

CTM - ALTROMERCATO – PROJECT BOARD

REPORT PARC

Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees – N.G.O.

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ETHICAL OVERSIGHT OF THE MAJORITY PARTNER OF C.T.M. IN PALESTINE

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INTRODUCTION

This oversight was commissioned by C.T.M. Altromercato's Project Board (from now on referred to as CiPi) as part of the normal relations with its partners.

There was a visit from 23 May to 2 June 2005 at the headquarters of PARC and in the zones of production of almonds and dates; it was not possible the zones of production of couscous (the Gaza Strip) because of the difficulties imposed by the Israeli government. The visit to Palestine was agreed to by PARC and was carried out according to the arrangements made between the two organizations. The CiPi, as the consulting organ of the Administrative Council per the ethical evaluation of partners has decided on a cyclical oversight program: it is fundamental to stabilize a relationship and a direct knowledge of partners both for exchange and for the correct practice of the ethical principles of Fair Trade (cf. *Carta dei Criteri per I Partners*, CTM).

Specifically it must be underlined that that there already exists an intense relationship between PARC and CTM for the almost annual visits that representatives of PARC make to Italy, but in any event it must be noted also that there are no specific trips to Palestine, save external auditors that work for CTM or other Fair Trade organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- The CiPi initiates direct contact with PARC and with the producers for an evaluation of the Fair Trade relationship;
- It has the objectives of auditing, informing, and exchange between consumers and producers, and in fact the program was agreed upon with Selim Abu Gazaleh, director of the Palestinian Fair Trade Department of PARC;
- It seeks to understand what knowledge the PARC producers have about Italian consumers;
- Evaluates the level of knowledge of the principles from the part of CTM organization partners;
- Verifies directly in situ the conditions of life of the workers and the work conditions, both environmental and payment-wise;
- Gathers direct information from the producers of couscous, almonds, and dates.

APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS

- Direct visits to the producers at the main headquarters of PARC
- Notes written immediately
- Contextualized photo documentation
- Material produced by PARC
- Socio-political documentation about Palestine

SPECIFIC GOALS CARRIED OUT

- Evaluation of the ethical conditions for the continuing of commercial cooperation
- Evaluation of the direct relation with producers

CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

- **Sustainability of the PARC project in relation to Palestine**

Indicators:

Annual budget
Personnel involved
Marketing sector
Assistance
Production services
CTM-PARC commercial relationship

- **Relationship between PARC and Producers**

Indicators:

number of productive projects
number of personnel on the projects
training of the personnel in fair trade
training of the producers in fair trade
technical assistance
marketing assistance

- **Entrepreneurial and Organizational Capacities of the Producers**

Indicators:

- Relationship firm/producer
- Relationship firm/home and local economy
- Autonomy of the producers
- Organization of the categories

FROM INFORMATION COLLECTED DURING THE VISIT. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF PALESTINA

2004 and the beginning of 2005 were distinguished by a series of important events, in general negative, for the Palestinian people:

the construction of the Wall of Isolation (ethnic and geographic), later declared illegal by the International Court at The Hague, 9 July 2004, Israeli attacks on Palestinian villages, the death of President Arafat, the decision of the Israeli government to move the settlements of the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, and the uneasy accord between the government of Sharon and the Palestinian Authority (represented by Abu Mazen) for the cessation of hostilities, thanks to the mediation on the Egyptian President Mubarak.

The result of these situation led to the unemployment of 60% of the population, the poverty and misery of 70%, and the drop of production in only one year of 50%, with a total loss of \$13 million.

On the other hand, on the positive side, the agreement for cessation of hostilities allowed for a return to a certain normality of civilian life, of agricultural work, of artisanal work, of a timid renewal of tourism and of a larger circulation of Palestinians in areas that were before disputed despite the intensification of Israeli checkpoints.

Specifically in the agricultural sector, the impact of the Wall and of the imposition of numerous military controls which limit the passage from one enclave to another inside of Palestine, kept the producers away from both their fields inside the “green line” (the border recognized by the UN as the occupation of Israelis in Palestinian territory from the war of 1967), as well as those who work on Israeli infrastructure in Palestinian territory. In Palestine the Israelis are the lords of the streets, the aqueducts, and the power lines and oil pipelines.

The Wall, which is hundreds of kilometres INGO and which we saw in many places, that Israel is building constitutes an authentic illegality. It does not respect the resolutions of the UN: number 181 on the division of Palestine in two states, number 242 about the withdrawal of Israel from the territories it occupied in 1967, number 194 on the right of return for refugees. It creates unending problems for the Palestinians: specifically, it will annex to Israel and take from Palestine (the West Bank) 50% of the

territory, and there will no INGOer be contiguous Palestinian territory as it will be divided by settlements that include 250,000 Israelis in villages.

The Wall will separate the Palestinians from their sources of water, from the best land from which come 40% of their agricultural products, the inhabitants of villages from their fields (like we saw in Hebron and Gerico), the fields from the sources of water, the agricultural centers from their markets, the villages from the cities, the children from their schools, and the workers from their workplaces. According to a UN estimate more than 680,000 Palestinians will be displaced by the construction of the Wall. The Wall closes the population in a kind of jail in which not only the territory is torn apart, but also the society, economy, the cultural and political dimensions of the people. What is unfolding is an old Zionist project: "the most land with the fewest Arabs."

We who have seen and heard can't help but be the spokespeople for our Palestinian partners, producers of almonds, dates, and couscous; artisans of olive wood and makers of olive oil soap.¹

ANALYSIS OF PARC AND OF THE PALESTINIAN PRODUCERS AND PARTNERS

PARC - Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committees – It's one of the largest Palestinian N.G.O.s which works in the rural sector with about 400 local communities, primarily rural.

Its mission as an NGO comprises two sectors of intervention:

- Support for rural communities
- Agricultural development projects

Support for rural communities happens through

1. a systematic analysis of the territories and of the conditions of the population;
2. a response to emergencies that arise because of the continuing conflict;
3. a strengthening of the organizations and of the local social and economic resources with a method of development of participation and of self-deciding capacity.

Agricultural development projects

Focus on the implementation of the entrepreneurial skills of the cultivators: raising of livestock, of farm animals and of bees.

PARC focuses on projects of sustainable biodiversity for a population that has need of self-sufficiency and for agriculture in transformation to organic: everything is oriented towards the creation of a local market and partially an international one linked to Fair Trade.

In 2004 PARC developed the following projects with support from the following international organization:

Projects 2004

¹ (for more information on the Wall: www.stophewall.it).

| | Project Title | Donor | Project duration | Project budget |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Empowering Palestinian Women | DANIDA Denmark | 13/3/2002 - 30/2/2005 | DKK 3,486,000 |
| 2 | Development of Naim Khader Center in Zababdeh | Walloon district/ Belgium | 20/1/2003 - 20/1/2005 | Euro 82,658 |
| 3 | Block Grant | Welfare Association | 6/3/2003 - 31/12/2004 | \$1,054,448 |
| 4 | Food Security And Job Creation | EU- Oxfam Belgium | 3/4/2001- 3/4/2005 | EURO 2,262,026 |
| 5 | Rehabilitation and Development Project in Gaza and the West Bank- RDP 2 | IFAD | 20/3/2003 - 20/3/2006 | \$1,014,000 |
| 6 | Land Reclamation | ANERA | 1/4/2003 - 31/8/2004 | \$30,290 |
| 7 | Urban Agriculture | Palestine33 | 1/1/2004 - 11/10/2004 | \$20,000 |
| 8 | Irrigation Management Information System | USDA | 29/7/2003 - 29/7/2006 | \$69,100 |
| 9 | Reclamation Land | Wallone district/ Belgium | 5/8/2003 - 5/8/2004 | Euro 32,000 |
| 10 | Improving Food Security at house hold level for Farmers & Women in Tubas and Jenin Districts | ACDI- voca United States of America | 3/9/2003 - 3/10/2005 | \$458,239 |
| 11 | Women Clubs Project | Grassroots America | 15/12/2003 - 30/12/2004 | \$18,296 |
| 12 | Introduction of Organic farming | RC Italy | 24/4/2003 - 24/4/2006 | Euro726,298 |
| 13 | Reduction of Water Recourses Contamination in Tubas District through black water treatment | ACH Spain | 15/11/2003 - 1/10/2004 | \$51,670 |
| 14 | Agricultural Land Development | UNDP | 01/12/2003 - 1/1/2005 | \$91,083 |

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|----|--|-------------|---|--------------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | |
| 15 | Agricultural Development | Land | UNDP | 01/12/2003 1/1/2005 | - \$41,195 |
| 16 | Skills Development Palestinian Organizations | of Rural | Belgian Cooperation Belgium | 01/01/2004 31/12/2004 | - Euro408,000 |
| 17 | Seedling Plantation in threatened land | | We l f a r e Association | 17/12/2003 16/2/2004 | - \$7,200 |
| 18 | Towards Capacity Building and Sustainable Rural Development | | Luxemburg Cooperation | 16/3/2004 15/2/2005 | - \$376,593 |
| 19 | House Development | Garden | ACPP Spain | 1/6/2004 6/1/2005 | - Euro 48,000 |
| 20 | Stakeholder Participatory Sustainable Water Management at Farm Level | | MEDA | 17/3/2004 16/3/2006 | - \$116,887,83 |
| 21 | Cistern Construction in the wall area | | CCFD France | 1/1/2004 31/1/2004 | - Euro 19,000 |
| 22 | House Development | Garden | C.C | 11/1/2004 10/6/2004 | - \$10,000 |
| 23 | Job Creation & drinking water improvement | | EEDDA | 1/1/2004 1/7/2004 | - Euro163,000 |
| 24 | Seedling Plantation in threatened land | | Welfare Association | 9/6/2004 9/2/2004 | - \$24,000 |
| 25 | Empowering Women Clubs in Gaza | | CCFD France | 1/2/2004 31/12/2004 | - Euro16,000 |
| 26 | Seedling Plantation | | S w e d i s h - Palestine Soli darity Group - | 2/1/2004 30/12/2004 | - \$9,264 |
| 27 | Food For Work | | WFP | 1/2/2004 30/4/2004 | - \$490,452 |
| 28 | Seedling Plantation | | Swiss Group | 1/1/2004 31/12/2004 | - \$9,704 |

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|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------|
| 29 | Voluntary Work | NRD - Norway | 1/2/2004 1/3/2005 | - | NOK 135,0000 |
| 30 | Job Employment/ building of terraces | Welfare Association | 23/2/2004 23/8/2005 | - | \$81,090 |
| 31 | Opening Agricultural Roads | DPFA | 15/4/2004 15/10/2005 | - | DKK 142,700 |
| 32 | Opening Agricultural Roads | IDB | 1/4/2003 31/10/2005 | - | \$2,664,000 |
| 33 | Emergency project / Rafah | A.I.L | 25/5/2004 30/12/2005 | - | \$70,520 |
| 34 | Land Rehabilitation | Pontifical Mission | 18/5/2004 30/12/2005 | - | \$11,000 |
| 35 | Rehabilitation the sidewalks in Sabastia | Pontifical Mission | 18/5/2004 30/12/2004 | - | \$6,500 |
| 36 | Program to Support the families of communities in Jenin through the psychological support and the income generation | NEXUS Italy | 2/6/2004 2/6/2005 | - | Euro29,760 |
| 37 | Emergency Land Reclamation and food production | NOVIB Netherland | 8/6/2004 31/3/2005 | - | Euro80,868 |
| 38 | Small Grants for Women | C.A | 1/1/2004 31/12/2005 | - | \$160,000 |
| 39 | Rehabilitation of lands affected by the wall in Jenin and Tulkarem | Welfare Association | 21/6/2004 30/6/2005 | - | \$85,000 |
| 40 | From Poor Families to Poor Farmers | Germany Diakonia | 9/6/2004 9/9/2004 | - | \$78,450 |
| 41 | Poultry distribution in Nablus | Fide Spain | 1/8/2004 30/12/2004 | - | Euro25,698 |
| 42 | Emergency project /Gaza Several | Institutions- Japan Swiss | 1/1/2004 31/12/2005 | - | \$4,000 |
| 43 | Gandhi Tour to the Middle East | Representative Office Switzerland | 14/7/2004 30/11/2004 | - | \$30,000 |

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|----|---|--|------------------------|-------------|
| 44 | Urban Agriculture in Refugee Camps | Grassroots | 1/1/2004 - 31/12/2004 | \$16,000 |
| 45 | Water demonstrations and training courses | Sodis/ Luxembourg | 1/1/2004 - 30/6/2004 | \$4,800 |
| 46 | Distributing manual agrarian tools | WFP/ ODOC | 14/7/2004 - 1/11/2004 | \$50,000 |
| 47 | Gandhi Tour to the Middle East | Norwegian Representative office/ Norway | 14/7/2004 - 30/11/2004 | NOK570,000 |
| 48 | Gandhi Tour to the Middle East | Canadian Representative Office/ Canada | 14/7/2004 - 30/11/2004 | \$20,000 |
| 49 | Rehabilitation of agricultural water cisterns | Mission Pontifical | 7/9/2004 - 30/12/2004 | \$11,220 |
| 50 | Food For Work | WFP | 1/9/2004 - 31/12/2004 | \$115,842 |
| 51 | Rehabilitation of agricultural roads and job creation | Welfare Association | 21/9/2004 - 1/4/2005 | Euro102,000 |
| 52 | Food baskets | Spain Fide | 1/9/2004-30/3/2005 | \$36,406 |
| 53 | Gandhi Film | Henrich Boll Germany | 1/9/2004-30/10/2004 | NIS28,000 |
| 54 | Food baskets | Children 's fund for development education and Relief in Palestine | 20/10/2004-20/11/2004 | \$19,350 |
| 55 | Emergency project for supporting effected families in Jabalia north of Gaza | Arab Committee &for Investment | 4/10/2004-4/2/2005 | \$70,000 |
| 56 | Summer Camp/Salfeet | Pontifical Mission | 1/7/2004-1/10/2004 | \$3,000 |
| 57 | From Poor Farmers to Poor Families | Diakonia Germany | 26/10/2004-26/2/2005 | \$93,630 |
| 58 | Urban Agriculture | French Consul France | 1/10/2004-1/4/2005 | Euro30,500 |
| 59 | From Poor Farmers to Poor families | NPA Norway | 15/102004-31/11/2004 | \$93,080 |

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|----|---|----------------------------------|----|--------------------------|----------------|
| 60 | Green School Project | Palestine France | 24 | 18/11/2004- 18/5/2005 | Euro 10,000 |
| 61 | Emergency land reclamation & Crop Diversification | NPA Norway | | 10/12/2004- 10/4/5005 | \$69,680 |
| 62 | Construction of drinking cisterns | Walloon district Belgium | | 1/12/2004- 30/2/5005 | Euro18,000 |
| 63 | Olive distribution on Gaza refugees | Palestine olive oil- Swiss | | 2004 | ----- |

Fair Trade Organizations With Whom PARC Cooperates:

Andines, France; El Puente, Germany; Olive Oil marketing campaign, Switzerland; Oxfam W. W., Belgium; Zaytoon, UK; ATJ, Japan; MAP, Canada; JNT, Japan; Eine Welt Handle; Austria; Sudsud Abed Trade, USA, CTM, Italy.

It should be noted that an anomaly is that PARC exports Fair Trade goods but is not yet a member of IFAT.

The most significant sector in which PARC is active in agriculture is olive oil, which is traditionally the main Palestinian export. PARC exports over 310 metric tons of oil, mainly Fair Trade: this means marketing support to 775 farmers. The outlook for 2006 is for a 20% increase over 2005.

The organizing sector of PARC in the sector of marketing puts at the disposal of young agronomists two centers for agricultural training and hands-on experience and, at the same time, highly-trained personnel who aid the producers with planning of the agricultural year, as well as a series of technical aid to the most marginalized of the rural areas, which represent 60% of Palestinian producers.

PARC promotes the associative system of rural communities, lately concentrating on women's associations (Women's Development Society) and on savings and credit (Saving and Credits Association).

With this methodology PARC has acquired a significant visibility in Palestine in the assumption of responsibility for civilian life, because it encourages the attitude of an involved citizenry. PARC is active in aiding the defense of human rights of the Palestinian people in their everyday work and civilian life.

ANALYSIS OF THE [FEMALE] PRODUCERS ² OF COUSCOUS

² Methodological observation: the above information was collected in an interview with Salim Abu Ghazaleh, Director of Marketing of PARC, on 1 June 2005 in Ramallah - because of the

Women are the primary actors in the productive process, but their role has not been adequately appreciated and PARC has launched as a second objective female empowerment. There are several objectives: to help women make decisions and to stimulate them to look for available resources. The personnel of PARC in the Gaza Strip is isolated from the headquarters in Ramallah in the West Bank and this presents numerous difficulties because the movement to and from is dependent on the Israeli army, which hinders communication between the two Palestinian zones.

PARC has begun to organize women in interest groups and cooperatives (118 groups and 8 cooperatives totaling around 4,979 women), to sustain programs of credit and loans, activities of women's organizations, launching female candidates to local legislatures, to help them in this way know better how to defend their rights and build influence in overall Palestinian life. Much effort has been invested in the sector of Savings and Credit through two associations affiliated with PARC: Rural Women's Development Society and the Saving and Credits Association. The women of these cooperatives are also members of the Women's Club which PARC also promotes in its territory.

In this phase PARC is also searching to attempting to develop relations between these associations present in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank through the new organization CORDA - Coalition for Rural Development Association, currently not very active because of the serious limitations of the war.³

In Gaza there are 6 cooperative of female producers of couscous the cooperative most historically significant is Al-Sheikh Radwan which began work in 1990 for the internal market; subsequently five other cooperatives formed for a total of about 350/400 members for a total production of 40 metric tons of couscous a year. Salim maintains that the women work almost six months a year; the consumption of that product is mainly in the winter given the large store of carbohydrates. For more detailed information about the production of couscous see the Report of the Mission of Carlo Pronzio for CTM and Oxfam in December 2003.

The women work the grain in the headquarters of the cooperatives, mainly in the summer from summer until November, producing on average with manual production 8 kg of couscous a day, working about four hours a day. They get \$1.40 per kilo produced, a payment that the cooperatives give themselves, considered very well-paid by PARC and by the CTM auditors in light of the national economic situation of Palestinian women.

The principle import of CM from Palestina is couscous (about 20 metric tons annually, on average); in Italy that product is appreciated by Fair Trade consumers.

PARC requests a service margin of 20% (not including the costs of its personnel), while CTM gives 30%.

The transparent price is a peculiarity of fair trade;

impossibility, given the imposition of Israeli rules, of reaching the women who make the couscous - and from PARC information.

³ See also "*In support of Palestinian women*", research report, J.M. Powers, UNESCO, 2003. pp 21-22

one calculates it like this:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| - payment for work of 1 KG. | \$ 1.52 |
| - internal transport | \$ 0.14 |
| - quality control | \$ 0.20 |
| - packaging | \$ 0.10 |
| - sterilization | \$ 0.10 |
| - customs duties at port | \$ 0.14 |
| - marketing and promotion | \$ 0.50 |
| - training | \$ 0.10 |
| - PARC administrative expenses | \$ 0.20 |
| - TOTAL PRICE PAID TO PARC (PARC numbers from July 2005) | \$ 3.00 |
| (price includes transport to Genoa) | |
| | |
| - Customs duties | \$ 0.12 |
| - Tariff | \$ 0.30 |
| - Elaboration | \$ 0.95 |
| - Insurance, prefinancing | \$ 0.04 |
| - Administrative Expenses CTM | \$ 1.92 |
| - TOTAL PRICE OF CTM (CTM numbers from Sep 2005) | \$ 6.33 |

The couscous is sold to the public in Italy in a package that weighs ½ kilo and costs € €3.65.

The philosophy of PARC is to promote the organizational autonomy of the producers; specifically, PARC promotes the organization of cooperatives, accompanies young agronomists in techniques for the production of couscous, makes the second round of quality control (grain, water, environmental hygiene) and supervises this, organizes marketing, and export of the product to Fair Trade markets.

The raw material (the grain) is transformed by individual farmers and then afterwards by PARC into the traditional product by an organic process revived six years ago. One of the problems of the Gaza Strip is the restricted size of the territory and the high population density, as well as the restricted rural areas caged in by the Israeli military.

The organic certification is certified by Egyptian Organic Agricultural Center, accredited by a German organization; since October PARC has sold certified couscous: this is a noteworthy step forward considering the conditions of the Palestinian people.

ALMOND PRODUCERS ⁴

⁴ **The almond producers were met with in the territory around Jenin** (in the northern part of the West Bank, formerly Samaria) accompanied by Engineer Mohammad Hamidat and Agronomist Doctor Omar in the villages of Zboobah and Aneen. The same day we met the women who produce the almonds.

Here we refer to producers with individual parcels organized in the Credit and Service Cooperative. Each producer has on average 4/5 of a *dunum* of land (1 *dunum* is about 1,000 square meters) in which they cultivate almond trees, olive trees, and gardens.

They are coordinated by the Almonds Association, which represents the local producers of almonds and olives; in addition they are part of the Fruit Trees Cooperative of the Jenin area; there are 22 associates of that group and have dues of \$250. PARC buys its almonds from that cooperative. The zone around Jenin has fresh land, perfect for the cultivation of gardens and bushes.

Analysis of the price:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Price paid for 1 kg. to the producers of dry almonds | \$ 9,80 |
| Price of peeling of almonds | 0,67 |
| Packaging | 0,12 |
| Laboratori and analysis costs | 0,23 |
| Sterilization and other technical costs | 0,16 |
| Quality control | 0,23 |
| Loss of weight during machination | 0,48 |
| Transport da Al Ram to Genoa | 0,18 |
| Administrative costs | 0,97 |
| Total cost to the port per Kg. | \$13.08 |

CTM imports around 5/6 metric tons a year of almonds. PARC provides an enormous social service and accompanying technical service to the Fruit Trees Cooperative: territorial politics, planning of the cultivation, conversion to organic, nurseries of plants in cultivation, technical attention to the planting areas and the treatment for fungus and flies (*Eurytoma amygdali*). Near the cultivations we verified with the agronomist problems of diseases that hurt the plantations. The agronomist affirmed that 40% of the production does not yet meet the criteria for export quality, that there is still much to be done. To remedy this, the cooperatives of Jenin have a scientific relationship with the laboratory of parasitology at the University of Thessalonika – Greece.

On a positive note there is a very positive outlook for a notable increase soon in cultivation because of a number of socio-political factors (e.g. the return of young people from jail and from the other side of the Wall of Apartheid) and economic factors (e.g. the increase on the world market of the price of almonds). The production was 10 metric tons in 2004 will be doubled, given no Israeli incursions.

The women who shell the almonds in Aneen are associates of the group of the Women's Association. There was a meeting that was quite significant, led by these women.

From the group work the following **most significant points** emerged:

- There are severe problems with running a family in cases where there are women alone with numerous children.
- Enormous lack of economic resources and necessities
- Territorial insecurity because of Israeli incursion
- Positive effect of the organizing and promotion work of PARC
- Few work opportunities because of the war and economic downturn

- Few days a year of actually processing the almonds because of bad harvests
- Effetto positivo della promozione organizzativa di PARC
- Excellent pay of their work.

DATE PRODUCERS ⁵

CTM imports about 6 metric tons of dates a year. The date producers are located in the hottest zones of Palestine (the oasis of Jericho, in the Jordan River Valley that is surrounded by desert and is 40km from Jerusalem), but it is also a politically “hot” zone: Israel wants the whole Jordan River Valley and above all the oasis of Jericho, the historic biblical city. In fact, after the abandoning of the Gaza Strip of the families of colonists that were placed there after the war of 1967, Israel began planning to erect an enormous new settlement in the Jordan River Valley for ultra-orthodox colonists evacuated from Shirat Yam. PARC calls on the international community to stop this continuing occupation of Palestinian territories that jeopardize Palestine.⁶

The production of dates is a traditional crop that is also grown by the Israelis in the same area in an intensive way, together with other crops grown technically advanced and very competitive, such are bananas and grapes.

The date cultivators live in a territorial context that is of the greatest interest to the Israeli occupation:

- Isolation of the population with military checkpoints
- Denial of access to the Dead Sea, to the Jordan River, and to the city of Hebron.
- Complete appropriation of the hydrologic reserves of the Jordan River Valley (it is forbidden for the Palestinians to dig wells – they are sold water by the Israelis)
- Occupation of the fertile oases that are traditionally Palestinian
- Discouragement of the entry of Palestinian children to schools

Enormous pressure to separate farmers from their fields

Analysis of price

| | | | |
|--|----|-------|-------|
| Cost to the producer of 1 kg of dates | \$ | 3.12 | |
| Transport from the farm to Jericho | | 0,04 | |
| Washing and drying the the dates | | 0,045 | |
| Loss of weight during processing | | 0,63 | |
| Loss of dates during selection for export | | 0.63 | |
| Selecting work | | 0,23 | |
| 1°packaging and treatment | | | 0,23 |
| Various expenses for electricity, water, & communication | | | 0,23 |
| Quality control | | | 0,23 |
| Transport from Jericho to the warehouses in Al-Ram | | | 0,067 |

⁵ We visited the producers of dates in Jericho (360 meters below sea level) on the 29th and 30th of May 2005 both in the plantations as well as at the headquarters of the Dates Union and of the PTFA - Palm Tree Farmers Association.

⁷ Palestinian Observatory “Al Marsad”, 27 September 2005

| | |
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| Shipment to Genoa Genova | 0,18 |
| Services to the producing associations | 0,23 |
| Final packaging | 0,32 |
| Administrative expenses of PARC | 0.87 |
| Total cost of the PARC product | \$ 7.052 al Kg. |

I

The date producers live in extreme conditions, remaining in their territory to defend in from the progressive occupation of the progressive military and economic occupation by Israel. Their firms naturally can't compete with the Israeli ones whose technology is far superior. Their food and houses are very poor, and their eating frugal. In the meeting with the producers they showed all of their anger about their social impotence, and for their isolation from the rest of Palestinian territory because of military checkpoints and the lack of permission for movement in the West Bank: one can't go near the river to the Dead Sea, to Hebron, etc.

They feel like angry animals in a cage. In our meeting they got out all of their anger and rebelliousness against Israel.

Their struggle is one of resistance. PARC is irreplaceable as organizing support for strengthening the Dates Union and the PFTA. PARC is also the only source of credit because their complete isolation from banks; in addition PARC is helping the farmers towards the transition to organic (some of them already have the certificate) and enlarging the production of dates thanks to a new technique of production and quality: the *medjoul* variety.

PARC considers the Date Farmers to be the one most at risk of all the associations with which it works, and because if that it is intensifying organizing and technical aid for their work; it has opened a large nursery thanks to Spanish support, and this will distribute 4000 plants to 108 producers. PARC has also located one of its centers for agricultural research, the "Al Reef Training Center Jericho," which offers post-graduate degrees and scholarships for those who wish to initiate research in the sector. PARC also coordinates the export of the dates thanks to the collaboration with the Dates Union, in the hope that one day the Union can directly manage the export on their own.

CRITERIA OF EVALUATION for monitoring PARC

- **Sustainability of the PARC project in relation to Palestine**
 - **Relationship between PARC and producers**
- **Sustainability of the agricultural producers**

RESULTS :

Sustainability of the PARC project in relation to Palestine

The mission of PARC is to develop and give power to the values and actions of

the Palestinian civil society.

The vision of PARC is to feel part of a large movement of civil society for defense and survival of its own people.

Sustainability of the economy of Palestine: an economy of dependence

Palestine lives mainly from foreign aid and not from its won production. The Protocol of Paris (1994) on economic obligations obligated the Palestinians to cooperate for customs and in business with Israel to guarantee the liberty of movement of capital and goods. Taxes were fixed by Israel to give back to the Palestinians the money gained from VAT and customs duties collected on merchandise entering the Gaza Strip and West Bank. In 1998 these taxes resulted in 60% of the income of the government. The dependence of Palestine on Israel has had of course disastrous effects on the Palestinian economy, especially during states of siege and closure of the territories, which have provoked economic chaos, given that 90% of import-export of Palestine is based on Israel. In 2002 the financial deficit was financed by international donors (the Arab States, Europe, and the World Bank) for \$464,000,000. At the same time, Israel received profits of \$700,000 from the system of taxation.

The restrictions on the development of the Palestinian economy has had immeasurable effects on Israel, specifically in the use of Palestinian laborers. Before the *Intifada* of 1993 there were 180,000 Palestinians with jobs in Israel, which fell to 83,000 and then further to 22,500 in 1996; 110,000 Palestinians lost their jobs because of the arrival of new workers from China, Romania, and the rest of Eastern Europe, and the monthly salary has dropped from 2,800 shekels to 1,600 in June 2003, that is to say that 45% of the workers have lost 50% of their income. In total 64% of the population lives below the poverty line, 44% receive food aid, 30% monetary aid.⁷

Sustainability of PARC

Indicators:

1. Budget 2004:

PARC at the end of 2004 had net capital of \$4,111,855 with a slight decline from the previous year because of fewer donations. It has an active and passive Financial State equivalent to \$7,937,792: this relates to international donations and executive projects.⁸

Appendix 3: 2004 Financial statements

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION - PARC

Financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2004 and 2003

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(All amounts in U.S Dollars)

Mr. Maher Sahlieh

Dr. Ismail Daiq

⁷ source: "Palestine and Palestinians," Beth Sahur 2005, Alternative Tourist Group.

⁸ PARC budget 2004

PARC is one of the biggest NGOs in Palestine, which channels international funds to support people that otherwise couldn't survive. In 2004 it moved its office to Ramallah, which had a strNGO strategic impact in raising the number of projects. Recently the new Administrative Board was elected. PARC is part of that side of the civil society that doesn't use money coming from the international projects and donations to the Palestinian people, to become bigger; it's part of those organizations that ass for two reforms for Palestine: independency and democracy, two essential requests of people that are looking for safety and protection for themselves and not for the governmental élite protected by special corps;

It asks for support for the productive sectors of the country more than to distribute food charity.

2. Involved personnel

The number of employed personnel after the Intifada of 2000 has increased to 136 people, 39% of whom are female. The most important thing that one can notice is the quality of training, both internal within the organization and external for the producers. The personnel receive training in: financial management, advocacy, language courses of English and project management of election campaigns

A special appreciation goes to the employed personnel that in 2004 gave 20% of their work as voluntary work, a circumstance that tells a lot about the philosophy of PARC, founded on civil volunteering and on a strNGO believe in solidarity. It's an organization motivated by the professional ethic of the personnel involved within the common cause, despite the large number of employees of the NGO: the growth of the Palestinian society.

3. Marketing sector

According to its mission PARC fights against the growth of poverty of the people, especially those from rural areas: PARC is trying to link the "basket" of food that it distributes to the study of the local resources on the base of micro-projects to reduce poverty, forced segregation, and unemployment. Thanks to international support it has opened marketing channels with American, European, and especially Arabic fair trade; it annually exports a value of \$ 1.400.000. ("Joining the Trade Justice Movement", PARC, June 2005.)

In the rural sector the social architectures have been strengthened, various sector programmes have been started (youngsters, agricultural producers, women), and PARC has offered various services like country roads, programmes of public housing and organizational abilities. In the marketing sectors more or less 40 people are employed at central and suburban levels. Mr. Salim is the director with his far-sighted and INGO experience. He has been co-ordinating for INGO time the famous "marketing investment," today "fair trade department." Unfortunately, PARC isn't a member of IFAT yet; to acquire this membership we suggested during the monitoring trip that they consider the Fair Trade Arab Forum of next year, as they work almost exclusively on fair trade.

4. Assistance

PARC gives assistance to the Palestinian people that suffer because of the Israeli violation of human rights of the last 50 years, occupation and confiscation of land for military reasons, the construction of the wall and the Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory. It supports a national campaign against the occupation of the territories and the creation of the wall of apartheid. For this

reason its work follows two tracks: assistance and development. (cf: "The Palestinian Rural People at the Crossroad: Development or Relief?", position paper, PARC , June 2005.) . It also coordinates a project "Work for Food" that aims to create various local infrastructures.

5. Production services

PARC is an organization whose principal interest is the economic social development of the rural population: in recent times its peculiarity is centred on networking work with the other organizations. It was elected by the other NGOs with the majority of votes to represent PENGON (the environmental network) and ACC (agricultural coordination committee). It works within the territories promoting the CBO, organized base communities (villages). It brought its services to 233 houses and trained 522 people especially on the development of the community. (Cf. "Report PARC 2004")

6. Commercial relation PARC –CTM

PARC was born in 1983 as voluntary Palestinian movement. At the beginning it tried, through engineers and agronomists, to give assistance to the producers that were suffering violations from Israel; in 2003 12,000 people worked as volunteers within PARC. While searching for international relationships it started the first relationship with Oxfam W.W., Belgium. In this context CTM made its first contacts more than 10 years ago, thanks to the network that the groups from Emilia Romagna had established, especially from Bologna with its fair trade shop "Ex Aequo", members of CTM and the Region itself with the decentralized cooperation to support the Palestinian people. The agronomist Mohammad Hamidat in 2000 took part in the fair "Tuttaltracosa," invited by the coordination of the fair trade shop of Emilia Romagna region and had the chance to start its relation with PARC-CTM. We must underline that PARC had already had, for INGO time, commercial relations with international fair trade.

The CiPi, met the representatives of PARC on the 2nd of June of the same year and in that occasion considered it positive, also on the base of an analytic plan prepared in advance, to let PARC join the group of partners, for two main reasons:

- 1- the Palestinian situation is part of the Interests of CTM,
- 2- the work of PARC with the Palestinian women is precious and it's able to involve marginal sectors of the society like women in Arab context.

The CiPi at that time expressed some doubts on the possibility of this project to survive, as it represents a very particular product, hand made. Time has demonstrated the contrary, despite the war between Israel and Palestine, thanks to the work that PARC has done constantly.

The successive relations between CTM and PARC have always been very tight at personal level as well, especially through annual contacts made by the Palestinian representatives travelling to Italy and of course through the import of the products: 1) the couscous coming from the Gaza Strip; 2) the almonds from Jenin; 3) the dates from Jericho.

From the balance of 2004 of CTM comes that PARC had a pre-financing of \$58,832 and turns out that from July 2003 to June 2004 CTM bought by PARC agricultural products for a value of \$146,162.

Also the human relationships got stronger thanks to these meetings, to the Italian solidarity, and to the promotional activities of CTM and BdM (Fair Trade Shops) about the typical products. One of those, the "Couscous Fair" at Naples, was particularly successful and PARC won the gastronomic competition based on couscous.

Problems underlined by the supervision:

- 1- PARC is not a producer and neither a marketing enterprise, it's an NGO that has been supporting the agricultural producers for years through a front society imposed by Palestinian law, "Al Reef Estate Co."
- 2- The war is an obstacle to the sustainability of Palestine, of the productive sectors, including those linked to PARC. CTM "suffers" the consequences coming from the unstable supply of products. The shelves of the fair trade shops are often without the couscous from the Gaza strip, the sugared almonds of Jenin, and the dates.
- 3- The director of the Palestinian Fair Trade Department Mr. Salim, underlines the surprise of the producer when they know at what price their products are sold in Italy, and this is not to denounce the inequality of the fair trade - caused unfortunately by the costs of the international and European economic system - but to put in evidence that PARC adds only a percentage of 15% on the price of the product paid to the producer; PARC doesn't charge for the agricultural planning and the technical assistance of the agronomists: PARC wants to raise the cost of the service at least to the 20%, as the rest of the expenses are paid by the NGO itself through international grants. This choice depends on the purpose to encourage the exportations of the producers that otherwise would stay isolated .
- 4- As far as the price is concerned PARC underlines that its part of the final price is the minimum as an NGO, but it is thinking to raise this; in fact, according the philosophy of managerial autonomy, the price of the services would double. During the month of July of the present year PARC has in fact renegotiated the contract fixing the price of the service at the 20%.
- 5- In the meantime the Director proposes to CTM the opportunity to use Euro instead of dollars for the transactions of import-export , a circumstance that penalises the purchasing power of the producers. At the moment this problem was introduced to the CiPi at the board of directors of CTM through the UCP. From the balance of 2003 it results that CTM has transactions in dollars with two partners, Meru Herbs and Ess. Bambolo.

Relation between PARC and the agricultural producers

Indicators:

1- Productive projects

PARC is one of the biggest Palestinian NGO that works in rural areas, has initiatives that involve about 400 communities with an annual budget of funds from projects equivalent to \$15,857,149, to which we must add the programme "Work for Food." The international financiers in 2004 gave priority to sustain to the possibility for people to live and this because of the offensive policy of Israel. The productive projects were reduced because of the occupation of lands and destruction of Palestinian villages by the Israeli forces of occupation: mainly the projects for women and youngsters were cut.

The focus of PARC is based on the sustainability of the rural agricultural development within a social change in which local people, mainly women, are the actors of the change. Of the 50 projects realised in 2004, 69% were about "development of a sustainable agriculture for self-sufficiency, the security of alimentary supply." (see appendix on "Report PARC 2004")

PARC provided the logistic system, the practice of quality control, the standard of production, the marketing for a total of 1,100 agricultural producers, for 12 organisations of this category, and for the co-operatives of women with more than 500 members.

In 2004 PARC exported 280 metric tons of agricultural products through the channels of the fair trade for a value of \$1,400,000.

2. Personnel of the Projects

The slight reduction of the annual grants compared to 2003 produced the partial reduction of the technical personnel in charge of carrying out the projects. This tendency depends on the change in the political position of the international donors that prefer to give a smaller contribution to the administrative expenses of PARC and to finance directly the social parts to which the project is directed.

The marketing sector employs a staff of about 40 people: administrative personnel in the head quarters, technicians, agronomists, engineers, and trainers all around Palestine, in the office of Ramallah, in the three centers “Al Reef training” (Jenin, Jericho, Gaza) with and agricultural training for those who have post-graduate masters, in the office of the export enterprise of PARC Al Reef Real Estate Co. for the storage, the food preservation and the preparation of the products.

We must underline the quality of the personnel. They are qualified people, specialised because of the studies undertaken and experienced on the ground for the professional side, but also with a high added value of passion, of great ability to establish human relations with the farmers, of self commitment in a very difficult and dangerous context: the personnel that we met has absorbed perfectly the mission of PARC, despite its big dimension. The personnel is highly motivated, love working and love the familiar community of PARC. The supervisors could directly experiment all this.

3. Training of Personnel and Fair Trade

The training of the personnel is of vital importance to PARC. The objectives can be reached only through the training of those that put them into practice, and for this reason the training courses of every level are started within a context of professional development. After the suggestions of other Palestinian organisations, PARC evaluated its development from 1996 to today, renewed its management and consequently implemented a plan of action.

The three post-degree training centres of “Al Reef Training Center” are strategic to renew its management and to prepare post-graduate agronomists to be able to play important roles within the Palestinian organisations. Every year 20 agronomist engineer can attend to these courses for 9 months of study: the three centres of Jericho, Jenin and Gaza have at their disposal big agricultural areas for the experiments; they are situated in very different environmental contexts: in Jenin in Samaria fresh hills; in Jericho which is a 260 mt under sea level the climate is torrid, desert; in Gaza, inside the strip, isolated from the rest of Palestine where there’s also a university of agriculture.

The personnel receives a specific training on the relationship between PARC and fair trade, as major interlocutor interested in the Palestinian situation and at the same time important international client to buy the products: for this reason the personnel is conscious of this particular relationship; representative of ATO’s and international volunteers often arrive inside the office of PARC for business or they stay to work in internships or for solidarity: this was found in the headquarters in Ramallah and in the society Al Reef for the export, and also by the contacts with the technicians in the territories.

4. Training of the Producers and Fair Trade

PARC’s strategy that involves 400 communities is the organizational decentralisation. The staff that conduct the projects live in any region, mainly those of agricultural production. Given the difficulties imposed by the Israeli army that puts more and more check points in the streets, it’s necessary to live in the place for those that lead the producers, first, and also the local

communities for which PARC has a project of development of empowerment. So there is a permanent training of organisations of Palestinian villages, of the personnel involved in the services, of the associations of category, such as for instance Animal Association, Almond Co-operative (in Jenin), Dates Association, Palm Tree Farmers Association (in Jericho), plus the training in the Gaza Strip. We must underline that many times it's not only a technical training or training of the community but also, and mainly sometimes, in places like Jenin and Jericho, training to resist in land against the occupation of the territories by the Israeli army, the occupation of their land, their houses, villages, refugee camps.

What level of knowledge have the producers of PARC of the fair trade and of CTM in particular of CTM?

We had the chance to discover that while the technicians have a different knowledge of the fair trade, that is quite clear and motivated to the producers, who have general notions like: economic and political support to the population; these information come often from the problems that turn out during the quality tests of the product to export, the rules to transport the food, the needs and the uses of the consumers. In particular, the producers don't know CTM, apart from a few people involved in getting the opportunity of a journey to Italy to represent the category.

5. Technical Assistance

The presence in the Territories of the technicians guaranty technical assistance through plans of a production cycle that goes from the planning of the areas to the marketing of the products.

In the supervision some difficulties emerged: because of the complete instability of the programmes caused by the "Israeli violations of Palestinian rights and resources including attacks to the agricultural land with destruction of the farms" (**inserisci nota 16: Interview with Ismail Daiq, general director of PARC in the office of Jericho, June 2005**) the access to the resources of water were continuously reduced: in Palestine 198,000 Israeli settlers used 85% of the resources of water, while 3,500,000 Palestinian use only 15%. The comparison is impressive and puts in evidence the real Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory.

6. Marketing Assistance

The Palestinian farmers, living encircled, can't guarantee a proper commerce of their products, especially at national level: PARC, being an NGO, works assisting and supporting the development. A tragic dilemma, like the one of 2004, when it was necessary to reduce the number of development projects to enlarge those of assistance because of the aggressive war of Israeli. (**aggiungi nota 17:** ¹ cf. "The Palestinian Rural People at the Crossroad: Development or Relief ?", PARC, Position Paper 2005).).

At international level PARC, year by year, could create relations of export especially with Fair Trade; the wealth of experience acquired on marketing at promotional level is not solely for the NGO but it is aimed to give the chance to the associations of category of the producers, who PARC is helping, to manage directly the marketing. At the moment the producers are still totally dependent on PARC for the export.

Sustainability of the agricultural producers

Indicators:

1. Relation Farm/Producer

In 2004 the Palestinian territory lost the 50% of its production, something like \$1,200,000,000 of loss in the agricultural field, which corresponds to a total loss for the Palestinian economy of about \$13.000.000.000 in a year. Dramatic!

The farms with which PARC has established its development programmes are of three different types: family farm, small-capitalization farm, co-operative of women.

The family farm and the small-capitalization farm have an average extension of 2-4 *dunum* (1 *dunum* = about 1.000 mq) for two reasons:

- a) the productive capacity of the farm has personnel and infrastructures only adequate for this length;
- b) the cultivable areas in the West Bank are situated in hilly areas and arid at the north, in para-desert and desert areas at the south east towards the Jordan, oasis leas and less accessible for the Palestinian people; the areas of the Gaza Strip are extremely small: 1.851 *dunum* cultivated on 5.947 km of the Strip.
- c) In many areas the policy of PARC regards only the defence and physical resistance on the territory with production aimed only to survive. For instance in Jericho the farms of dates are at their last gasp compared to the wealthy ones of Israel just besides them: these have all the possible financing, invested capital or with ease of payment for many years; water resources occupied and exclusive; the international marketing started by the government.

2. Problems of the Farms

There is a lack of youth initiative caused by the war, lack of water resources imposed by Israel (impossible to sink a well), lack of scientific attention adequate to the export of the products (almonds, dates, olive oil).

Example:

- a) 40% of the production of almonds is under quality level, thus it is impossible to sell them abroad;
- b) the olive oil to export through the fair trade is too acidic. There have been some complaints.

The co-operative of women of Gaza that produces couscous doesn't have lands to cultivate the wheat; to work it they must buy it from private producers from the Gaza Strip. Their productive system is linked both to the internal needs and to export, and they work 6 months per year; this way they are making the co-operative system of women stronger. A co-operative only of Arab women is extremely important for the emancipation of Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip, where a more orthodox approach to Islam is prevalent.

3. Relationship Farm/family and Local Economy

In 2004 in spite of the serious loss in agricultural area because of the systematic occupation of new territories, the employment in agriculture rose a bit, from 12% to 16%: some prisoners have been freed and they returned to their families, many families trapped by the wall had to move towards new Palestine lands.

The Palestinian farm is an enterprise to survive, in fact 17% of the families; not so much compared to the 83% that lives thanks to international aid. The farms visited, linked to PARC in their planning, showed a certain dynamism and prospect because they are managed on schedules that are often imposed by the export for fair trade. They've got a guaranty about quantity and price; they've improved the managerial skill and in some case, like that of the almonds, they are leader of that sector and contributed to rise the price of the product on the market; they have created expectation in the Italian market that consumes the couscous, especially in the centre-south of the country, with culinary initiatives very much appreciated that contributed to the knowledge and alimentary practice. The quality of couscous from Palestine is becoming popular.

4. Autonomy of the Producers

The Palestinian people is a strong population with a high sense of dignity in a war that has been afflicting it for 50 years: the longest war of present times. It has lost much territory in 2004, corresponding to 400.000 dunum, 83% of which arable. It has lost a lot of its autonomy in its territories for the construction of infrastructure and for the Israeli settlements; it is not connected directly to foreign countries, it stays enclosed inside hundreds of check points everywhere; it doesn't have an airport ; its economy can't sustain the population; every investment its regularly destroyed; the roads, the water resources, the resources of light are often in Israel's hands. The foreign trade is mainly of Israel: the Palestinian products go abroad with a stamp "Made in Israel".

For these reasons, the producers don't have managerial autonomy, but they have a breathtaking independence.

They can't impose their products on the market which is in Israel's hands, nevertheless they can feed many families, a little sign of autonomy from Israel. Many producers, following PARC's direction, are changing their production into organic ones, which raises the quality of the Palestinian products abroad.

We noticed that in the main office of PARC a poster invited us to boycott products coming from the Israeli settlements.

5. The Organisations of Category

We met many organisations of the category for the agricultural production to which the producers of PARC refer to themselves and of which they are members, sometime with a promoting role.

In Jenin we met the Women's Club, rural Women's Development Society, Fruit Trees Co-operative, Almond Association, Almond Co-operative.

In Gaza exists CORDA: Coalition for Rural Development Association, Saving and Credit Association.

In Jericho we met the Date Union, The PFTA: Palestinian Federation Trade Agricultural.

This philosophy is not only the one of PARC but is general; it belongs to the population in a context of social and productive life at its limit. The organisations can't bring the producers to an economic miracle but can bring them to strongly defend their common interests. In better conditions they'll be able to express the potential; at the moment they are anticipating a future of independence and democracy for Palestine.

Conclusions

The objectives of the present monitoring of CTM to PARC were the following:

1 - to verify the ethical conditions to continue the collaboration.

We could verify that PARC is a partner of CTM that meets completely the criteria of the fair trade: it has the mission to support the rural communities that represent the 60% of the Palestinian population; it carries out socially useful projects and the economic investments in the agricultural sector are managed, it seemed to us, in a responsible way by leaders, technicians and many volunteers that collaborate with it.

We met people and organisations of producers and of category that collaborate or are promoted by PARC itself, women and men that work to survive during this war of occupation that has lasted since 1948: they openly assert to be working for a worthy cause, the defence of the Palestinian territory, of their little piece of land and of their alternative of international fair trade.

2 – to evaluate the direct relations between PARC and the producers.

The producers that we met are people that, thanks to the support of PARC, of its technicians and its policy, that they have the courage to invest in agriculture on lands incredibly precarious, that are often invaded by Israeli bulldozer or tanks. Only in 2004, 62.828 *dunum* cultivable were lost (1 *dunum* = 1000 mq), 1,296,626 trees were cut (a rise of 472,314 from 2003); a lot of land was confiscated or annexed to build roads, public works, settlement for about 400.00 *dunum*: all in all in 2004 the total loss in the agricultural Palestinian sector for the Israeli arbitrary abuses is estimated at around \$332 million (report, 2005).

These workers, men and women, young and old without any difference, they faith, die, are exhausted but determined, never resigned, they cry for their dead and their lost land. They consider PARC a mother that from one region to the other weaves the thread of life for its many children, from Gaza to Jenin, from Hebron to Jericho.

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