



Press release

Paris, January 5th, 2012

A strong attendance of local communities is expected for the third conference on Franco-Palestinian decentralized cooperation the 23rd and 24th of January, 2012 in Hebron.

Cités unies France and the *Réseau de Coopération Décentralisée pour la Palestine (RCDP)*, in partnership with the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), and with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will hold the third conference on decentralized cooperation between France and Palestine the 23rd and 24th of January 2012 in Hebron, Palestine.

This conference will represent an important institutional event for decentralized cooperation, but also a political event as Palestine has been admitted as a UNESCO member on October 31th, with the supporting vote of France.

This event is part of the French local authorities' commitment to the Palestinian communities. The growing number of partnerships shows the political will of local institutions to support the future state of Palestine.

The expected strong attendance of French and Palestinian local authorities will give to the Conference an international scope and will provide an opportunity for local and regional partners to reaffirm French support, but also to work together for common development serving populations and local democracy.

The highest French and Palestinian authorities will attend the conference, namely Mr Henri de Raincourt, French Minister attached to the Ministre d'Etat, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, responsible for Cooperation, and Mr Salam Fayyad, Prime minister of the Palestinian National Authority.

This conference will bring together in a formal way French and Palestinian stake holders of decentralized cooperation and will encourage new partnerships. This dialogue is particularly significant in light of the crisis experienced by Palestinian communities today.

Several thematic round tables will present the actions of the decentralized cooperation during the two days meeting: Heritage, support for Palestinian institutions through economic development, water and sanitation, the commitment of European local authorities in Palestine, the role of youth

and women.

The *Réseau de Coopération Décentralisée pour la Palestine (RCDP)* is a French association chaired by Claude Nicolet, Deputy Mayor of Dunkerque, Community Advisor of the Urban Community of Dunkerque and Regional Councillor of Nord-Pas-de-Calais. It brings together, represents and supports the majority of French local communities involved in decentralized cooperation with Palestinian cities but also with refugees' camps.

The RCDP is dedicated to promote diplomacy of local authorities and act as a link between local authorities and French and Palestinian governments while remaining within a European and international approach for a fair and sustainable peace in the region.

The program of the event will be available on the website of *Cités Unies France* (<http://www.cites-unies-france.org/>).

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