



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO and Sida restore Dar Canawati cultural heritage building in Bethlehem to its former glory



Bethlehem, November 21, 2013 – Under the patronage of H.E. the Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Rami Al-Hamadallah, H.E. the Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Dr. Rula Ma'ay'a, Consul General of Sweden in Jerusalem Mr. Axel Wernhoff, The Head of UNESCO Culture Unit Mr. A. Junaid Sorosh Wali – On behalf of the UNESCO Head and Representative Mr. Derek Elias-, the Governor of Bethlehem Mr. Abdelfattah Hamayel, and the Mayor of Bethlehem Ms. Vira Baboun inaugurated on Thursday Dar Canawati; a historic building in Bethlehem city.

The Historic building was renovated by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation (CCHP) under the project "Local Development through the Rehabilitation and

Revitalization of Historic Built Environment in Palestine" funded by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish international development cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by UNESCO.

The three year project coordinated by UNESCO aims at contributing to the improvement of the quality of lives of local communities and marginalized groups through the rehabilitation and revitalization of the historic built environment in Palestine.

The early 20th century building is situated in the northern side of Bethlehem city, composed of two floors with a total area of 560m² and sits over 827m² land areas. The building has been abandoned for more than 15 years and is currently owned by the **John Paul II foundation** in the Middle East.

The building will be used as Health Services Center in cooperation with Al-Rahma Association as well as providing "lecture rooms designated for teaching languages" by John Paul II Foundation.

"Who resurrects life can do everything; today we are celebrating the revival of life and resurrection of souls. People of Bethlehem must be proud to see the heritage of their ancestors still standing to serve them today" said the Mayor of Bethlehem Ms. Vera Baboun.

"During the last period Cultural heritage gained importance in the Palestinian agenda, Sweden jointly with UNESCO will continue to support this sector to achieve a sustainable Palestinian state building" said the The General Consul of Sweden in Jerusalem Mr. Axel Wernhoff.

"UNESCO shall continue its efforts in Palestine to reach the main goal of placing culture and cultural assets at the heart of the sustainable development policies in Palestine" said Mr. A. Junaid Sorosh Wali from UNESCO.

H.E. the Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ms. Rula Ma'ay'a Congratulated John Paul II foundation and thanked CCHP for renovating Canawati building and everybody who contributed to the success of the project.

The inauguration ceremony also included a presentation by "Arch. Luma Khoury" the project's architect. The presentation highlighted the process of renovating Dar Canawati illustrated with photos. The participants cut the ribbon and had a tour inside the building.

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