. This database is being programmed in-house by ARD IT staff. The database will include information on suppliers in the West Bank and Gaza covering full contact information, location, and all materials that are sold. This will allow for a complete search for desired items and the identification of the closest location. The database also provides reports on procurement activities such as total purchase orders issued and total amount spent with and without VAT. Total VAT paid for every purchase order will also be recorded. The above-mentioned reports will be useful for both the Procurement and Finance Departments. It will be accessible in both Ramallah and Gaza via the wide area network.

During this time, ARD provided initial training on the database, which was tested for 10 days by PLC staff in the Procurement and Supplies Departments in both Gaza and Ramallah. Their comments will be incorporated into the final database.

Preparations were made for a workshop on stores, supplies, and inventory, to be held in Ramallah. Areas to be covered in the next workshop include how to manage and organize stores; methods of storing, monitoring, and auditing stores; cooperation with branch offices regarding requests, inventory, and reports required; and discussing daily routine of stores and new forms. The information will then be finalized, and a manual for department use will be prepared. This workshop had to be delayed until the fourth quarter due to scheduling and permit problems.

A draft manual for supplies and stores was also developed and submitted to the Supplies Division staff in both Gaza and Ramallah to be reviewed. It was agreed that a more comprehensive discussion would occur in the workshop on supplies, stores, and inventory.

Assistance to the IT Department. During the previous months, increasing numbers of breakdowns of computer and communication equipment have been occurring at the Ramallah office during this time. During Quarter 3, it became imperative that this issue be resolved. As a result, ARD developed an “Action Plan” for ARD IT and PLC IT staff

to assess the hardware/software of each computer, to check the local area network connections, and to assess all printers. This plan was completed and implemented in Ramallah. All collected information will be entered into an electronic database (currently being developed by ARD IT) and analyzed.

ARD's IT Field Manager continues to spend time at the PLC in Ramallah and Gaza to provide on-site assistance. As budgeted in our contract, ARD purchased tools for the PLC IT Department.

ARD arranged for additional training for the Hardware Technician of the Ramallah PLC. This training was requested by the PLC through Dr. Labadi and was thoroughly supported, and originally recommended, by ARD IT staff. This training began at the end of Quarter 3.

ARD compiled a large software needs list for the PLC-ITU and provided some of this software to the IT Department. Work is continuing on developing a database program for the computer equipment at the PLC.

Miscellaneous Staff Training. ARD provided funding for two Gaza IT Department staff to attend a systems analysis class. ARD also arranged training on the "life cycle" of records and on information technology that can assist in records management for two staff from Administration in Gaza. The material and trainers of this course will be evaluated to assess suitability for participation by others.

Staff Training in Computer Skills. A basic computer training class for nine PLC staff in Ramallah from the Procurement, Supplies, Technical, and Personnel Departments was conducted at the ARD computer-training center. Evaluation of the course was conducted, and ARD followed up with the participants to ensure transfer of knowledge to their context.

Staff Training in Web Page Design. ARD coordinated with the TDU in selecting the appropriate trainer for this course and provided technical assistance in course development. Training for nine staff of various PLC departments was held in Ramallah at ARD's training facility.

III. IMPACT OF ACTIVITIES, PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED, AND STEPS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THEM

A. Enhancing the PLC's Legislative and Deliberative Capacity

Improved Cooperation between the Diwan and the Legal Department of the PLC. In the past, ARD experienced difficulty in promoting cooperation between the Diwan and the Legal Department of the PLC. The strategy adopted during that quarter, and continued into this third quarter, has been to promote cooperation around technical issues. This has included providing joint training and study tours and facilitating an agreement for PLC legal staff to participate in World Bank Law Commissions. This approach appears to be producing results in the form of increased information sharing and greater willingness to cooperate.

Insufficient Time for Program Management. Report writing and administrative duties have made it difficult for the Program Manager for Legislative Process and Budget to focus on program management duties. While additional hiring has helped to maintain program activities during this quarter, it is hoped that the completion of many of the required reports during this quarter will allow the Sector manager to focus more fully on program management.

Obstacles to Committee Development. As described in the Three-Year Work Plan on Committee Development, there are a number of obstacles to committee development, including destructive hiring patterns, lack of output, delegated authority to committees, and the increasing identification of committees as primarily a forum for criticizing the government. In order to avoid committees becoming identified only as sources of government criticism, ARD will focus on providing assistance to committees not only in public hearings but also in legislative hearings.

Another obstacle to committee development was the fact that ARD committee assistance has, recently, been falling under the management of three sectors. This led to some confusion and frustration among committee Members and staff about whom to approach regarding particular activities, as well as requiring additional coordination between ARD staff. As a result, committee assistance is now managed by a single ARD staff member, Scott Hubli, although particular activities are delegated to other staff members. This has allowed assistance for legislative and public hearings to be combined, where appropriate, and hence streamlined.

B. Executive/Legislative Relations and Oversight

Impact of Public Hearings by the Health Subcommittee. During this period, the Health Subcommittee of the Education and Social Affairs Committee submitted their report on the series of public hearings and investigations on the Pharmaceutical Industry and the regulating role of the Ministry of Health that they conducted with the assistance of ARD. This was the first series of public hearings conducted by the PLC and was a pilot for the public hearing process. This report was read in the PLC plenary session, and detailed the various responses by the Ministry of Health to this process. The report also supported the public hearing process and encouraged this mechanism to be adopted by other committees. This report may have contributed to the increasing interest in using public hearings by other committees. Another important impact of this process was the development of three laws – the Pharmacists Law, the Medical Assistants Professions Law, and the Public Health Law. Another associated effect was that the committee is now studying the Public Health Law and is preparing to work with consultants with a public health background on this issue.

Decreasing Executive Branch Willingness to Respond to Oversight Activities. As outlined in the Performance Indicator Report, there was a trend during the second quarter for the Executive Branch to be less responsive to PLC requests for information and

action, and a corresponding decrease in the number of oversight initiatives by the PLC. ARD's knowledge of the PLC during Quarter 3 suggests that this trend is continuing. While there were some high-profile oversight activities during this quarter, most notably PLC discussion and investigation into the teachers' strike and associated public servant salary problems, the impact of this and other oversight activities on Executive Branch behavior continues to be minimal. In this political context, the impact of any technical assistance to strengthen the oversight capacity of the PLC on actual ability of the Council to enforce governmental reform is limited.

In response, ARD has taken two main approaches. First, technical assistance to improve the capabilities of staff and Members to perform their oversight role continues to be useful. In the short term, there are some less controversial oversight activities where the government might be expected to respond, as occurred in the Ministry of Health's response to the PLC's oversight activities regarding the Pharmaceutical Industry. Technical assistance is important to help the PLC conduct these activities efficiently and effectively. In the long term, increasing oversight capabilities of the PLC, particularly permanent staff members, will prepare the Council for its oversight role when the political climate and the responsiveness of the Executive Branch are more favorable. Second, more creative ways of strengthening the oversight capacity of the PLC have to be found. One such approach is working with the Women's Unit of the PLC, which can serve as an effective bridge between the PLC and the relevant governmental institutions, thus helping to ensure implementation of gender-appropriate legislation. Another is to work with NGOs to strengthen their ability to access the oversight processes of the PLC, hence serving to support the PLC in its oversight role.

C. Increasing Interaction with Constituents

Increased Contact between Constituents and PLC Members through Town Meetings.

ARD's program to provide constituent offices with the technical and financial assistance to organize town meetings had a positive impact in bringing constituents together with PLC Members. In this politically sensitive period, some PLC Members have preferred to play a low-key role because of their expectation of backlash from constituents due to the expiration of the mandate of the PLC and lack of progress in the peace process. In this context, these town meetings provided a rare opportunity for constituents to hear from and question their elected Members firsthand. Although many issues were raised at these meetings, including the peace process, they focused primarily on issues of direct local concern, such as water, electricity, and health care.

Increased Capacity of Constituent Offices to Deal with Constituent Complaints. In this quarter, ARD provided all 16 constituent office directors with training in basic computer skills. These skills are the first step in enabling these directors to effectively use the Processing Constituent Inquiries Software. This software program is providing constituent offices with the necessary data on the number and types of cases received in the districts (this software will be revised soon to provide more analysis). This is a particularly important development as, currently, the constituent offices respond to constituent complaints on an individual basis. By compiling the types of cases,

constituent offices can translate constituent complaints into issues to be addressed as part of the legislative process. This has already occurred to a limited degree, as the data has, in some districts, been translated into topics of discussion at town meetings and other community events. This process should be encouraged, and these issues further developed into relevant legislation. This will contribute to the goal of ensuring that the PLC is more appropriately responsive to constituent concerns.

D. More Effective Internal Management

Improved Functioning of the PLC IT Department. There have been notable improvements within the PLC IT Department in Ramallah as a result of ARD technical assistance. With ARD's continuous presence within the Council providing on-the-job training, IT staff have become more proficient in their jobs. As a result, more PLC staff are starting to contact Council IT staff directly when they experience problems rather than first calling ARD. As ARD helps to organize the department, the overall attitude of staff is becoming more professional. Attendance has improved, and interest in work has grown. There are still frustrations on the part of other staff with this department, but this should lessen as ARD continues to provide assistance to this key department.

Improved Functioning of the Procurement and Supplies Departments. Technical assistance provided to the Procurement and Stores/Supplies Departments is evidenced by the usage of the forms developed by ARD in tracking commodities and in following standard guidelines for procurement. In addition, staff have been heard to quote the Procurement Law to other Council staff in response to questions. The Stores Unit has reorganized their storage area according to safety guidelines (i.e., heavy items on lower shelves; cleaning supplies separate from food items) and is incorporating the first-in, first-out rule of dispensing.

E. Cross Sector Issues

Political Uncertainty. As noted in the introduction, the political instability and uncertainty within the Palestinian context during this period has had a detrimental effect on many PLC staff and Members' motivation. It has also made it difficult to plan long-term for the project, given the uncertainty over the future membership of the Council and its structure. The general approach of ARD has been to focus on activities in which the benefit will likely carry over into any new Parliamentary structure, such as training for permanent staff. A second part of the strategy has been to focus on activities that provide information about the effectiveness of the current structure of the PLC, and possible recommendations for improvements, such as a review of the governmental ombudsman function.

IV. ARD ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Completed Work Plans. The following work plans or reports were completed during this period: Assistance in Budget Review; the Three-Year Work Plan for the Oversight

Sector, the Three-Year Work Plan for Public Information and Dissemination, the Internal Legislative Process Report, the External Legislative Process report, the Three-Year Work Plan for Accessing Expertise, the Three-Year Work Plan on Legislative Development, and the Three-Year Work Plan for Committee Staff Development.

Hiring. During this third quarter, hiring continued to fill some positions identified in the original contract that remained vacant, and one short-term position that emerged as the work progressed. The following staff were hired during this period:

- Mohammed Abed Rabboh, Technical Coordinator for Legislation, based in Ramallah;
- Mu'taz Qafisheh, to provide assistance to the PLC Legal Department and the Diwan on legal research and legislative drafting matters, six-month consultant from early April, based in Ramallah;
- Amanda Melville, Report Writer/Senior Project Coordinator (Oversight Sector) from beginning of May, based in Gaza;
- Tahseen Elayyan, Translator/Project Assistant (Oversight Sector) from mid-May, based in Ramallah; and
- Jumana Tahboub, Administrative Assistant from mid-June, based in Ramallah.

ARD advertised for a Technical Coordinator for Media and Public Relations position in the local Palestinian newspapers. Interviews with candidates were held in this period. This staff person would be responsible for working with the PLC to implement the work plan on public dissemination and information.

Procurement. During this period, ARD procured a reception desk and chairs, various furniture for new employees, a laptop, two computer workstations, air conditioning for the Gaza office, and equipped the Ramallah conference room with chairs, table, and blinds.

Other Activities. ARD held the official opening of the new Ramallah office in April. This was attended by PLC Members and staff, the President of ARD and ARD staff, as well as staff of USAID. A six-month project review was also conducted with the ARD home office and USAID.

V. INDICATOR REPORT

During this period, the data collection for the indicator report was finalized, the information was analyzed, and the report was submitted. The main findings are summarized below.

Table 26: Indicator Summary and Implications

Indicator	Main Findings	Implications
Legislature/ Executive Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer EA-Initiated laws are completing the formal EA review process Formal review procedures appear to be supplemented by informal procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate review process further Consider changing law and measurement of indicator
Legislature Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller proportion of passed laws is being initiated by PLC PLC is still not initiating many laws in response to public concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm this trend next report Develop the capacity of the PLC to initiate laws in response to public concerns
Legislature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC continues to substantially review EA-initiated legislation in which the EA does not have a strong interest PLC appears to be less willing/able to oppose EA will by amending laws in which the EA has a strong interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm this trend next report If the PLC capacity for amending key EA-initiated legislation is being weakened, strategies to address this issue need to be developed
Legislature Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decreasing percentage of laws underwent public review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm this trend next period If trend continues, investigate why
Finance Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No finance hearings were conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involving public in the review of this critical legislation and expenditures should be a high priority for the PLC
Legislature Enactment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of enactment was high Where legislation is not controversial, enactment by the EA is straight-forward Where legislation is controversial, the will of the EA increasingly seems to prevail in enactment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is another indicator of a trend of greater EA influence in the legislature process in key types of legislation
Oversight Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The absolute number of oversight activities decreased The number of plenary activities decreased while the number of committee activities increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLC appears to be adopting a new strategy to conduct increasing amounts of the oversight activities in committee If this trend continues, need to investigate the effectiveness of this approach
Oversight Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of responses from EA increased, although remains low However, impact of such requests/responses on EA behavior appears to be limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a continuing need to increase the responsiveness of the EA to PLC requests The PLC needs to consider how to increase the impact of oversight activities on EA behavior
Response to Constituents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an extremely high rate of response to constituent inquiries Reasonable percentage of these cases are resolved Responses remain largely individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator needs refining PLC needs to further develop its capacity to translate constituent concerns into legislative process
PLC Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No transparent hiring practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an important area of internal administration that needs developing
PLC Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High reported conformity with transparent procurement procedures, particularly with relation to the lowest and highest procurement categories The accuracy of this assessment is unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to focus on improving procurement practices for second and third category of procurement Need to use procurement tracking sheets to more accurately assess this indicator

VI. ACTIVITIES EXPECTED TO BE CARRIED OUT NEXT QUARTER

A. Enhancing the PLC's Legislative and Deliberative Capacity/Budget Support

- Provide technical assistance on committee development
- Finalize Birzeit University Legal Database
- Provide administrative assistance to the PLC Legal Department
- Provide English language training to committee clerks
- Provide technical assistance on General Insurance Law and Public Health Law

B. Executive/Legislative Relations and Oversight

- Maintain ongoing assistance in oversight hearings to committees
- Finalize of Public Hearing Manual
- Provide technical assistance to the Women's Unit
- Provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
- Investigate the ombudsman role

C. Increasing Interaction with Constituents

- Provide ongoing installation of, and training for, the Constituent Inquiries Processing Software
- Provide outreach and public relations training for constituent office staff
- Provide press and public information training for Public Information Department staff to improve quality of publications
- Train constituent officers on how to facilitate town meetings
- Finalize work on the Constituency Relations Manual

D. More Effective Internal Management

- Continue training and implementation of providing timely information to Members
- Continue procurement of equipment for PLC
- Develop procedures for Personnel Department
- Assess financial management procedures
- Develop and initiate implementation of training plan on utilization of wide area network