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WEST BANK/GAZA

PRESS RELEASE

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USAID Launches New Water Projects in Halhul and Beit Jala

HALHUL AND BEIT JALA, WEST BANK – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), held groundbreaking ceremonies in Halhul and Beit Jala on Tuesday to launch two new activities under USAID's Emergency Water and Sanitation (EWAS) program. The events were attended by USAID Director for West Bank and Gaza Howard Sumka and representatives from ANERA and the municipalities of Halhul and Beit Jala.

In Halhul, USAID is funding a \$200,000 project, implemented by ANERA, to refurbish the town's 35 year-old main water lines. The old pipes have deteriorated, causing high water losses and contamination of drinking water, which has led to bacterial infections among local residents, especially children. New water pipes will provide a greater supply of clean water to the 28,000 inhabitants of Halhul.

USAID, through EWAS, will also build new sidewalks, hand-railings, and traffic signs to improve safety on Halhul's main street. The total EWAS activity in Halhul is expected to generate 480 person-days of employment.



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In Beit Jala, the EWAS project will install a proper drainage network to prevent the main roads from flooding with rainwater mixed with sewage. This will improve health conditions and facilitate the movement of nearly 600 local residents. The construction will cost \$96,000 and is estimated to generate 210 person-days of employment.

The EWAS program is a \$16.8 million program funded by USAID and implemented by ANERA. The program will provide emergency water and sanitation assistance to West Bank and Gaza communities, who do not receive potable water or sanitation services or whose services have been disrupted. USAID's Emergency Water and Sewage assistance programs will benefit more than 864,000 Palestinians and create 26,500 days of employment, often in rural areas with high unemployment.