

May 25, 2009

Mr. Klaus WieseHügel
President of BWI
Geneva

Ms. Anita Normark
General Secretary of BWI
Geneva

Dear Anita and Klaus,

Re: The Histadrut-PGFTU Venture "Vocational Training and Employment to Palestinian Construction Trainees"

We are delighted to send you the outline of the joint venture: "Vocational Training and Employment to Palestinian Construction Trainees" between the Histadrut and the Israeli Construction and Wood Union, which is affiliated with the Histadrut and PGFTU and the Palestinian Construction Union which is affiliated with PGFTU.

It is our pleasure to express our endorsement and commitment for this important and high priority venture between our organizations, which with no doubt will enhance the relationship between the Histadrut and PGFTU, strengthen the status of the Palestinian and Israeli employees and strongly support the peace process and co-existence in our region.

The PGFTU is committed to publish this venture among the Palestinian employees and recruit candidates for this venture. The Histadrut is also committed to carry out the venture with the PGFTU and to assure the employment of Palestinian trainees in the Israeli construction sector.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of BWI for taking the auspice in this venture and the strengthening of international solidarity. We are convinced that the cooperation between our organizations will be a role model for the trade unions movement and the political leaders in our region.

With our best regards,

Fraternally yours,

Itzhak Moyal

Chairman of the Israeli Construction And Wood Union, Histadrut-General Federation of Labour in Israel

Shaher Sa'ed

PGFTU General Secretary President of the Palestinian Construction Union, PGFTU

Vocational Training and Employment for Palestinian Construction Trainees

Background Information and Goal

The Oslo Agreement in 1993, which paved the peace process between the Israeli and Palestinian people, enabled joint meetings and cooperation between the Histadrut and the Palestinian trade union (PGFTU) and their affiliated unions. In the framework of these meetings, an agreement was signed between the two parties under the auspice of ITUC.

The two federations are committed to strengthen their relationship in order to protect the rights of the Palestinian and Israeli employees and to implement the peace between the two people in order to achieve co-existence, prosperity tranquility and normality in the region.

According to the meetings and the proposals between the two sides and the representatives of BWI, it was decided to help the Palestinian workers in the construction sector and thus to decrease the high percentage of poverty among the Palestinian employees (which is higher than 60%) and the high percentage of the Palestinian unemployment (which is currently higher than 35%, particularly in the construction sector). This situation is a result of various reasons, one of which is the lack of vocational training for the employees.

In order to improve the quality of life of the Palestinian employees in the construction sector, it is vital to ease their entry into the Israeli labour market, provide them with an appropriate vocational training and guarantee their respectable wages.

Consequently, the Histadrut and PGFTU reached an accord to carry out the venture "**Vocational Training and Employment for Palestinian Construction Trainees**", which will enable the latter to attain the professional knowledge and experience and guarantee their employment in the Israeli construction sector.

The Association of Construction and Builders in Israel and the Israeli Union of Construction and Wood Union, Histadrut, began this year a venture for vocational training, to integrate and promote Israelis in the construction sector. This venture is led, managed, and supervised by the Israeli Foundation for the Promotion and Development of Construction in Israel, by a professional team which deals with its promotion.

Due to the expected success in the opening months of this aforementioned venture and according to the potential to extend it, the Israeli Construction and Wood Union, Histadrut coordinated with the Association of Construction and Builders in Israel and



the Palestinian Construction Union, PGFTU proposed a suggestion to promote a venture for Palestinian construction trainees, who will be provided with vocational training and receive a diploma in Israel and they will be employed in Israeli construction companies.

The Method

1. The first course is considered a pilot program, which will be accompanied by representatives of the Histadrut and PGFTU.
2. The course will be offered to 30 trainees.
3. The course will consist of 2 stages
 - (a). The institutional course will be based on the existing program of structural construction work in the framework of the facilities of the Center for Construction Technology in Holon belonging to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor in or in another facility, which will be decided upon. There will be 540 classroom hours, consisting of 3 months of theoretical and practical lectures (field training).
 - (b).The practical training period, which will be held in the construction companies that will be recruited by the Histadrut. The companies will provide the apprenticeship (this part of the training will enable professionalism).
4. At the end of every stage, the trainees will pass an authorized examination, which will be prepared and transmitted by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.
 - a. At the end of the basic course there will be an comprehensive theoretical exam which will be: Level 3 theory in the profession (building casts, iron and metal work, scaffolding, and construction);
 - b. At the end of the practical training, there will be a comprehensive practical exam on Level 2.
5. The graduates, who successfully pass the exam, will receive a diploma in structural construction work and a professional certificate of building casts Level 2, and iron and metal worker Level 2.

The Implementation of the Venture:

6. The trainees will arrive each day by arranged bus transportation, which will pick them up at a specific pick up point at the border check point, and will also drop them at the same place at the end of each day.
7. The students will be accompanied by a Palestinian course coordinator, who will also be the liaison person with the Israeli team.



8. The class in theory will be held from Sunday to Thursday from 8 AM until 5 PM.
9. The practical part of the course will be held according to the working hours on the construction sites from Sunday to Friday.
10. The practical training will be held in 3 companies – who will provide work managers, who will also be the instructors for a group of up to 10 workers.
11. The students will be responsible for their own meals.
12. The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Employment will provide an Arabic teacher, who will be prepared to provide Arabic materials for the trainees.
13. **Since the Histadrut and PGFTU suggest that 60 trainees participate in this venture, we recommend that to hold two courses running concurrently or consecutively, depending on the availability of the training centers' faculties and the employers' needs for workers.**

Remarks:

14. It is possible to convert the structural construction work course to "Wet Professions" course, at identical costs, contents and scope, **which authorizes for flooring and plaster work.**
15. its distinguishing advantages:
 - a. There is a substantial shortage of professional people as well significant difficulty in recruiting Israeli employees;
 - b. It is easier to locate companies which will employ these workers;
 - c. Avoiding competition with the current venture, which deals with employment of Israeli employees

Enclosed a budget table in order to carry out the venture (**covering one course**) which outlines the contribution of the Histadrut and the sum we request from BWI and the international community.

The Course Budget

Estimated costs of the vocational training venture and the authorization of Palestinians as structural construction work			
Item	Estimated cost of the Venture	Covered by the Histadrut	Remarks
Theoretical and practical course	NIS 270,000	NIS 270,000	Three month course, 30 students. NIS 3,000 per student per month
Practical training-instructors	NIS 135,000		3 instructors for three months (NIS 15,000 per instructor)
Practical training support for the companies	NIS 225,000		NIS 2,500 per trainee for the employer to cover the time lost at the sites
Theoretical and practical training, salary for the trainees	NIS 1,260,000		NIS 7,000 per trainee/month
Transportation	NIS 198,000		NIS 1,500 per day (22 days a month)
Palestinian Coordinator	NIS 42,000		NIS 7,000 per month
Forecasted unexpected costs 15%	NIS 319,500		
Total expected costs in NIS	NIS 2,449,500	NIS 270,000	
Total expected Costs in Euro	Euro 437,411	Euro 48,214	Euro 1=NIS 5.6