



## DEVELOPMENT EMERGENCY MODALITY

### Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

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## Cover Page

**UNCT/MCO:** State of Palestine

**Reporting Period:** 1 January - 31 December 2022

**JP title:** Strengthening livelihoods and social protection in response to rising food prices, rising energy prices and tightening financial controls

**Thematic SDG Areas:** Decent jobs & universal social protection; Food systems transformation;

**PUNOS:** WFP, ILO

**Stakeholder partner:** National Government; Civil Society Organizations; IFIs/DFIs; Humanitarian actors; Bilateral aid organizations;

**Gender Marker:** Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

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## Annual Progress

### Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

On-track (expected annual results-achieved)

### Overall Progress

Outcome 1: Empowering women's cooperatives and farmers through increased access to agricultural inputs, strengthening capacities and the enabling environment for improved livelihoods and resilience.

Output 1.1: Increased knowledge and access to capacity strengthening for women's cooperatives and farmers A questionnaire was developed and distributed to 17 cooperatives to understand the needs reported by a cross-section of food system actors, particularly in the context of elevated food and agricultural inputs prices that were exacerbated by the Ukraine Crisis. Particular attention was paid to understanding the needs of women and other vulnerable groups within the food system. The needs assessment comprised a series of interviews that sourced information on challenges and constraints faced by the cooperatives and their members (including information on the value chain, market penetration, and consumer satisfaction). Preliminary results helped inform the design of capacity strengthening activities for cooperatives, as part of this project. Responses highlighted specific training and human resources needs, along with needs for greater access to credit and improved business efficiency. In 2022, a total of eight workshops and training sessions were conducted supporting 40 women in the cooperatives. A further 20 women will receive capacity strengthening activities in Q1 2023. In addition, the JP conducted "Training of Trainers" workshop on My.Coop training module to improve the management of agricultural cooperatives. This included 21 female and male participants, including two members of the Cooperative Work Agency (CWA). The training targeted board members and potential managers and focused on management of agricultural cooperatives, designed to institute the main principles of cooperatives and to improve governance and management practices of the 15 cooperatives identified, CWA and the Ministry of agriculture in OPT. 127 farmers affected by the Ukraine crisis and selected in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture also received training sessions on the use of

pesticides and fertilizer in farming techniques.

Output 1.2 Increased availability of food items and access to agricultural inputs the target population of the women's cooperatives and farmers also received agricultural inputs from the JP. Two women's cooperatives were identified in Hebron governorate (Al-Shouyoukh Women's Cooperative and Dura Agricultural Women's Cooperative), in coordination with MoSD. One cooperative was provided with livestock assets (20 sheep). The cooperative was responsible for the purchase of the sheep and were supported by the JP with veterinary expertise. The women in Al-Sheyoukh were provided with twenty sheep, with a responsibility to care for and raise, so they can continue to diversify their output and include dairy products. The sheep are kept in a central location and are rotated among the members for care throughout their lifetimes. The members are compensated through sales of milk and dairy products. With the profit they make, they are able to cover the costs of fodder. The second cooperative was provided with a large greenhouse unit (3 dunams), along with seeds and seedlings to cultivate tomato, cucumber, and eggplant such that the cooperative can then harvest and use to produce items to sell. For the target population of farmers, each received seeds and seedlings of wheat, barley, and alfalfa to grow and harvest crops. In 2022, the distribution took place and the development of crops is being closely monitored.

Outcome 2: Enhancing and diversifying financing for shock responsive social protection systems

Output 2.1: Analysis is conducted to improve the design of the current PNCTP in response to this and future crises The UNCT have carried out a wealth of studies on social assistance programming in Palestine, including assessments on the effectiveness of social protection floors and on the proxy-means test, which this JP built upo

### **SDG Acceleration progress towards the SDGs, focusing on the main SDG targets**

The JP aimed to contribute primarily to the following five SDG targets.

- Goal 1: End Poverty; 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger; 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- Goal 5: Gender equality; 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Goal 8: Decent Work; 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- Goal 17: Partnership; 17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

The JP accelerated progress towards the SDGs through both its social protection and livelihoods activities. Analysis on poverty dynamics from 2013 to 2018 and transfer value determination aimed to support Palestine to adopt more inclusive and rights-based social protection system, accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs. Work on the social protection component also advanced the establishment of the social insurance pillar in the Palestinian national social protection architecture, thereby working to reduce the demands of the non-contributory, tax-financed pillar of the system. The draft social security law makes important progress towards the achievement of Universal Social Protection, achieving substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Livelihoods interventions in the wake of the Ukraine crisis worked to build resilience and advance the Decent Work Agenda. Vulnerable groups were targeted within the food system, and in particular, women's groups, with interventions working to strengthen food system actors and gender equality. The JP partners engaged with other key social protection and livelihoods actors, including through the Local Aid Coordination Sector Working Group, the Social Protection and Cash & Voucher Assistance – Thematic Working Group, and the complementary development partners' Social Protection coordination meetings.

### **Constraints that were encountered and any adjustments that were made to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the JP and the coherence and coordination of UN system support.**

The analysis on consumption and income levels (Output 1.1) was initially intended to be carried out by the PCBS and to focus on poverty levels directly. Several constraints were identified at the beginning of the work, including: the World Bank was already supporting PCBS to track changing prices; limited data was available on poverty, with the latest PECS data being from 2017; and after extensive discussions PCBS preferred for the UN agencies to carry out the analysis and present findings (rather than PCBS staff directly doing the analysis or being trained through the process). The latter constraint is understood to be because PCBS is primarily a data collection entity and producing analysis to inform policy would be beyond its political remit. These constraints meant that the UN agencies moved to carry out the analysis themselves, and that the results are based on consumption data rather than poverty data. An unexpected upside is that there will be increased ownership by the MoSD, as they are now the primary entity who will use

the results, despite PCBS still being involved. Further, the JP was able to redirect some funds intended for strengthening PCBS capacity to instead strengthen MoSD and national capacity in social assistance through two highly regarded training courses.

The work on transfer value determination mechanisms was initially intended to focus only on emergencies and specifically in response to inflation. During the inception phase, the focus was broadened to include an assessment of transfer value determination mechanisms for the PNCTP against set criteria, which was derived from international labor standards. Further consultations and recommendations were produced to support the harmonization and coherence of transfer value determination mechanisms across the humanitarian development peace nexus. This enabled the work to better respond to the context, where a large portion of cash transfers are carried out by non-governmental actors. The same consultant was used in both the wealth dynamics and transfer value determination work, in order to ensure continuity in policy recommendations and findings.

The livelihoods component of work noted three main challenges as implementation began with identified cooperatives. Products sold by the cooperatives, although to a high degree artisanal and of low processing, were found to have limited differentiation between products sold across different cooperatives. Plans were incorporated within the training to introduce branding and value addition to enhance sales. Secondly, the JP identified that targeted cooperatives had previously been supported on key agricultural extension services and veterinary services by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), however, these had been stopped in the prior three years due to a lack of budget. The JP led discussions with the MoA to restart these services and ensure a professional-level of support (whereas cooperatives were now reliant on less-qualified paid services). The JP stepped in and provided these services for the course of the programme, after which the JP will coordinate with the MoA to continue provision of these services. Finally, it was noted that the cooperatives play a vital income generating and insurance-mechanism for members, as at times, a member will rely on the cooperative income in situations where the member becomes unemployed and is in search of a job. The JP worked on improving logistical efficiencies to maintain income generation whilst minimizing the number of workers across different processing cycles and decrease transportation costs.

Meetings with the cooperatives highlighted several important factors in enhancing productivity – (1) access to credit (2) a market-driven approach (3) measures to increase women’s participation and (4) collaboration with other cooperatives. The JP incorporated activities on financial and digital awareness workshops to enhance access to credit. Business planning and markets-orient

### **Next steps, scaling and sustainability [up to half a page]**

Activities to improve social protection adequacy under this project have kick-started a sectoral focus on transfer values, which will expand in 2023, funded through an existing EU funded UNJP that aims to strengthen coherence and harmonization across the nexus for social assistance with involvement of both humanitarian and development actors. The analysis of poverty dynamics, alternative mechanisms for transfer value determination and financing options is expected to inform ongoing debate on the re-design of the national social assistance scheme to strengthen rights-based mechanism that better address life-cycle risks in line with the vision of progressive realization of a Social Protection Floor. The upcoming development of the Social Development Strategy and ongoing work on national legislation for social assistance will benefit from the analytical and conceptual inputs developed through the project.

The scale up of the social security law process – through public consultations and then implementation – will continue to be supported by the JP; regular budget funds have already been assigned for the interim, and potential longer-term funding streams have been identified. Work to strengthen cooperatives will extend beyond the close of this project, working in close alignment with the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Agriculture. The outcomes of the needs assessment and study will inform future engagement.

## **Strategic Partnerships and Communications**

**Explain how diverse stakeholders were engaged with the JP**

Livelihood's activities were implemented in coordination with MoA and MoSD. An MoU was signed with MoA with the aim of continuing activities beyond the conclusion of the project. Shock-responsive social protection component and its activities were implemented in coordination and consultation with the MoSD, MoL, worker and employer groups, PCBS, development and humanitarian partners, including but not limited to UNICEF, WB, OCHA, EU. This included the organization of dissemination and validation workshops, regular meetings, and presentations of the different analyses' findings.

### Key meetings and events organized

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JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors	Kick-off meeting event
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## Priority Cross-cutting Issues

### Cross-cutting results/issues

The Joint Programme aimed to mainstream gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights throughout the programme design and implementation. Work in the livelihoods component focused on women and identified two women's cooperatives to build capacity and transfer agricultural assets. Interventions included the introduction of more flexible working hours for women, especially married women with children. Under the second component of the project, the JP worked to strengthen gender neutrality in the design of the social insurance scheme as well as to strengthen specific protection mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities (e.g., invalidity benefits). Work to improve shock responsive social protection and develop the social security law advances progress on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948 Article 22 on the right to social security, and the international social security standards (specifically ILO C102 and R202) that give substance and set minimum standards to realize this right.

### How did the JP apply the Gender Marker

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services); Policy dialogues, advocacy (e.g. direct inputs to national policies, strategies, laws, including women's and girls' rights groups in coordination mechanisms); Capacity development (e.g. training of social workers, local governments, local communities); Adaptation of existing programmes (e.g. revision of eligibility criteria, removal of conditionalities);

### JP address the below cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind

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Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	No	No	Yes

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## Contribution to enhancing SDG Financing

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Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy in focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

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### **How and in which area your JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing**

The social protection component under this JP contributed to strengthen the financial sustainability of the social protection system through the drafting of a revised contributory social security law which would diversify the financing base within the social protection system and is also considered a crucial element to sustainably protect households in SoP, particularly given the unreliability of both government revenues and donor funding. In the mid-term to long-term, this work contributes to a more adequate social assistance and advancing the agenda of establishment of a shock responsive contributory social security system in OPT. This in turn contributes to improved effectiveness of the social assistance non-contributory schemes when the revised law is adopted and signed by the President.

Currently in OPT, there is no encompassing legal framework regulating the government-provided social protection programs, hence no legal obligation upon the Ministry of Finance to pay for social protection benefits. This creates uncertainty in financing and lack of resources to deliver the benefits. Under this JP, work is undergoing and will continue beyond the project, to support the MoSD in drafting a social assistance law with specific provisions on financing to guarantee a sustainable, regular and predictable financing and delivery of benefits to the right-holders.

The work on developing a set of alternative options for transfer value determination and paper on alternative financing options for the gradual roll out of a social protection floor also is also expected to contribute to improved effectiveness of the national systems in terms of value for money and equality in benefits distributions, and harmonization of transfer value determination mechanisms across the nexus, as well as to advance discussion on diversification of social protection financing basis – with a stronger reliance on domestic resources – in the context of the new national social development strategy. Additionally, options were introduced to respond to the conflict in Ukraine or other price shocks, for example through indexation of transfer values.