

Speaking Points

24th April 2017

**Your Excellency Minister of Local Government Hussein Al Araj,
Ministers, Mayors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on behalf of the European Union at this very important workshop organised by the European Union CESMED project in Palestine in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government.

I would like to thank the team of the Ministry of Local Government, and in particular Mr. Walid, and the officials of the three Municipalities involved in the CES-MED programme (Hebron, Nablus and Tulkarm).

Palestinian energy security is and will continue to be a concern for the European Union. We believe that an efficient Palestinian energy sector is crucial for Palestinian development and economic prosperity. An increase in the diversity of energy resources, suppliers, and routes available will enable the Palestinian Authority to provide reliable and affordable services to Palestinians.

The energy situation in Palestine differs from the situation in other countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean due to the limited accessibility to primary energy resources, financial constraints, and the particular political context. In addition, Gaza's isolation presents technical challenges in transporting, storing, importing and exporting energy.

Palestine persistent dependency on Israel for meeting its energy requirements, does call at this stage for important efforts in terms of investments in securing more energy from renewables. It also encourages more work towards the achievement of fair sales agreements either through bulk price imports from Israel or imports from other countries in the region.

Through this programme, the involved **Municipalities have made significant progress towards the development of their capacities for planning, implementing and managing local sustainable energy measures**, as well as developed the tools to increase investment in these areas.

CES-MED is not an initiative that is implemented in isolation. It is part of a larger set of interventions the EU has put in place in the

Mediterranean region to support cooperation in the energy sector at both national and regional level.

Local authorities have a key role to play: cities are the place where we consume most of our energy, but also where the greatest potential for decarbonising our economies lies. By promoting sustainable energy, cities can make a tangible contribution to the fight against **Climate Change** by considerably reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to maximise the impact of cities' achievements, we would need to scale these up at national level, possibly in the framework of comprehensive national programmes/strategies for the promotion of local sustainable energy.

With this in mind in the course of the past few years, the EU has supported, among other initiatives, the *institutional set up and operationalization of the PA Electricity Sector*. It also assisted an European Investment Bank loan to the PA for the construction of a four 161 KVI substations in the West bank. The EU has also recently helped PENRA to the update of the *Sustainable Energy Strategy for the next 5 years, which we* hope the PA Cabinet will endorse in the weeks to come.

Let me conclude by recalling that energy security is essential for any economy. *The Energy sector of Palestine* has enormous potentials despite the many challenges you face. What I can promise you is that as you move forward, you can count on a long-standing and committed partner: **the European Union**.

Thanks you