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In reply please
refer to: E17/180/2PAL(00265)

Your reference:

Mr Uraib Zalatimo
Office of Contracts Management
United States Agency for International
Development (USAID)
West Bank and Gaza Mission
American Embassy
71 Hayarkon St.
Tel-Aviv, Israel

22 June 2006

Dear Mr Zalatimo,

***Strengthening nutrition management in the occupied Palestinian territory
Grant No. 294-G-00-04-00208-00***

I am pleased to enclose the final technical report for the above-mentioned project, to which the United States Agency for International Development generously donated \$296 800 (two hundred and ninety six thousand, eight hundred US dollars).

As you will note in reading the report, the funds contributed significantly to strengthening the occupied Palestinian territory's Ministry of Health Nutrition Department, enabling the department to take a leading role in nutrition related activities particularly coordination.

The final financial report will follow in due course.

I wish to thank the United States Agency for International Development for its continued and valuable assistance to the work of the World Health Organization in various parts of the world.

Yours sincerely,

Dr A. Alwan
Representative of the Director-General
for Health Action in Crises

cc: USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse, Silver Spring, MD
Ms Nance Kyloh, USAID Representative, Permanent Mission of the United States of
America, Geneva

ENCL.: As stated above



**World Health Organization
Organisation Mondiale De La Sante
West Bank and Gaza**

**FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)**

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| 1. Project Title: | Strengthening nutrition management in the occupied Palestinian territory | | |
| 2. Country: | Occupied
Palestinian
Territory | Beneficiary
Population: | Palestinian
population (3.29
million people), with
a special focus on
vulnerable groups
(women and
children) |
| 3. Start date of project: | 24/08/2004 | End date of project: | 28/02/2006 |
| 4. Project Duration (Period
of Implementation): | 18 months | Amount (US\$): | 296,800 |
| 5. Grant No.: | 294-G-00-04-
00208-00 | Date of report
issuance: | 31/05/2006 |
| 6. LOC Number: | HH-05C5P | USAID Office: | West Bank and Gaza
Mission |

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Strengthening nutrition management in the occupied Palestinian territory

I General Objective

The general objective of the project is to strengthen the MoH Nutrition Department (ND) in order to achieve an effective, sustainable and functioning body in the area of nutrition. The Nutrition Department will be in charge of policy, planning, monitoring, evaluation and coordination, considering both short-term emergency interventions and long-term activities related to nutrition.

II Specific objectives

- a. Developing an appropriate functional structure for the ND
- b. Strengthening the technical capacity of the staff of the ND in order to produce a plan of action for the intervention in the health sector and a groundwork for the formulation of a multisectoral policy.
- c. Strengthening the ND leadership in coordination of health interventions and in intersectoral coordination.

III Background and Overview (as per project proposal)

Nutritional assessments suggest a substantial increase in the number of malnourished children over the past two years. Malnutrition rates seem to be particularly high in Gaza, where 75% of the population lives below the poverty line. Assessments showed the number of children suffering from acute and chronic malnutrition being three (for the acute) and five (for the chronic) times higher in Gaza than in the West Bank.

Women, and in particular pregnant and lactating women, suffer from a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies. In June 2002, a study reported that every second mother and child (under-five) is suffering from mild anaemia and every fifth from moderate anaemia.

Among the reasons for the deterioration of the nutritional status of the Palestinian population are the restrictions on local trade due to closures that result in shortages of basic commodities like imported foodstuffs in some Palestinian areas. Also, the lack of money due to high unemployment rates prevents households from purchasing essential supplies. As a result, food consumption patterns are changing. Meat and dairy products, which are usually the main sources of high quality protein, minerals and micronutrients, are being consumed less.

Health services related to nutrition are mainly provided through the Ministry of Health Primary Health Care (PHC) system. However, given the multiplicity and diversity of providers, the type, profile and quality of interventions related to nutrition are heterogeneous, and not necessarily according to the needs of the population.

In relation to policies, food and nutrition issues have been fragmented among several ministries and disciplines. However, the MoH is the main body responsible for all matters related to nutrition and its related health disorders, as well as for supervising food industry, food safety and marketing.

A Nutritional Department has been recently established within the MoH. The department should enable the Ministry to develop food and nutrition national basic standards, and to lead and sustain all strategic planning and managing activities related to nutrition. The department should therefore embrace advisory, operational, training and educational functions. The nutrition department is actually only a formal,

non-operative structure, composed by two units, one in West Bank and another in Gaza. Each unit has been assigned a minimum staff: a director, who is reporting to the director general of primary health care, and a minimum number of staff (nurses/doctors). The MoH is going to prepare a more defined organizational structure of the department, including job descriptions for the staff. There were no specific terms of reference for the department.

To support the nutrition departments in the West Bank and Gaza this project was designed with the objectives as mentioned above.

IV Achievements per planned activities and expected outcomes

Expected Output 1: Structure and profile of the Nutrition Department of the MoH finalized

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
To draft document prepared with organizational structure, mandate, clear job description of key staffs for the nutrition department.	1. An organizational structure along with detailed ToR produced. 2. Formal endorsement by the ministry	1. A draft organizational structure and ToR for nutrition department has been produced. Nutrition department translated the document in Arabic with incorporation of nutrition policy statement and developed as a departmental manual. 2. The General Director, PHC directorate approved the manual.	Completed.

Expected Output 2: Situation analysis done and disseminated

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
To make a situational analysis on food and nutrition situation through technical groups under the leadership of nutrition department.	1. A report on the nutrition situation analysis produced. 2. Presentation of the report in meetings in West Bank and Gaza to the concerned stakeholders. 3. Publication of the report.	1. A report on the "State of Nutrition" produced. 2. Key findings have been presented in West Bank and Gaza 3. The document has been translated into Arabic, and printed in two languages.	Completed.

Expected Output 3: Policy document "nutrition strategies in Palestine" complemented and consolidated

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
Focus, complement and consolidate the policy document "nutrition	Document completed, agreed integrations accepted, and	Partially achieved.	A national strategy document on nutrition already exists. The

strategies in Palestine”, through review the document with the ND staff other relevant MoH units/departments and with relevant partners.	document disseminated		project reviewed the strategy document as planned and utilized during development of draft national nutrition policy statement and development of plan of action for nutrition.
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Expected Output 4: Plan of action formulated and disseminated

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
Formulate a plan of action for nutrition in line with updated “nutrition strategies in Palestine” with participation of all relevant stakeholders.	1. Matrix of activities on nutrition in place and planned. 2. Plan of action endorsed by MoH and main stakeholders.	1. A plan of action matrix drafted with participation of stakeholders from West bank and Gaza 2. The plan of action document is endorsed by the Nutrition Steering Committee of the MoH.	Completed.

Expected Output 5: Training plan developed, on the basis of the needs assessment

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
Make an assessment of training needs for nutrition departmental staffs of MoH and a propose a training plan.	1. Need assessment report available 2. Training plan available	Training need assessment – completed through ND in-house exercise. A training agenda prepared.	

Expected Output 6: Plan of action started up in its implementation.

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
Lead, directly contribute to and monitor the implementation of the plan through nutrition thematic group.	1. Nutrition thematic group met at least once every two months 2. Bi-monthly review of progress on training, implementation of planned activities organized.	Nutrition thematic group met as scheduled. Reviewed implementation of activities as outlined, and discussed other emerging initiatives.	Additional activities like performance of nutrition-related technical task-force groups were also regularly reviewed by the thematic group.

Expected Output 7: National food and nutrition policy draft formulated

Activities	Indicator/s	Achievements	Remarks/Comments
Contribute to the formulation of a multisectoral national food and nutrition policy	1. A national nutrition policy statement drafted. 2. A detailed food and nutrition policy drafted and endorsed by April 2005 through National	1. National nutrition policy statement drafted and presented at West Bank and Gaza. 2. Process not yet initiated.	For indicator #2: the MoH is reluctant to form the National Nutrition Food and Nutrition Council, who should be leading the development of comprehensive food

	Food and Nutrition Council.		and nutrition policy.
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V Constraints faced during implementation of the project

1. The project duration was extended until end of February 2006 due to a delay in initiating some of the project activities and hiring of staff.
2. The challenging move from mainly material support to qualitative structural changes in the department
2. Some staff seemed to focus on clinical management rather than on public health nutrition.
3. Intra-departmental challenges and communication gaps, particularly between the West Bank and Gaza nutrition departments, further delayed the implementation of project activities.

The constraints were overcome through repeated discussions, negotiations and convincing the MoH to make some changes within the nutrition department.

VI Indicators of Qualitative Changes within the Nutrition Department

1. The ND started playing leading roles in nutrition-related technical committees, e.g. breastfeeding committee, salt iodization and food fortification related committees.
2. Started organizing regular departmental meetings, activities review and forward plan.
3. Regular communications are being held between ND of West Bank and Gaza (through videoconference and telephone).
4. The ND officials started regular field visits.
5. Coordination role: Meetings with other relevant departments of MoH and other ministries, UNRWA and other organizations.
6. Active role in nutrition thematic group meeting, e.g. presenting thematic groups' performances, leading discussions etc.
7. Initiated nutrition-related protocols review for harmonization.
8. Planned and organized three nutrition training courses for physicians and nurses.
9. Played leading role in recently completed IDD survey; currently analyzing and preparing reports
10. The nutrition department of Gaza participated actively in Rickets survey.
11. Staffs of ND played a key role in designing nutrition surveillance system (which is now on the way to implementation).
12. MoH designated one district-level staff as nutrition focal person for the respective district.

VIII Annexes

1. The State of Nutrition: West Bank and Gaza Strip
 - a. State of Nutrition Document (in English)
 - b. State of Nutrition (in Arabic)
2. Operational Plan of Action and Policy Statement
 - a. National Nutrition Policy Statement and Operational Plan of Action for Nutrition

- b. Status of Nutrition Activities inline with the Operational Plan of Action
- 3. Nutrition Department Manual
- 4. Training Need Assessment and Training Agenda as per Operational Plan of Action priority areas
- 5. Review of rickets situation among Palestinian Children in Gaza Strip
- 6. Rickets Study
 - a. Main report (draft)
 - b. Annexes
- 7. Course materials on Local Training Course on Nutritional Management of Chronic Diseases. (only hard copy available, will be submitted to USAID local office)