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ANERA and USAID start new projects in Halhul and Beit Jala

HALHUL AND BEIT JALA, WEST BANK, JULY 10, 2007. – USAID and American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) held groundbreaking ceremonies in Halhul and Beit Jala today, to highlight the start of two new projects under the Emergency Water and Sanitation (EWAS) Program.

In Halhul, USAID is funding a project, implemented by ANERA, which will refurbish the town's main water lines. The present water network was installed 35 years ago. Today's old pipes have deteriorated in many places, causing high water losses that lead to continuous interruption in water supply in several areas.

The deterioration has also led to the contamination of drinking water by unhealthy levels of bacteria, which has led to a rise in bacterial infections among local residents, especially children, causing abdominal pains, skin rash and irritated bowels. When this new project is finished in about two months, new main water lines will provide a greater supply of clean water to 28,000 inhabitants in Halhul. The cost for this project will be around \$200,000 and it is expected to generate 480 person-days of employment.

While working in Halhul, ANERA will make the towns main Street, Nabi Younis Street, safer for pedestrians, creating sidewalks, hand railings and installing traffic signs. These activities are also funded by USAID.

*ANERA creates opportunity and hope for people in the Middle East
by improving health care and education and stimulating job creation.*

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Later the same day, USAID and ANERA had a groundbreaking ceremony in Beit Jala, as the start of another EWAS project. The project will attempt to resolve problems associated with the lack of stormwater drainage in the Aljadawel and Alamayer neighborhoods. During wintertime, the main roads in the area are flooded with rainwater mixed with sewage, which hinders the movement of some 600 local residents, especially younger students on their way to and from a nearby school. In addition, the polluted water represents a health risk, contaminating the drinking water with bacteria.

ANERA, with funding from USAID, will resolve the problem by installing a proper drainage network. The cost will be approximately \$96,000 and the project is estimated to generate 210 person-days of employment.

Emergency Water and Sanitation Program

The EWAS program is a \$16.8 million program funded by USAID and implemented by ANERA. During the period of August 2006 to September 2008, ANERA will provide emergency water and sanitation assistance to communities who do not receive potable water or sanitation services or whose services have been disrupted.

EWAS is implemented throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Typical projects involve the rehabilitation or expansion of water and sewage networks, installation of rainwater collection cisterns, delivery of water by tanker and stormwater drainage systems in areas prone to flooding.

Since the start of the program, 66 projects have been completed and another 33 projects are being implemented. More than 864,000 persons have benefited so far from EWAS and 26,500 days of employment have been created, often in rural areas with high unemployment.

ANERA – American Near East Refugee Aid

ANERA is a leading American, non-governmental organization that provides humanitarian aid to Palestinians and other populations in need in the Middle East; we are an independent, apolitical, non-religious entity. For nearly 40 years, ANERA has partnered with local groups in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan to provide relief in health care, education and job creation. Our funding comes from private, public and corporate donors.

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