

**ASSISTANCE TO THE
PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**Quarterly Report No. 1
(1 October – 31 December 1999)**

Submitted to:

USAID/West Bank and Gaza

Submitted by:

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Prepared Under Contract #: 294-C-00-99-00156-00
Assistance to the Palestinian Legislative Council

December 1999

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QUARTERLY REPORT NO. 1

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I. Introduction and Summary

This first 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 October to 31 December 1999.

The project is designed to strengthen the ability of the 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.

Beginning immediately after the completion of the preceding contract (PLC1), the new project (PLC2) took advantage of ARD's three years of expertise and began implementing activities from the first week of the contract. However, as the project geared up, the PLC slowed down. Delayed decision-making in the Liaison Committee and the start of Ramadan combined to limit the number of actual activities. Nevertheless, ARD made the most of the slower pace by focusing on planning and moving offices.

Receiving the government budget and dealing with an opposition *bayan* (manifesto) were the two most significant events in the PLC during this period. Even before the Executive Branch had adequately responded to the PLC's demands regarding the 1999 budget, the Executive Authority (EA) surprised all by submitting the 2000 budget to the Council a full two months before the start of the fiscal year--unprecedented in the short history of the Palestinian Authority (PA). In another unexpected development, the PLC Budget Committee Chair of the past year, Dr. Azmi Shuabi, resigned from the chair position and was replaced by Bethlehem District Member and businessman, Daoud al-Zeer.

On 27 November, a group of 20 Palestinians, including academics, political leaders, and 8 Members of the PLC signed and published a manifesto – or *bayan*, in Arabic – that strongly criticized the PA for breaking promises, allowing corruption, and abusing its power. The PA was swift to respond, arresting the twelve non-PLC Members and accusing all signatories of using disrespectful language and inciting the public. Under pressure from the Executive Branch to take firm action against the PLC Members, the PLC called for an emergency session to be held in Gaza in early December. Prior to the meeting, there was speculation that the eight PLC Members who signed the manifesto would be stripped of their parliamentary immunity, or expelled from the PLC. Both actions would have conflicted with the PLC's Standing Orders, as well as international parliamentary standards. Meeting in closed session, the PLC passed a resolution condemning the eight PLC signatories of the *bayan* and issuing a warning not to resort to such actions again. The resolution also called on the EA to release the other signatories who had been arrested, and called for the establishment of a committee to monitor PLC Members' behavior.

The evening after the Gaza vote, one of the PLC signatories was attacked in his hometown of Nablus, and shot in the leg. A week later, another PLC signatory was attacked and beaten by six security officers in Jericho.

This was the first time in the four-year history of the PLC that a significant number of Members had acted together to strongly criticize the PA. The fact that the group had chosen to voice their concerns in

an unparliamentary way seemed to anger some PLC Members more than the content of the manifesto. Clearly the PLC wanted to take action that would be both firm and consistent with its Standing Orders; it succeeded in this, but failed in its attempt to bury the uncomfortable and divisive affair. The movement, which was started by the Bayan al-Eshreen episode and gained momentum from the PA's heavy-handed reaction, seems destined to remain on the Palestinian political landscape. Toward the end of the quarter, there were discussions about some or all of the signatories forming a formal opposition caucus in the PLC.

II. Main Accomplishments During this Quarter

Along with administrative activities, such as hiring staff and obtaining new office space in Ramallah and Gaza, planning activities dominated the first quarter of the project.

A. Project Planning

The most significant single planning activity was the strategic planning workshop held on 17-18 November 1999; however, a number of other meetings and activities were conducted to support project planning. Many of the meetings were also designed to build working relationships with institutions and organizations that will be involved in future project activities.

Strategic Planning Workshop. On 17-18 November 1999, ARD held a strategic planning workshop (SPW) for PLC staff, PLC Members, ARD staff, and consultants to assist in the strategic planning of activities for the three-year contract. A full report on the SPW (dated 29 November 1999) has been submitted to USAID under separate cover.

The SPW had multiple objectives, including: 1) providing PLC Members and staff with a briefing regarding the scope of the PLC2 project, 2) reviewing lessons learned from previous ARD technical assistance projects to the PLC, and 3) obtaining PLC Member and staff input in planning activities under the PLC2 project. In addition to these primary objectives, there were a number of hoped-for secondary benefits, which included: 1) providing opportunities for PLC Members and staff to meet new USAID and ARD staff; 2) providing opportunities for PLC Members and staff to participate jointly in staff development planning; and 3) stimulating interaction between certain PLC staff and counterparts at certain other agencies -- the Diwan al Fatwa wa al-Tashr'ie (the Diwan), the Budget Office in the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

In general, the SPW was very successful in meeting these objectives. The SPW was attended by 10 ARD staff, 5 ARD-hired consultants, 19 PLC staff members, 8 PLC Members, and a few selected outside participants. The attendees received a general briefing on the PLC2 project and an overview of the illustrative activities for their sector. Substantial input was received in small group sessions regarding possible project activities; a number of activities have been added and subtracted from the tentative list of activities contained in the contract proposal in response to this input. The discussion panels were lively and helped build dialogue between the PLC and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the Budget Office in the Ministry of Finance.

Both inside and outside the framework of the SPW, the consultants provided useful insight with respect to the development of the workplans in each of the sectors. However, participation from the Liaison Committee was not as strong as anticipated. Only three Liaison Committee members attended portions of the SPW. Some differences exist between the activities that are requested by the PLC staff and Members and the activities that ARD feels are best suited to achieving the developmental objectives of the contract. ARD anticipates that further modifications will be required to the work plan in order to accommodate Liaison Committee member concerns.

Planning with the Diwan. Although one of the staff members of the Diwan, Awatif al-Ghane, attended the two-day SPW, the purpose of her participation was to provide the Diwan's perspective on PLC-centered activities and to suggest and discuss possible avenues of cooperation. The SPW was not the appropriate forum for detailed planning of ARD's activities with the Diwan. As a result, ARD conducted a

series of meetings (before and after the SPW) with Ibrahim al-Dougme, the Head of the Diwan, to develop our programming with the Diwan for the first year of the project.

The summary work plan chart for Sector A, which was attached to the draft first-year work plan submitted to the PLC Liaison Committee, was discussed with Mr. al-Dougme in detail. The timing for one of the activities (the identification of an Arabic-speaking legislative drafting specialist to work for an extended period of time with the Diwan and the PLC Legal Department) was advanced in response to Mr. al-Dougme's requests. Other activities were added, including some targeted English language training and limited administrative assistance relating to workflow and records management. ARD believes that an understanding has been reached with Mr. al-Dougme regarding planned activities that are to be conducted with the Diwan during the first year and that are already proceeding on a number of fronts.

Some of the tensions between the Executive Branch and the PLC are reflected in tensions between the Diwan and the PLC Legal Department. Although Mr. al-Dougme was receptive to joint training between the Diwan and the PLC Legal Department in certain limited instances, he was reluctant to support joint training in certain core areas, such as legislative drafting. Although part of this reluctance is justified due to differences in skill levels between the Diwan staff and the PLC Legal Department staff, it certainly goes beyond this. ARD expects that these tensions may surface in finalizing a unified legislative drafting manual. Although ARD will need to be sensitive to these issues moving forward (from both the PLC and Diwan side), it is hoped that having staff members who have worked closely with Mr. al-Dougme (Scott Hubli and Tareq Abed Shafi) will help in resolving some of these issues.

Preparation of the First-Year Work Plan. Following up on the SPW, summary charts describing the work plan were prepared in the final week of November and were distributed to the Liaison Committee on 27 November 1999. The complete work plan, including the narrative description of the summary charts, was finalized on 3 December 1999 and was transmitted to Dr. Labadi to distribute to the Liaison Committee members. The Liaison Committee has not met since that time.

B. Assistance in Legislative and Deliberative Process

Birzeit Drafting Manual. ARD met with staff at the Birzeit Law Institute to plan the final stages of developing this manual. Work on this manual began more than a year ago under the PLC1 contract.

Search for Medium-Term, Arabic-Speaking, Legislative Drafting Consultant for the Diwan. Research is underway – focused on Egypt – to locate such a consultant. The search is being undertaken in cooperation with the head of the Diwan, Ibrahim al-Dougme.

Review of the External Legislative Process. Project staff member, Tareq Abed Shafi, interviewed a number of people in the Diwan regarding the current process. An initial draft of the results of this review has been prepared.

Assistance to the Legal Committee and the Legal Department. ARD Consultant Keith Schulz assisted the Meridian Group in the planning and implementation of the Legal Committee study tour in Washington, DC. In addition, Senior Technical Advisor Scott Hubli met with key individuals in the PLC Legal Department and Legal Committee. ARD's Special Legal Consultant Anis Kasim continued his discussions with the PLC Leadership regarding the need for a Legal Department manager. ARD has been asked by the PLC to assist in organizing a series of judicial law hearings.

Paper on Motions of Censure. In response to several requests from PLC Members and staff, ARD prepared a brief and objective paper analyzing the PLC's December action against the signatories of the Bayan al-Eshreen. The paper looked at the PLC's actions in relation to its own Standing Orders as well as in comparison with international practice regarding legislative censure.

Assistance to Committee Staff. ARD held initial discussions and began work on a concept paper expanding the public hearing assistance from oversight to cover proposed legislation as well.

Discussion of Mechanisms for Possible Contacts with the Knesset. ARD met with the Palestinian/Israeli organization, al-Mossawa, to discuss ways in which contact with the Knesset might be developmentally useful to the PLC. Development is underway on contingency plans for organizing visits and exchanges when conditions are conducive and the PLC provides approval.

C. Assistance in Budget and Oversight

Despite the delays in Liaison Committee approval of the annual work plan, activities in this sector continued, partly with momentum from the PLC1 project.

Assistance to the Budget Committee. After the resignation of Dr. Azmi Shau'ibi from chairmanship of the Budget Committee, ARD met the new Chair, Daoud al-Zeer to discuss assistance to the committee. Follow-up discussions were held with the full Budget Committee. ARD also met with Budget Director Abla Nashishibi to discuss ways in which the project can strengthen the budget and fiscal capacity of the PLC.

Public Hearings. As a continuation of its efforts to develop the capacity of the PLC committees to conduct proper investigations and public hearings as a mechanism for oversight of the Executive Authority, ARD assisted in the preparation of a successful public hearing organized by the Health Subcommittee of the Education and Social Affairs Committee on the Palestinian pharmaceutical industry. This session was held in Gaza as a culmination of ARD's pilot project that focused on the Health Subcommittee. Subcommittee Members and staff organized this final hearing in a series of four hearings with little involvement from ARD.

The essential oversight purpose of the Health Subcommittee investigation on the pharmaceutical industry has spawned a number of initiatives for legislation. ARD's preliminary discussions with the key Subcommittee Members reveal interest in using the same public hearing mechanism in the legislative development process. Work in this area would require active involvement of project staff working in the legislative process sector.

As a result of the success of the pilot project, most of the remaining nine committees of the PLC became interested in conducting investigations and public hearing sessions. The most active preparations are being undertaken by the Committee on Refugee Affairs and the Committee on Security and Interior Affairs. Both committees are being supported by ARD. Topics selected for the sessions are "Development projects and refugee camps" in the case of the Committee on Refugee Affairs, and "Misuse of firearms in the Palestinian Territories" in the case of the Committee on Security and Interior Affairs.

Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. ARD met twice with staff from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to discuss ways in which the PLC2 project can improve the relationship between the Council and the Ministry. Also discussed were ways in which PLC2 activities could include Ministry staff.

D. Assistance in Constituency Relations

Constituent Office Study. During the PLC1 project, one of the major obstacles facing ARD in the sector of constituency relations was the inability of the PLC to make a decision as to the structure of their constituent offices. From the moment the PLC officially opened and staffed PLC offices in each of the 16 electoral districts, member usage and effectiveness of the offices varied. Some PLC Members, with their own resources, opened their own private offices, and others succeeded in getting the PLC to open private offices for them. By 1998, there were a wide variety of office structures, and PLC policy on

constituent offices was inconsistent. Although many PLC Members were satisfied with a shared office structure, a growing number were urging the PLC to replace shared offices with a system that allowed members to open private offices.

To address this ongoing issue, ARD offered to help the PLC conduct a thorough assessment of the existing District Office situation and a feasibility study of alternatives, in order to help the PLC Leadership make a sound decision on this issue. As opposed to hiring an outside firm or consultant to conduct this study, the PLC opted to form an internal group, the Feasibility Study Committee, consisting of three PLC staff members, including the PLC's District Office Director. ARD's Program Manager for Constituency Relations was invited to serve on the committee. This group, which was formed by an official PLC decree in late October, met with District Office staff, private constituent office staff, and PLC Members to gather information and understand various perspectives on this issue.

The study included a comparison of the PLC District Office structure with the private offices, a detailed financial analysis of the current District Offices, and recommended alternative constituent office models. Annexes provided readers with background material on specific Member usage and cost comparisons.

The feasibility study was officially submitted to the PLC Director General, Dr. Mahmoud Labadi, in December. The study is expected to be reviewed by the PLC's Council Affairs Committee (CAC) in the next quarter. PLC Speaker, Mr. Ahmad Q'rie, has expressed interest in reaching a final agreement with PLC Members on this issue. ARD provided USAID with an English version of this study.

Democracy Day Campaign. ARD has been heavily involved in the planning, preparation, and implementation of the second annual 7 March Democracy Campaign. This year's planning already improves on the initial campaign with a determined attempt by the PLC to involve the Executive Authority, including several ministries, numerous NGOs and civil society institutions, and media institutions in its activities. The Ministries and NGOs welcomed the overtures and showed great enthusiasm to participate. This kind of cooperation in which both branches of government and the NGOs work together on a campaign that emphasizes democratic principles helps to strengthen relations between the Legislature and the Executive Authority on one hand, and the PNA institutions and the civil society organizations on the other.

Constituent Casework Management Software (CCMS). ARD continued its work on the Constituent Casework Management Software (CCMS), designed to facilitate the processing of constituent inquiries that come through the District Offices. As this program was installed in all 16 constituent offices at the end of PLC1, modifications needed to be made at the beginning of PLC2 to ensure easy use for the District Office staff. ARD is continuing to update this software. In the next quarter, ARD will update the program and make more changes in all District Offices. Training will also be provided for directors on the use of this program.

E. Assistance in Internal Administration

Unlike the other areas of the project, this new project sector does not include carry-over activities from the initial PLC1 assistance project. With only a few activities that had already started, most of the work in this sector was dependent upon PLC approval. However, groundwork was laid in this sector which will allow activities to proceed more quickly once the "go" signal is received from the PLC.

Internal Communications Systems. Enhancing the capability of the Council to communicate internally is a facet of the internal administration support that had been classified a priority by the PLC at the November Strategic Planning Workshop. With this in mind, ARD's information technology section began assessment of the Council network systems in Gaza and in Ramallah. In addition, ARD's Management Information Systems Manager developed an assessment plan and a suggested implementation strategy that are ready to discuss with Council IT staff and Kim Glenn, ARD's Vermont MIS Specialist,

once we can proceed with more direct action. This layout of options will serve as the basis for brainstorming and decision-making with all collaborating partners.

Database programming and staff training on dissemination of notices to Members began in the first quarter. ARD's programmer was able to provide an initial database to the Council, and testing and training have begun on distributing Council Session agendas to Members. This will be expanded to cover committee meeting schedules and other documents for distribution to Members and staff. Distribution points will be set up in Ramallah and Gaza.

Staff Training Needs. The Senior Technical Advisor and Project Coordinator met with Kamal Daibas, Director of the Development and Training Unit of the PLC, to discuss training needs of the Council. Mr. Daibas provided ARD with the initial assessment of staff training requirements prepared by his department. The final product will be available in early 2000. Discussions centered on areas in which ARD could provide assistance. ARD will collaborate closely with this department throughout the project. Strong cooperative ties with the department are being formed by this ARD project team, which is important due to the close working relationship required.

Journal Enhancement. Enhancement of Journal forms and automation continued into the first quarter of PLC2. Some changes and additional improvements were made in the forms used by the Journal Clerk. In addition, the Journal automation system was installed on the PLC's hardware at the Chamber to allow maximum use of the system by the Journal Editor. The PLC's network then allows the Journal Editor access to the document started at the Chamber and allows her to finish the work from the Administrative Building after the session has ended.

Y2K Assistance. ARD computer staff, working in conjunction with Council computer department staff, continued their assessment of Year 2000 compatibility of Council hardware and software. One problem arose 1 January 2000 affecting the network in Ramallah; ARD was able to provide technical assistance in resolving the problem.

F. ARD / PTU Start-up and Mobilization Activities

Implementation Plan. ARD prepared and submitted its start-of-project implementation plan, as required by the contract.

Annual Work Plan. Based on the results of the November Planning Workshop, ARD prepared and submitted its first annual work plan to USAID in November 1999. The work plan was also submitted to the Liaison Committee for its review and approval.

Recruitment. Several new positions were identified in ARD's PLC2 proposal. Certain existing ARD staff members were promoted to new positions based on their work performance. The Program Manager for Executive/Legislative Relations and Public Outreach was actively recruited by ARD, even prior to finalizing the PLC2 contract. ARD filled the remainder of the vacancies using standard recruitment procedures (i.e., advertising these employment opportunities, scoring the applications, and interviewing the top candidates).

Program Manager for Executive/Legislative Relations and Public Outreach-- Hanan Rabbani was recruited during the summer, prior to the start of the PLC2 project. She brings knowledge of Members of the Council and the Executive, and has a high level of experience in organizing public events. She is currently focusing on Democracy Day planning.

Gaza Office Manager--Mr. Ziad Jaser moved in mid-December from his IT role within the Constituency Relations sector to fill the important position of ARD Gaza Office Manager/Senior Project Coordinator. Mr. Jaser brings a strong and immediate ARD presence to the Gaza area, and his previous work with the Council and the District Offices will allow program activities to proceed more quickly in that area. In addition to the responsibilities of office management, he will

represent ARD in meetings with the Council, NGOs, and other entities in Gaza. He will continue to provide technical assistance in the Constituency Relations area. Along with Tareq Abed Shafi and Samar Abu Ramadan, ARD now has a strong team based in Gaza.

Technical Coordinator for Legislation--During the first quarter, ARD completed recruitment of a Technical Coordinator for Legislation based in Gaza. The position meets two key needs. First, providing ARD with an attorney who can review legislation and other legal documents in Arabic and, second, providing ARD with a relatively senior staff member in Gaza who can help represent ARD on a daily basis with the Gaza PLC staff, the Diwan al-Fatwa wa al-Tashr'ie and the Gaza NGO community. ARD found an excellent match for the position, Tareq Abed Shafi. Mr. Abed Shafi has been working for the last year on the UNDP rule of law project and has developed good working relationships with the Head of the Diwan and the Minister of Justice, a knowledge of the Diwan's internal processes and procedures, and significant legal research and legislative drafting skills.

Technical Coordinator for Public Administration--Mr. Jawad Risheq starts in this position in January. Mr. Risheq has had extensive experience in local public administration providing technical assistance in the areas of human resources, finances, procurement, and information systems. The focus of his assistance is in Sector D—Internal Administration, but his skills in management and in training will cross over into providing assistance in all sectors.

Project Assistant and Translator--Wedad Naser is providing program support to the Legislative Process/Budget sector. She brings seven months of ARD experience from PLC1 in this area.

Translator--ARD's position of a full-time translator was filled by Khalil Sleibi, He has over 18 years of translation experience and is proficient in reading, writing, and speaking Arabic, English, French, and Spanish.

Office Support Staff--Lina Ahmad, appointed as Administrative Assistant in ARD's office in Ramallah, comes with six-years of experience as secretary and administrative assistant in several international organizations. Samar Abu Ramadan, selected as Office Coordinator for ARD's Gaza office, comes with six years of experience as administrative assistant in the Development Resource Center and Community Development Unit/ PECDAR/UNDP.

New Office Space. With the increased scope of the PLC2 project over the first three-year contract and with the hiring of additional staff, ARD/West Bank needed to move to larger office space. New premises were found near the Council Chambers at the Ministry of Education that satisfy ARD's space requirements. This location will serve the project well, allowing for easy accessibility between the Council and ARD. The PLC currently holds their plenary sessions at the Chamber and, in August 2000, plans to move into a new administrative building on the same property.

On 21 December 1999, the transition from the old office to the new office began. ARD struggled with all of the inconveniences and frustrations of a general move, along with the additional problems of discovering new construction flaws. However, the dust is settling and the main communication networks are in place. ARD staff pitched in to make the transition as painless as possible and have been gracefully enduring the paint/varnish smells, the cold, the water leaks, telephone installations, and procurement headaches.

ARD plans an open house for PLC Members and staff to show them the new offices and training room, and will use the opportunity to introduce the PLC2 project to more of the Council. In addition, USAID and leaders of the NGO community will be invited.

During the project's first quarter, ARD was able to make excellent progress in opening their Gaza Office. The search for an appropriate facility uncovered optimum office space close to the PLC's Administrative Building in Gaza City. This facility allows space for the office staff as well as training and conference rooms. The telephone switchboards, computer network, and furniture/equipment procurement should be complete in January 2000.

Procurement. Procurement of office equipment and furniture needed for ARD's offices in Ramallah and Gaza began during the initial three months of the project. USAID regulations and ARD procedures are being followed regarding the bid process, country of origin requirements, and approval processes. ARD transferred over and is using all non-expendable equipment and furniture from the first project, but, in addition, needed to procure the following contract-approved items:

Computer workstations

Printers

Computer network, cabling and hubs

Telephones and switchboard

Photocopier

Mobile phones

Conference tables

Servers

Scanners

UPSs

Fax machine

Cars

Desks and computer tables

Filing cabinets

West Bank/Gaza Accessibility. Senior Management met with Captain Peter Lerner of the Israeli Department of International Affairs to discuss the required permits for local ARD staff to travel between the West Bank and Gaza areas in performance of their jobs. ARD was able to arrange three-month permits for staff. These permits will renew automatically as long as staff remain employees of ARD. Also being explored is the possibility of obtaining a car permit that would allow driving through Erez Checkpoint. This would greatly increase the ease of travel between areas.

III. Summary of Implementation Problems and Remedial Actions

The greatest problem facing the project at this stage of implementation is the PLC's lack of decision-making engagement in the project. In spite of a hopeful start to the new contract, that included a high-level signing ceremony, the Speaker's endorsement of the project, the formation of a new Liaison Committee (LC) with a commitment to meet every two weeks, a successful participatory planning workshop, and the development of a comprehensive annual work plan that was submitted to the LC in November; there has been no formal response to the work plan – in fact, the LC has failed to meet since November.

The LC's inability to meet was partly explained by the general slow down of activity during Ramadan, beginning in early December, Christmas, New Year's Day, and the four-day Eid that followed in mid-January. In fact, these same conditions would have prevented the project from reaching a high level of activity even if the LC had approved the work plan. (In order to take advantage of the slow down, ARD moved its offices during this period.)

In addition to the seasonal slowdown, other factors combined to prevent the LC from meeting and approving the work plan. As the LC is an ad-hoc committee, it does not have a full agenda of oversight or legislative responsibilities, and it does not meet as regularly as other committees. Also, the overall political situation, including negotiations with Israel and the PLC's internal turmoil related to the Bayan Al-Eshreen incident, presented serious distractions – not only from reviewing the ARD work plan, but other important legislative work as well.

The project has responded to the LC's delayed decision-making in the following ways:

- focusing on essential start-up tasks (recruitment and office move);
- working on contract activities that do not directly involve the PLC (i.e., activities with the Diwan);
- working on contract activities that can also be considered carry-overs from PLC1;
- developing annual work plans; and
- working on activities at the PLC's specific invitation (committee assistance, Democracy Day).

Although it would have been preferable to receive LC approval on the work plan by the end of the first quarter, given the general slowdown conditions that prevailed in West Bank and Gaza, it probably would not have made much difference. However, if LC inaction continues into the second quarter, the project could face serious delays.

IV. Summary of Status of Data Collection on Indicators and/or Indicator Development

ARD has worked closely with USAID to refine and amend the legislative performance indicators that were used in the course of the PLC1 contract. An effort has been made to simplify – and perhaps reduce the number – of the original six indicators while developing additional indicators that measure performance in the areas of budget review and internal administration. Once a new set of indicators has been agreed upon, baseline data will be gathered and targets will be established. The first performance indicator report is due at the end of the second quarter.

V. Description of Relationship Between Activities/Accomplishments and Achievement of Results

The first quarter of a three-year legislative strengthening project is perhaps too early to be discussing results. However, the project activities – particularly planning – conducted during these initial months have laid the foundation for the achievement of the contract results.

A review of the PLC's performance and developments during this reporting period indicate signs of encouraging progress in areas in which the project has focused. Although it would be both unwise and inaccurate to draw direct links between PLC performance and ARD project activities, there are clearly cases in which ARD assistance appears to have contributed toward a strengthened legislative capacity.

The Health Committee's use of the public hearing mechanism in its investigation of the pharmaceutical industry is a remarkable accomplishment. ARD played a critical role in developing this pilot project and has now extended similar assistance to the other committees. Word that ARD has been providing public hearing assistance reached the Speaker's office and led to a request from the Speaker that ARD assist the PLC in organizing a series of public hearings on the crisis facing the Judiciary.

Several town meetings in the districts were organized by PLC staff who have been trained by ARD and, with the help of ARD-designed software and our training for constituent office staff, thousands of constituents are better served by their representatives. Remaining in the area of constituent relations, ARD has played a major role in helping the PLC conduct a thorough assessment and feasibility study of the constituent office situation before the PLC makes a critical decision to change the office structure.

Although ARD cannot claim credit for the relatively early arrival of the government budget, it will be reviewed by Members and staff who have received training from ARD and who benefited from the budget gatherings at the November workshops.

VI. Activities Expected to be Carried Out Next Quarter

In addition to the preparation of sector work plans called for under the contract, the PTU plans to implement the following activities during the next quarter:

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

- Wrap-up seminar on the budget process
- Long-term placement of legislative drafting mentor
- Computer training on Birzeit legal database
- Needs assessment of equipment and legal resource materials
- Training on the Birzeit Drafting Manual
- Support on Criminal Procedures Draft Law
- Support on Copyright Law
- Preparation of a Legislative Process Guide

Development of Executive/Legislative Relations

- Ongoing assistance to standing committees
- Ongoing support to the PLC on Democracy Day Campaign
- Preparation of study tour to Morocco and Tunisia
- Assistance to the Ministry of Parliamentary affairs

Increasing interaction with constituents

- Ongoing installation and modification of the Constituent Inquiries Processing System Software
- Computer Training for District Office directors and secretarial staff on using the network
- Outreach and Public Relations training for constituent office staff
- Support constituent office staff in organizing and implementing Democracy Day activities, including town meetings in outlying areas
- Help to develop the PLC Web site
- Begin press and public information training for Public Information Department staff to improve quality of publications

More Effective Internal Management

- Initial planning and implementation for communications link between Ramallah and Gaza
- Internal communications system for providing information to Members
- Initial equipment needs assessment
- Development of procurement procedures
- Development of administrative procedures for personnel
- Legislative process orientation to staff
- Technical assistance to new Chief Clerk