

P.E.A.C.E. Programme

Palestinian/European/American/Co-operation in Education

International Network for Co-operation with Palestinian Universities



5th General Assembly

UNESCO, Paris

Saturday 24th November 2001

Documents of the Meeting

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

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PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

UNESCO, Paris

24 November, 2001

Report of the Meeting

I. Opening Session

The Session was attended by 64 participants (cf. List of participants) representing universities and other higher educational institutions, IGOs and NGOs, which are active in the field of higher education.

Professor Gabi Baramki, Member of the Steering Committee of the PEACE Programme, opened the Session. He informed that *the meeting is constituted in conformity with the By Laws: of the 74 member-universities (cf. Section II para. 2 of the Report of Activities)*, 31 were present and 9 were represented by mandate {University de Liège, Belgium; Université Paris 7 and Ecole d'Architecture de Lille, France; University of Groningen, The Netherlands; Al Aqsa University and Gaza Islamic of Gaza, Palestine; Université de Lausanne and Université de Fribourg, Switzerland; and The Community of Mediterranean universities (CUM)}

The Agenda and Programme of the meeting were approved as submitted.

H. E. Professor Munthir Salah, Minister of Higher Education and Chairperson of the PEACE Programme, welcomed the new members of the PEACE Programme namely 3 Palestinian universities (*The Arab American University, Jenin; Al Aqsa University, Gaza; the Polytechnic University, Hebron; as well as the University of Lecce, Italy*).

He then pointed out the special significance of the Session of the General Assembly, which coincides, with the 10th Anniversary of the PEACE Programme. He further emphasised that the Assembly meets at a time when, once again, Palestinian universities are faced with great difficulties and function under very harsh conditions. This new situation calls for the reinforcement of the PEACE Programme on a larger scale and for a re-examination of its function, structure and mode of action.

Mr. K. F. Seddoh, Director of the Division of Higher Education, greeted the participants on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO and emphasised the role of Palestinian universities for the national identity and the self-sustainable development of the Palestinian people.

He gave high appreciation to the work of the PEACE Programme in promoting co-operation and channelling international support to the Palestinian universities and reiterated UNESCO's full support to the Programme, in keeping with the relevant decisions and resolutions adopted by the General Conference and the Executive Board of UNESCO concerning the situation of educational and cultural institutions in Palestine.

Professor Manuel Hassassian, Executive Vice President of Bethlehem University, presented the current situation in the Palestinian territories and the obstacles encountered by the Palestinian universities. He stressed that a university, by nature, assumes a tremendous challenge to mould the character of its students through formal education. Therefore, the work of Palestinian universities has become extremely important in equipping their students with the tools necessary for an increasingly globalized world and providing them with the skills in democratic sense and values.

Palestinian universities provide for their students an environment characterised by pluralism, openness and respect in spite of their various social and religious backgrounds. Despite the painful political realities, such as the politically volatile environment surrounding them, and the consequent suffering of the Palestinian people, they strive to enter the 3rd millennium in a spirit of hope, together with a consciousness of the moral values and principles that have guided their action. He further added that, under the present political circumstances, the task of the Palestinian universities becomes even more remarkable and the sense of dedication to their mission an even steeper challenge.

II. Peace Programme - Report of Activities and Financial Report

The meeting was then chaired by **Professor Vincent Hanssens** of the University Catholique de Louvain. He gave the floor to **Professor Valerio Grementieri**, Secretary-General of the PEACE Programme Steering Committee, to represent *the Report of the Activities of the PEACE Programme over the period October 1998 – November 2001*.

The debates on the Report focused on the types of activities that have proved successful and could be extended, as well as on devising new kind of activities aimed at reinforcing the PEACE Programme. Several speakers pointed out that the PEACE Programme is still not known by many higher education institutions, especially non-university ones. Hence, lesser activities in engineering, science and technology.

Other speakers mentioned that many funding possibilities, particularly those offered by the Programmes of the European Union in the field of higher education are not fully utilised. Useful information was provided by the representative of Istituto Superiore Universitario di Formazione Interdisciplinare (ISUFI) of the University of Lecce, Italy. She reiterated the readiness of the Institute to continue its support to the PEACE Programme through scholarships.

The discussion shifted then to the difficulties encountered in carrying out co-operation projects with Palestinian universities under the present difficult conditions. Several projects have been discontinued and the question was asked whether it was safe for foreign academics to go to Palestine at present. Several representatives of the Palestinian universities pointed out that the presence of foreign academics at Palestinian universities is particularly important precisely in these moments, not only to express directly their solidarity, but also to inform the international public opinion on the real situation and the constant harassment and humiliation to which they are submitted. A grassroots solidarity movement in defence of the basic rights of the Palestinians is emerging. PEACE Programme member-universities and the international academic community as a whole can play a significant role in boosting this movement.

Discussion continued on ways to expand membership of PEACE, particularly by including higher education institutions other than universities and from other regions than Europe and North America. *It was suggested that the "A" in PEACE should not stand only for "American", but also for "African", "Asian", "Australian", "Arab" and other universities.* It was further emphasised that links with institutions should start not only through writing to university presidents and to their international relations offices, but also to university department and to individual academics that are already involved in co-operation projects with the Palestinian universities.

The Report of Activity was then approved by the General Assembly.

Under Item III of the Agenda, Professor Gabi Baramki presented *the Financial Report* of the PEACE Programme. In the ensuing discussions, clarifications were requested on certain technical aspects of the Report. The issue of a possible increase in the amount of the membership fee was posed. However, most of the participants were in favour of diversifying funding resources rather than increasing the membership fees.

There was a request for clarification concerning the special contribution of Ghent University to cover expenses for the Palestinian students at that University. It was agreed that the Treasurer and the representative of Ghent University should discuss and agree on an appropriate proposal to spend that contribution.

The participants were informed about the request submitted to the European Union for a substantial grant to support the PEACE Programme. The support extended by UNESCO to PEACE - especially to the PEACE Programme Office at UNESCO through secondment of a staff member was considered essential and the participants in the General Assembly expressed the hope that it will be continued in the future.

It was pointed out that the new Steering Committee to be elected at the General Assembly should devote particular attention to setting the financial situation of the PEACE Programme on a solid, long standing basis. *A vigorous funding campaign should be launched for that purpose.*

III. Plan of Activities of the PEACE Programme for 2002-2003

Under Item IV of the Agenda, the General Assembly chaired by *Professor Edward Jennings*, President Emeritus, of Ohio State University and member of the Steering Committee of PEACE, examined the *Plan of Action for 2002-2003*, which was presented by *Professor Ivar Ekeland*, Vice President of the PEACE Programme.

The activities proposed in the Plan of Action were considered judicious, to the extent to which they were based on past experience of the PEACE Programme. It was explained that since the PEACE Programme does not have a stable budget, it could only continue activities for which external funding is secured. PEACE could also initiate new projects, but it should make sure that there are clear prospects of adequate funding for them.

A question was raised as to whether the activity of the PEACE Programme should be “integrated” in the overall strategy for the development of higher education as adopted by the Ministry and by the Palestinian Rectors’ Conference. Some speakers insisted on the flexibility of the activities of the Network.

However, the participants agreed that it was important for the PEACE Programme member-universities to know the Strategy for the development of Palestinian higher education, when planning their co-operation with Palestinian universities. According to the information provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, the strategy is at an advanced stage of preparation, with the active involvement of all Palestinian higher education institutions, and of the Palestinian society at large. The Strategy will, therefore, be issued soon. It was agreed that all activities initiated and carried out by the PEACE Programme should emerge through discussions and common agreement among the participating universities. In designing these activities, they should be guided by the overall Strategy mentioned above.

Professor Ekeland further recommended the following guiding principles for the future Plan of Action of PEACE:

- a. The PEACE Programme shall make an effort to gather information on the development of the Palestinian higher education strategy, and communicate it to the other universities, more particularly to the member-universities. As a first step, the PEACE Programme Office was instructed to gather such information and send it to the Rector of the University of Pavia, to help him present the PEACE Programme at the next meeting of the Coimbra group.
- b. The PEACE Programme should continue the successful practice of setting up consortia of universities, capable to initiate projects on the ground in Palestine, with the understanding that by sharing efforts, they will decrease the burden on each university.
- c. The PEACE Programme will initiate a project in academic staff administration and finance management at Palestinian universities, as well as proposals aimed at securing material assistance to these universities, especially for the acquisition of equipment and library and research facilities.

- d. The next Steering Committee should examine and establish concrete ways and means for implementing the proposed projects of the PEACE Programme, including their financing, through support from various organisation and agencies in the UN System, the EEC, from other IGOs and NGOs as well as from foundations and potential donors.

Another area of possible action that was mentioned is the brain drain, which affects negatively the quality of the staff of the Palestinian universities. The PEACE Programme should serve as an instrument which could revert the brain drain phenomenon into “*brain-gain*”, by putting into practice the “Academics without Borders” Project, as envisaged by UNESCO.

Several speakers asked for further details concerning the two new projects proposed in the Plan of Action: *Teacher Training* and *E-Learning and Distance Education*. Their usefulness was stressed. At the same time, it was agreed that they require further revising. Consortia of PEACE Programme member-universities should be set up, in order to further develop them and to secure their funding.

On the whole, it was pointed out that the Palestinian universities experience at present an *emergency situation* and this should be better reflected in the Plan of Action, through *bolder initiatives and more concrete projects*. Several speakers indicated in that respect that it would be the task of the new Steering Committee to revise the proposed Plan of Action of 2002-2003, by including new projects and by providing concrete budgetary provisions for their implementations.

Possibilities to revise and expand the Programme of Action were illustrated in the statement made by **Professor Roberto Schmid**, President of the University of Pavia, Italy, in which concrete proposals are made to that effect. The statement is attached as an **Annex** to the present Report.

The Plan of Action was then approved, with the provision that it could and should be amended by the Steering Committee, in keeping with the recommendation mentioned above.

IV. Other Issues

Under Item V of the Agenda, the General Assembly chaired by *Dr. Munthir Salah*, examined the proposals of the Steering Committee for *changes in the By Laws of the PEACE Programme*. After lengthy discussions, the Assembly adopted the changes indicated in the revised text of the By Laws (attached).

The General Assembly proceeded then to the *election of the new Steering Committee of the PEACE Programme (Item VI of the Agenda)*. Proposals were presented for representatives for the four members representing the Palestinian universities, five members representing the European universities and one member representing the American universities. The Steering Committee was elected unanimously in the following composition:

Palestinian Members:

Dr. Radwan Barakat, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Hebron University
Professor Rami Hamdallah, President, An Najah National University
Professor Manuel Hassassian, Executive Vice President, Bethlehem University
Professor Muhammed Shubair, President, The Islamic University of Gaza

European Members:

Professor Luc François, Director of Educational Affairs, Universiteit Gent
Ms. Monica Margarit, Director, International Relations, University of Barcelona
Professor Jan Peters, President, International Federation of Catholic Universities
Professor Gianni Vaggi, Director, Centre for International Co-operation and Development,
University of Pavia
Professor Annick Suzor-Weiner, Director of the Office of International Relations, Université
Paris-Sud

American Member:

Professor Edward Jennings, President Emeritus, Professor of Finance, Ohio State University

Election of the Executive Bureau:

The election of the Executive Bureau required further consultations among the members of the Steering Committee and of their institutions. Following that consultation process, the following were elected as members of the Executive Bureau:

Chairperson: Professor Manuel Hassassian, Bethlehem University

Vice-Chairperson: Professor Gianni Vaggi, University of Pavia

Secretary-General: Professor Luc François, University of Ghent

Treasurer: Professor Rami Hamdallah, An-Najah National University, Nablus

Under Item VII of the Agenda, the General Assembly elected the following *Honorary Members: Professor Gabi Baramki, Professor Vincent Hanssens and Professor Valerio Grementieri.* It was stressed by several speakers that Honorary Membership should be restricted to a limited number of individuals and their function should not lead to confusion with attributes and functions of the Steering Committee. Moreover, it was stressed that in addition to the counselling services, the honorary members should also play a major role in **securing financial support** to the PEACE Programme.

The *Session closed with an address made by Professor Manuel Hassassian,* who expressed deep admiration and commendation of the work accomplished by the outgoing Steering Committee, which has left a distinctive mark on the PEACE Programme. He further appreciated the contribution of the PEACE Programme to institutionalising in Palestine a culture of higher education and research emphasising the appreciation given by the Palestinian universities to the benefits of the PEACE Programme, he stressed that: “What we need at this stage is an Action Plan that is more accommodating to the objective conditions and to the steep challenges and high hurdles they pose. They could only be met by openness, inclusion and tolerance”.

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Opening Session

Address of

**Professor Munthir Salah
Minister of Higher Education, Palestine
Chairperson of the PEACE Programme Steering Committee**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour, today, to address a distinguished international group of academics, members of the PEACE Programme at UNESCO Headquarters on the occasion of holding its 5th General Assembly. I am very grateful to you for your participation in spite of your heavy schedules. I would like also to welcome the new members who are participating in this meeting, Namely 3 Palestinian universities: Arab-American University, Al Aqsa University, Polytechnics University of Hebron and one European University: the University of Lecce, Italy.

Memory takes me back 10 years, when the PEACE Programme was initiated to launch a programme of co-operation with the Palestinian universities, which had been subjected to constant harassment, restrictions, and complete closure, to remind me of the present situation of the Palestinian universities in particular and the Palestinian people in general. Today we have the universities open but the roads to them are completely closed by Israeli military roadblocks that prevent students access to them.

During the first Intifada, which started in 1987, we used to rent offices, use churches and mosques as lecturing centres. We could, therefore, replace the closed campuses by renting offices and buildings. At present, we have the universities open, but students cannot have access to them, a care that we cannot replace students as we did before for closed campus, which indicates that the Palestinian students are denied from one of the basic human rights: Education.

The report of activities outlined three stages in the brief history of the PEACE programme, which are:

- (i) The first stage started in November 1991 to November 1994, when the activities were devoted to clarifying the search for appropriate modalities of action.
- (ii) The second stage started in November 1994 to October 1998, where the activities were devoted to blend solidarity with concrete action.
- (iii) The third stage started in October 1998 and it is still on.

The third Stage, in my opinion, is the critical one and witnessed the following events:

- Establishment of the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education. Its activities and role in relation to the PEACE Programme were studied thoroughly and a fruitful complementary mutual functions and co-ordination were agreed on.
- Three different Israeli governments came to power during the period. Each of them had its own agenda, but they were all keen to destroy the educational system in particular and the Palestinian National Authority in general. Efforts were also made by the three Israeli governments to destroy the Palestinian economy, agriculture, and tourism. A complete continuous closure of the discrete Palestinian areas has been and is still being practised by the Israeli. As a result, every aspect of life is deteriorating in Palestine.
- It was noticed in the third stage that the number of university members is decreased slightly.
- It is important to mention that during the third stage the PEACE Programme was unable to hold its 5th General Assembly in any Palestinian or European University. A result of this, the Steering Committee decided to hold it at its UNESCO Office.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We believe that the right justification for establishing the PEACE Programme, namely to assist the Palestinian universities and to play a significant role in co-ordination with others, to develop the capacity of the Palestinian universities is still needed, but on a larger scale.

We believe that a new situation has emerged, at present, for the PEACE Programme, which requires a fresh re-examination of its nature, function, status, structure and programme in order to clarify all these points.

Finally, I would like to express, on behalf of the PEACE Programme, our gratitude to the European Union for its generous financial donation without which we could not proceed to set up the programme.

I wish to also express our gratitude to the Director-General of UNESCO, represented at our meeting today by Mr. Seddoh, the Director of the Division of Higher Education, for the continuous support extended to PEACE. UNESCO seconded a staff member to the Programme Office at UNESCO, made a financial donation to help our scholarships scheme, covered the expenses of different UNESCO Chairs at the Palestinian universities and covered partially the expenses of the PEACE Programme International Conferences that were held, including the General Assembly.

Also our thanks are extended to all of you who helped our Programme and made it a real one in various ways and turned it into a real instrument for co-operation and support to the Palestinian universities.

Thank you.

Address of

Francisco Komlavi Seddoh
Director, Division of Higher Education, UNESCO

Mr President,
Your Excellency,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Director General of UNESCO, and on my own behalf, to convey greetings to the participants in the Fifth session of the General Assembly of the PEACE Programme and to wish it full success. As you know, we regard the PEACE as one of the first initiatives and one of our leading activities within the framework of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme. It is therefore, a pleasure for UNESCO to host your meeting at its Headquarters and I wish to assure you of our full support for a sound continuation of your activities. UNESCO has on various occasions expressed its faith in the reinforcement of international co-operation and for increased academic solidarity so as to raise the quality, relevance and efficiency of Palestinian Higher Education. Steps have been taken in that direction, in keeping with the relevant resolutions and recommendations of the General Conference and the Executive Board to reinforce UNESCO's support to the Palestinian people in all areas within its competence.

Through their short but very eventful history, through the difficulties and the harsh conditions they have been facing and continue to face, the Palestinian universities offer a convincing example of the role higher education plays in the history of a nation. For a country like Palestine, which lacks other resources, higher education represents the main instrument for human resources development, and therefore a main asset for self-sustainable development. The Palestinian universities are a major educational, scientific and cultural force in the emerging Palestinian nation. They act as dynamic factors conducive to national identity and national integration in a future Palestinian State, which is recognized as an urgent necessity by the international community.

The PEACE Programme has emerged as an efficient instrument to promote co-operation and to channel international support to the Palestinian universities. It has played and continues to play a very useful role in assisting the Palestinian universities to raise the quality, relevance and efficiency of their programmes. Your scholarship scheme, in particular, has been very successful. Several new academic programmes have been introduced at Palestinian universities upon the initiative of PEACE Programme-member universities. The universities of Gent of Pavia, the consortium of five Parisian universities, the University of Oslo and many others have been very successful in this respect. I wish to stress how much UNESCO appreciates their action.

At the same time, we are very much concerned to see that many of your valuable initiatives could no longer be continued because of the aggravated situation in the Palestinian Territories. Once again, the Palestinian universities are completely blocked and the students

and teachers cannot go to classes. These are clear acts of disregard of academic freedom and university autonomy, which were re-emphasised by the World Conference on Higher Education. Professor Ivar Ekeland, Vice President of the PEACE Programme and Honorary President of Université Paris-Dauphine has written a moving article on the situation of the Palestinian universities and the difficulties encountered in carrying out inter-university co-operation at present. These difficulties must be removed. As an international organisation in the UN System, which has been created with the mission to promote peace through international co-operation in the field of education, science, culture and communication, UNESCO fully supports your endeavours in this regard.

Your meeting takes place at a moment marked by the escalation of violence and the persistence of unsolved issues, which threaten peace and security in the world, including the Middle East. As pointed out by the Director-General on the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance, celebrated on 16 November, it is necessary "to step up action in order to remove the deep-rooted causes of violence" which include "misery, exclusion, ignorance and discrimination ": This requires unwavering solidarity in thought and action, in order" to counter injustice and the danger of a certain form of globalisation, thereby eliminating intolerance and fanaticism root and branch".

May I also refer to the recent adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by the General Conference of UNESCO, at its 31st session. While recognising the creative diversity of peoples as an important asset, which must be protected and promoted, it also emphasised the need to affirm adherence to common ethical values and principles.

It is such common values and principles that the PEACE Network of universities strives to promote through concrete action in favour of Palestinian universities. What you are doing deserves to be supported not only by other universities, but also by the authorities of your countries, and by the international community as a whole. As far as UNESCO is concerned, you represent a very useful tool in the efforts to provide assistance to the Palestinians in the field of higher education, at this crucial moment in their history. We are most grateful to you for everything you do.

C'est lorsqu'un pays traverse une période difficile, que l'avenir semble bouché, que le découragement peut avoir tendance à s'installer, c'est précisément à ce moment là qu'il est plus urgent que jamais de mettre l'accent sur la préparation des hommes et des femmes qui seront les acteurs et les décideurs de demain.

L'UNESCO se réjouit de ce que le Programme PEACE se place dans cette perspective.

May I conclude therefore by reiterating UNESCO's full support to you and our sincere wishes for success in your future action.

Thank you for your attention.

Address of

**Professor Manuel Hassassian
Executive Vice-President, Bethlehem University**

The Role of Palestinian Universities and its Students Within the Context of the Political Situation

Introduction

A university, by nature, assumes a tremendous challenge, because inherently it is supposed not to accept the current status of its students, but rather strives to mould their character through formal education, equipping them with the tools necessary for an increasingly globalized world, and providing them with skills in democratic sense and values. Under normal conditions this is not an easy task. Under difficult political circumstances, such as the politically volatile environment surrounding Palestinian Universities, the task becomes even more formidable and the sense of dedication to the mission and the importance of the institution become even a steeper challenge. Despite the hurdles that have characterised their path since the beginning, Palestinian Universities are a success story with many wonderful moments: when a new building is dedicated, when the graduation ceremony is held, and when we hear that Palestinian society appreciates and acknowledges their unique role. However, before I talk about our work and mission, let me brief you on where things stand politically.

The Political Environment in the West Bank and Gaza

The recent wave of unrest constitutes another turning point and threshold in the history of the Palestinian national movement. With the accumulation of grievances, injustices and negation of national rights, Palestinians saw the peace process as the way out. However, the peace process brought little progress in the daily life of Palestinians, and in many ways the situation deteriorated, especially when Israel continues to build settlements that under-mine the very essence of the peace process, at a time when the Palestinian economy is not growing, and Palestinians are not allowed free movement. In all, Palestinians discovered that the peace process was not going to bring national liberation, but instead consolidated Israeli control. Al-Aqsa Intifada came as the straw that broke the camel's back. The entry of Sharon into one of the holiest sites, with his history of massacres and terrorism, was perceived as a deep insult that could not be accommodated. It is important to note here that the Moslem Endowment Authority (Islamic Waqf) allows Jews to visit the site, but it was precisely the character of Sharon and the way he entered the Mosque that made September 28, 2000, a turning point in the peace process.

There is still a tremendous amount of uncertainty engulfing the political atmosphere between Palestinian and Israelis, with all the destabilising ramifications this has on the region and the world. As Universities, we are not isolated from that, and again as precedence indicates, our students are on the forefront.

In a rush against time President Clinton presented his ideas for peace. The official Palestinian response to those ideas read that Palestinians "remain grateful to the United States" considerable contributions to peace efforts and welcome it's continuing involvement in future negotiations." However, the memorandum expressed Palestinian concerns that the U.S. initiative would divide the Palestinian state into three separate cantons, while Jerusalem would be divided into a number of unconnected islands, and Palestinians will be forced to decline the refugees' right of return. Moreover, there were no provisions made regarding workable security arrangements between Palestine and Israel, and the proposal seemed to respond to Israeli demands while neglecting the basic Palestinian need for a viable state. It is crucial that any future peace agreement takes into consideration these Palestinian reservations. For final status agreement to succeed, it must address the contested matters equitably and with no ambiguity.

President Arafat and the Palestinian leadership are strategically committed to peace. Yet when the Israeli propaganda machine tries to misrepresent the Palestinian positions with the aim of scoring points, it falls into the paradigm of the past and fails to address objectively Palestinian concerns. Peace does not mean that Palestinian leadership will do the dirty work on behalf of the Israeli Army. Many times it seems that this is what the Israelis are seeking to achieve. The Israeli Army failed to crush the Palestinian will, and now they expect the Palestinian Authority to be able to do just that on their behalf.

There is no military solution for this conflict, yet the situation has deteriorated from bad to worst. Let me give you some statistics. During the first month of Al-Aqsa Intifada, approximately 150 Palestinians were murdered by the Israeli Army. During the 1st Intifada, approximately 150 Palestinians were murdered during the entire 1st year.

At this stage, the death toll is very high among Palestinians; and the number is close to 800. Palestinians live in a state of siege, houses are bombed, people terrorised, at a time when Israel keeps crying that its security is threatened. The army committing these atrocities, ironically, is called the Israeli "Defence" Forces. So far, more than 35,000 Palestinians have been injured, out of which approximately 4,000 people have permanent disabilities.

Palestinian Universities in the Context of the Current Situation

In the midst of such a political context, the work of Palestinian Universities become extremely important, because they provide for students an environment characterised by pluralism, openness and respect. Students come together from various social and religious backgrounds, from cities, villages and refugee camps, thus forming a unity within diversity.

The vibrant, dynamic qualities of Palestinian Universities are evident in the rich campus life and activities enjoyed by their students. This may be expressed in drama, music and dance, and in active involvement in social and environmental issues.

Growth and development at Palestinian Universities continue despite the painful political realities and consequent suffering of the Palestinian people. Palestinian Universities enter the 3rd millennium in a spirit of enthusiasm and hope, together with a consciousness of the moral values and principles that have guided their action from their foundation.

Recommendations

1. The role of intellectuals in processes of change and major political crisis is of great importance.
2. The need to focus on peace building by civil society as a complement to peace making by the leaders involved in the Arab-Israeli peace process had dramatically become more obvious than ever with the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Rabin.
3. In the pursuit of peace, the "establishments" of the countries in the region need to find stronger sources of support that will generate a true majority among the populations.
4. There is no purpose in stressing symmetric trends in the two societies, rather, there is a need to understand both sides.
5. We suggest focusing on both students and faculty because they act as feedback to each other's political attitudes.
6. While the policy relevant function of the academic world should not be neglected, at times when the peace process becomes paralysed it is no less important to further proactive research as a way of increasing understanding of the root causes and concrete arguments for antagonism to the peace process as well as stimulating a constructive dialogue with different individuals and groups across the political and religious spectrum.
7. In addition to the importance of policy-relevant work and impact at the grass roots level, peace oriented activities among the Israeli and Palestinian civil society currently involve only a small fraction of the total potential of such interactions.
8. One of the main challenges is to take advantage of the large adherence within both civil societies to the principles of democracy and extend it to the advocacy of peace based on an historic compromise.

Final Remarks

It is by now self evident that lasting peace in the Middle East can be attained only with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. This is the core issue. Issues such as personal security for Israelis, regional co-operation, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are only the symptoms not the cause.

Now given that the Oslo process failed, then we must learn the lessons for the inevitable future phase of negotiations and focus the energy of think-tanks, strategic thinkers, and security establishments, towards doing the preparatory work and to wait for the appropriate time when the negotiations will be re-launched.

Both sides need to keep their channels of diplomatic communication open with each other, even if at a bare minimum.

I am not pessimistic myself over the long-term prospects of a settlement. Yet I am concerned that nothing is being done to lay the groundwork for the era post Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights, and the new Palestine when the revolution is over.

It is certainly provocative to talk about peace at this time, but more provocative is the deafening silence among the Israeli left.

I believe that the concept of stagnation is misleading, because eventually events on the ground get out of hand and the situation deteriorates. This is where we are standing right now.

ANNEX I

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Working Document 1

Draft Agenda

- Item I** Adoption of the Agenda

- Item II** Report on the PEACE Programme activities over the three-year-period, October 1998 – October 2001

- Item III** Financial Report of the PEACE Programme

- Item IV** Plan of Action of the PEACE Programme for the 2002-2003 period

- Item V** Adoption of Changes in the By Laws of the PEACE Programme

- Item VI** Election of the new Steering Committee of the PEACE Programme

- Item VII** Appointment of Honorary Members of the PEACE Programme

ANNEX II

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Working Document 2

Programme of the Meeting

Friday 23rd November

Arrival of Participants

Saturday 24th November

09.00	Registration of participants
09.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening Address by H. E. Professor Munthir Salah Chairperson of the PEACE Programme• Address by Mr. F. K. Seddoh Director, Division of Higher Education, UNESCO• Presentation of the situation of Palestinian universities, by Professor Manuel Hassassian, Executive Vice-President, Bethlehem University
10.00	Report on the PEACE Programme activities over the three-year-period, October 1998 – October 2001
11.00	Coffee break
11.30	Continuation on the debates of the Report
12.00	Financial Report of the PEACE Programme
13.00	Lunch break
14.30	Plan of Action for the period 2002-2003
16.30	Adoption of Changes in the By Laws of the PEACE Programme
17.00	Coffee break
17.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election of the new Steering Committee of the PEACE Programme• Appointment of Honorary Members• Closing of the General Assembly Session
20.30	Dinner

Sunday 25th November

Departure of the Participants

ANNEX III

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Working Document 3

Item III of the Agenda

Report of Activities of the PEACE Programme Over the period October 1998 – November 2001

Introduction

The present report covers the three-year period, which has elapsed since the last ordinary session of the General Assembly, held in Paris, in October 1998. The 5th Session of the General Assembly coincides with the 10th anniversary of the PEACE Programme. It is a good occasion to take a brief retrospective look at its past action before focusing on the activities undertaken during the period mentioned above. Three stages can be identified in the brief history of the PEACE Network:

- (i) *November 1991* (when the PEACE Programme was established) *to November 1994* (when the international conference of Louvain-La-Neuve was held)

This first period was devoted to *clarifying the objectives and functions of the PEACE Programme and to the search for appropriate modalities of action*. The main emphasis was put on gaining international recognition and on expressing solidarity with the Palestinian universities. The possibilities for concrete practical action were limited. It is the merit of the founding universities and of the members of the Steering Committee of the PEACE Programme to have persevered in gaining international recognition for the PEACE Programme and in establishing it as a unique academic network.

- (ii) The Louvain-La-Neuve International Conference (October 1994) marked the beginning of a second phase in the history of the PEACE Programme characterised by the effort to *blend solidarity with concrete action*. This was made possible through the significant support extended to PEACE by UNESCO and by the European Commission, concomitantly with its increased membership. The setting up of the PEACE Programme Office at UNESCO in March 1995 played a significant role in this respect. This period of consolidation through action was further strengthened through the international conference on « The Role of Higher Education in the Context of an Independent Palestinian State », (Nablus, November 1996). The emphasis was now shifted towards *efficiency* and the elaboration and launching of *concrete projects*, aimed at meeting the needs of Palestinian higher education.

- (iv) The third period started with the 4th General Assembly, held in October 1998 in Paris. Following the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education of the Palestinian National Authority, a new situation had emerged for the PEACE Programme, which required a fresh re-examination of its nature, function, status, structure and programme. The last General Assembly adopted adequate measures reflected in the Guidelines and the Plan of Action approved on that occasion.

The present report focuses on the ways in which the PEACE network has succeeded to meet these important challenges. The set of priorities established in Paris in 1998 were to be carried out in two ways:

- a. through activities undertaken directly by the Network, with the funds and resources at its disposal, and
- b. through activities mediated by the PEACE Programme, but carried out with resources and funds obtained from other sources.

The report will indicate the extent to which its provisions have been implemented.

I. Human Resources Development and Academic Mobility

This was to be carried out through: *(i) grants for Palestinian students to study abroad, and (ii) faculty exchanges*

(i) Grants for Palestinian students to study abroad

The target figure to offer 12 grants over the period has been attained. As shown in Annex 1, 15 Palestinian students pursued studies abroad over the period, of which 10 for the PhD degree. Two students graduated in the year 1999, two in 2000 and another two in 2001. There are at present seven Palestinian students abroad under the PEACE Programme Scholarship Scheme.

In addition, the PEACE Programme, through bilateral agreements with Palestinian universities has mediated several other grants. According to available information provided by member-universities, there are several Palestinian students at various European universities at present (University of Pavia, University Catholique de Louvain-La-Neuve, University of Amsterdam, University of Oslo, Ohio State University, University of Trier, etc.).

A new development concerning the Scholarship Scheme is the arrangement reached with the University of Lecce and Istituto Superiore Universitario di Formazione Interdisciplinare (ISUFI) through this arrangement, Palestinian students are regularly accepted to attend the International Master Courses on International Trade Law & European Community; Innovative Materials and Technology; Economic-Business Management. Four Palestinian students were admitted to the courses and graduated

them successfully in 1999/2000. Two more are attending the courses during the 2000/2001 academic year, two have been accepted for the year 2001/2002.

PEACE Programme grants are integrated into the overall Plan for Faculty Development of the Ministry of Higher Education. The Scholarship Scheme is the most significant achievement of the PEACE Programme. It represents an important contribution to reinforcing the teaching and research capacities of Palestinian universities. Three positive elements should be singled out in relation to it:

- the selection processes adopted by PEACE works well. All Palestinian students completed studies successfully. There has been no case of failure and no difficulties have been encountered with regard to their academic work;
- all Palestinian students who completed studies, returned to their universities to join the teaching staff, or received other assignments in priority fields;
- the cost efficiency of the scholarships scheme is self evident. This should allow its continuation, with an increased number of grants.

(ii) Faculty Exchange

The very ambitious provisions for faculty exchanges foreseen in the Plan of Action adopted in Paris three years ago, namely 30 Palestinian universities teachers to be invited to spend short periods of time at universities abroad, 6 grants to support bilateral projects, etc. could not be implemented because of lack of funds.

However, several exchanges could be organised, especially through bilateral arrangements, or within the framework of the new academic programmes established at Palestinian universities (to be dealt with below). It must also be stressed that faculty exchanges were seriously affected by the deterioration of the situation in Palestine.

II. Academic Programmes and Research

Progress in this second field of action of the PEACE Programme has been significant during the period covered by the report. Many member-universities were involved in developing new academic programmes at Palestinian universities.

- *The Programme on Mathematics Applied to Economics* implemented by a consortium of French universities worked very well until November 2000, when it became impossible to send French professors to Palestine. However, the fact that a Palestinian had obtained his doctorate in the field, allows its continuation. An evaluation of the Programme by the French authorities is foreseen.
- The Universities of Pavia and Sienna have completed preparations to launch an academic programme entitled *Transitional Co-operation, Local Development and Transfer of Innovation in Palestine*. Although it has not been possible to actually start the Programme, several Palestinian academics are already involved in preparations, including stages in Italy.

- *The Law Studies Centre at Birzeit University* continues to function, but there are the same difficulties concerning the possibility to send foreign professors to teach at the Centre.
- Concerning the *UNESCO Chairs*, established at Palestinian universities, the Steering Committee decided to discontinue the UNESCO Chair on Archaeology and the Language Centre at Al Quds University, which have completed their function. The *UNESCO Chair on Human Rights and Democracy* and the *Refugee Studies Centre*, established at Nablus University with the support of UNESCO, continue their activity.
- Preparations have been underway for sometime to establish a *UNESCO Chair on Water and Marine Sciences*, which should provide academic support to the Marine Science Centre, funded by UNESCO and the Flemish Government. The establishment of the Chair will be further clarified with the Science Sector of UNESCO and the appropriate institutions and authorities in Palestine. An agreement between UNESCO and the University of Gent on co-operation in favour of Palestinian Higher Education Institutions was signed in 1998. One of its provisions refers to the Water Resources management Project at Palestinian universities in which the University of Gent has been involved for some time. This could help advance the plans to set the Chair.

There has been no progress made in relation to other projects mentioned in the Plan of Action adopted three years ago, namely: *Microelectronics Laboratory at Palestinian universities*, *Research in Biotechnology* and *Management and Business Administration*. The reasons are twofold: lack of funds on the one hand, and the worsening situation in the Palestinian territories. UNESCO and the European Union (in particular through MEDCAMPUS and MEDA) were to be the main funding sources. Unfortunately funds were not forthcoming. In addition, the political situation did not encourage the member-universities to get involved.

The same is true of other projects foreseen in the last Plan of Action, namely *Cultural and Spiritual Tourism (in conjunction with UNESCO's Bethlehem 2000 project)*, *Distance Education*, and *Teacher Training*. The last two projects deserve special attention and are taken up again in the Plan of Action for 2002-2003.

III. Reinforcement of the PEACE Programme

Efforts to reinforce the PEACE programme over the 1998-2000 period were geared mainly along the following lines:

1. Better knowledge of the situation of the Palestinian universities and the ways in which their needs could be met through international co-operation

This was done in the first place through the *website of the PEACE Programme*, established at UNESCO. It includes a presentation of the Palestinian universities, as well as of the PEACE Programme and its activities. It is necessary, however, to better use this facility by introducing new data and types of information and keeping them up-to-date. The member-universities are invited to provide relevant information regularly, in order to be included in the web-site.

The new information and communication technologies are used extensively in order to keep the members of the Steering Committee, the member-universities, and the universities in various regions of the world better informed on the situation of the Palestinian universities and on the activities of the PEACE Programme.

The practice of organising panel sessions devoted to Palestinian higher education at the Annual Conferences of the European Association of International Education (EAIE) was continued successfully. Such sessions were organised in Maastricht (1999) and Belgium (2000).

Members of the Steering Committee and members of the PEACE Programme office at UNESCO used their participation at various international gatherings in order to present the PEACE Programme. This led to new members in some cases (Vestfold College, Norway), or to new scholarship for Palestinian students (i.e. The ISUFI International Master Courses).

2. Membership

The number of PEACE Programme members continued to grow during the period, arriving at 84 members. However, this continued increase was paralleled by a certain loss of interest on the part of some members, which ceased to pay, or never paid the membership fees and did not take part in the activities of the Programme. This situation rendered it difficult to have a quorum for the 5th Session of the General Assembly. The Steering Committee, acting in keeping with the By Laws of the PEACE Programme, decided to take note of the fact that these universities, which never paid their membership fees and did not take part in any of the activities of the Programme for a long time, had in fact ceased their membership with PEACE.

At present, the PEACE Programme has 74 members namely: 11 Palestinian universities (of which 3 are to be confirmed at the 5th Session of the General Assembly), 3 Associate Collective members and 60 European universities (of which 1, the University of Lecce will be confirmed at the 5th Session).

3. Extra ordinary meeting of the PEACE Programme; Meetings of the Steering Committee

An extra ordinary meeting of the PEACE Programme was held in Gent, in April 1999. The University of Gent hosted the meeting in conjunction with a very successful International Seminar on “Five Years of Autonomous Rule in Palestine: The Role of International Co-operation in Higher Education”.

The Steering Committee and its Executive Bureau met regularly during the period. Most of the meetings were held in Paris, at UNESCO. In order to reduce costs, they were organised in conjunctions with other meetings held at UNESCO. The Chairman of the Steering Committee and members of the Bureau met twice the new Director-General of UNESCO to discuss ways and means for UNESCO’s continued support to the Programme. The need for such support to the activity of the PEACE Programme office at UNESCO was stressed.

Conclusions

The 1998-2001 period has been a very challenging one, for the PEACE Programme, with many ups and downs, with significant achievements, but also with weaknesses and failures.

The history of this General Assembly is significant in this respect. The prospects for the Conference planned to be held in Bethlehem in November 2000 were excellent. All our preparations were shattered by the worsening situation. The same was true of many academic programmes based on international co-operation at Palestinian universities, which were practically discontinued.

However, despite these difficulties, we were always encouraged to see not only our member-universities, but also other institutions of higher education in various parts of the world, very much concerned by the harsh conditions imposed on the Palestinian universities. There is a new wave of academic solidarity with the Palestinian universities. It is the task of the PEACE Programme to build on this potential in the years to come. Proposals to that effect are included in the Plan of Action of the PEACE Programme for the 2002-2003 period, to be discussed under item IV of the Agenda. The participants in the General Assembly are invited to examine them and to make suggestions and recommendations for the further reinforcement of the PEACE Programme.

ANNEX IV

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

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Item III of the Agenda

Financial Report of the PEACE Programme Over the period October 1998 – November 2001

The PEACE Programme has been operating on a limited budget ever since its foundation. The initial allocation received from the European Union and the various financial contributions made by UNESCO and others were exhausted on specific programmes and objectives. At its 4th Session of the General Assembly held in Paris, 1998, decisions were reached recommending the adoption of strict austerity measures, especially with regard to secretariat and administrative expenses.

Even with very limited resources, the PEACE Programme could continue its activities due to the support of its member-universities. *Their commitment has been the main funding source for the activities of the PEACE Programme, especially academic programmes and staffs exchanges.*

I. Revenues

A. Funds carried over from the previous financial exercise

As indicated in the Financial Report to the last Session of the General Assembly of the PEACE Programme accounts at the Arab Bank, Paris, were as follows at the beginning of October 1998:

Current account 1101-024258-110	US\$15,086.24
Deposit account 1101-024258	US\$26,913.22
Deposit Account 1101-024258-610	US\$10,225.12
Current account 1101-024258-100	FFr.15,595.00

In December 1998, the two savings accounts were merged into one single account.

In addition, funds in the PEACE Programme account at the Arab in Ramallah on 01/01/99 were **US\$31,879.00**.

B. Membership fees over the period 1998 - 2001

Total revenues from membership fees in 1999, 2000 and 2001 as of 01/10/2001 amounts to **US\$74,869.00**. Annex 1 shows the situation of membership payments in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

As indicated in the recapitulating table below, revenues from fees have been decreased slightly in 2001. It is back to the level of 1999 this year, because the Palestinian universities have just paid their fees (**US\$5,000.00**) which are not indicated in the figure. It must be pointed out, however, that while a core number of PEACE Programme member-universities pay constantly their fees, many others do not pay. This poses problems, because membership fees have become a major source to cover expenses related to the scholarship scheme.

	<u>US\$</u>	<u>Fr.F.</u>	<u>Euro</u>
1999:	18,562,00	46,856,45	1,463,82
2000:	14,780,00	43,164,01	1,710,00
2001:	12,581,00	34,422,00	6,021,38
Total	45,923,00	124,442,46	9,195,20

II. Expenses

A. Grants under the PEACE Programme Scholarship Scheme

The total amount that the PEACE Programme grantees have received for the period covered by this report is **US\$101,724.39**.

Annex II gives details of the overall financing of all the PEACE Programme Palestinian grantees over the period 12.03.1997 – 05.09.2001, which amounts to **US\$200,033.39**.

An explanation is necessary in relation to the 3 students who have completed, or continue their studies at Gent University. In 1997, they were offered a one-year full grant. To enable them to complete studies and get their Ph.D. degrees, Gent University allocated **US\$49,753.97**, which was supplemented by the PEACE Programme and their respective universities as follows:

a. contribution of the University of Gent:	US\$24,750,00
b. contribution of Al Quds Open university:	US\$11,400.00
c. contribution of Al Azhar University:	US\$1,000.00
d. contribution of the PEACE Programme	US\$76,615.69
Total	US\$113,765.69

The remaining **US\$24,985.97** from the total contribution of the University of Gent will be used to cover expenses for future students who will pursue studies there.

B. Other Expenses of the PEACE Programme

1. Expenses of the PEACE Programme Office, Paris: **US\$5,407.00**

This amount covers:

- the cost of a Printer for the office for FrF.11,400
- payment for 3 temporary staff assistants
- other expenses.

2. Expenses of the PEACE Programme Office in Ramallah: **US\$14,176.23**

This amount covers expenditure of the members of the Steering Committee related to the activities of the PEACE Programme, which are mainly Steering Committee meetings, participating in international conferences to mediate the needs of the Palestinian higher education institutions and staff assistance. These expenditures were in the form of:

- Air tickets to Paris (6), Maastricht (3), Leipzig (2), Belgium (1)
- Per diems for Maastricht (2), for Paris (1)
- Registration fees at international meetings (2)
- Staff assistance (1)

The total expenses of the two offices: **US\$19,583.23**

Total expenses of the PEACE Programme over the 3 year-period amounted to: **US\$121,307.62**

III. Budgetary Provisions of the Programme for 2002-2003

According to the Bank Statements of the Arab Bank in Paris, the PEACE Programme has at present (31.10.2001), the following funds available, which are mainly to be used as a scholarship endowment fund :

Current account 1101-024258-110	US\$ 1,556.35
Deposit Account 1101-024258-610	US\$63,726.25
1.	<hr/> US\$65,382.60
2. Euro account 1101-024258-111	US\$10,667.33
3. Current account 1101-024258-100	FFr.95,725.48

The Ramallah Office informs that an additional sum of US\$25,123.13 is available at the Bank in Ramallah for the scholarship endowment fund. This brings the total of funds available for the future Plan of Action of the PEACE Programme to around **US\$117,000.00**. An additional **US\$45,000** is expected to come from membership fees in 2002 – 2003. It is obvious that with a budget around **US\$160,000** for a two-year period will not allow the PEACE Programme to undertake ambitious projects.

It is absolutely necessary for the PEACE Programme to secure a solid and stable funding base for its future plan of action. Past experience indicates that, when good projects are elaborated and convincing arguments are brought to the funding community, funds could be secured for its activities. The following financing guidelines are submitted for discussion to the General Assembly:

- (i) The newly elected Steering Committee should start a large-scale funding campaign, from the IGOs, the donor agencies and a wide range of potential funding sources. More specifically:
 - the request for a substantial allocation for staff development (the scholarship scheme) and for academic programmes, already submitted to the European Union should be pursued, with adequate efforts to obtain its approval.
 - proposals for support for concrete projects should be submitted to UNESCO and to other agencies in the UN System
- (ii) A major source of income for the PEACE Programme has been provided in the past by governments, upon the request of member universities in the respective countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, etc.). This practice should be further reinforced and expanded.
- (iii) A third source of income is provided by the member-universities themselves, from their own budgets. Several of them have made specific provisions in their international co-operation budgets for activities in favour of Palestinian universities. The sums are modest but, when pooled together, they can make a difference, particularly for smaller scale projects.
- (iv) The contribution of the Palestinian universities themselves to the PEACE Programme needs to be singled out for its particular, symbolic importance. It serves to indicate that they find the PEACE Programme useful for their own future development.

**Summary of Membership Fees Payment for each University
for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001**

Country	US\$	FrF.	Euro
Belgium			
Universiteit Gent	1984,00		1 050,00
Vrije University of Brussel	984,00		524,00
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	2 000,00		
Facultés Univ. Notre Dame de la Paix	1 000,00	2 951,68	
Univ. Catholique de Louvain			850,88
Université Libre de Bruxelles		4 165,33	635,00
France			
Tresorerie de l'Etat		2951,81	
Université Paris VII		12590,00	
Université de Paris I		19777,17	
Université de Paris IX Dauphine		9993,77	
Université de Sciences et Tech. Lille		6887,55	
Italy			
Università degli Studi di Ancona	729,00		1 401,30
Università degli Studi di Siena	728,00		
Università degli Studi di Pavia	1 948,00		
The Netherlands			
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	2 500,00		
Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden	750,00		
Universiteit Utrecht	2 000,00	5657,63	
Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen	724,00	4165,16	635,00
Norway			
Universitet I Bergen	1 750,00		610,88
Universitetet I Oslo	2 894,00		
University of Sc. & Technology, Trondheim	1 750,00		
Vestfold College	500,00		
Palestine			
Al Azhar University of Gaza	938,00		
An Najah National University	1 000,00		
Al Quds Open University	1 000,00		
Birzeit University	1 000,00		
Islamic University of Gaza	1 000,00		

	US\$	FrF.	Euro
Portugal			
Universidade de Aveiro		2 921,70	1240,00
Spain			
Universidad de Almeria		4 007,11	
Universidad de Barcelona	3 000,00		
Universidad de Granada	1 918,00		852,94
Universidad de Salamanca	957,00		
Universidad del Pais Vasco	1 000,00	5582,72	1 026,08
Universitat de València	1 962,00	5594,91	
Sweden			
University of Göteborg	3 000,00		
University of Orebro	485,00		
Switzerland			
Université de Genève	750,00		1220,00
Université de Fribourg-Suisse		6360,16	
Université de Lausanne	1 688,00		
Associate Collective Members			
Community of Mediterranean Universities	2 000,00		
Intl. Association of Univ. Presidents	1 984,00	25254,35	
Total	45 923,00	118 861,05	10 046,08

Summary
of the
PEACE Programme Scholarship Payments
for the years
1997/1998/1999/2000/2001

	1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	Bank charges	Total
Muna Matar	1 990,00	10 400,00	10 520,00	2 400,00	7 735,00	135,95	33 180,95
Usama Zain Eldin	4 420,00	14 000,00	14 120,00	3 240,00		120,05	35 900,05
Yusef Abu Zir	1 670,00	13 600,00	13 520,00	6 000,00	9 735,00	159,69	44 684,69
Omar Milad	1 800,00	2 400,00	850,00			38,07	5 088,07
Issam Bihesi		2 600,00	600,00	3 286,00	2 400,00	101,63	8 987,63
Muhm'd Abu Elhaj	7 220,00	10 800,00	2 400,00	1 300,00		145,36	21 865,36
Bahjat Qazzaz	1 000,00	4 600,00	600,00	3 000,00	2 400,00	127,72	11 727,72
Ibrahim Salameh	7 220,00	10 800,00	2 400,00	600,00		128,42	21 148,42
Abdallah Mhana	2 500,00	3 600,00	2 400,00	1 200,00	2 400,00	127,72	12 227,72
Zeyad Abu Heen				1 200,00	2 400,00	19,78	3 619,78
Loai Awad				839,00		0,00	839,00
Imad M Ghanayem				764,00		0,00	764,00
Total	27 820,00	72 800,00	47 410,00	23 829,00	27 070,00	1 104,39	200 033,39

ANNEX V

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

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Plan of Action of the PEACE Programme for the 2002-2003 period

I. Background

The PEACE programme was created at a time when the Israeli occupation forces had shut down the entire Palestinian education system for a period of several years, in open disregard of the basic human right to education of the Palestinian people. The need for such an international initiative emerged because there was no official Palestinian authority responsible for higher education through which aid to higher education institutions in Palestine could be co-ordinated and channelled.

The PEACE programme therefore served two major purposes:

- *To promote international co-operation with Palestinian higher education institutions and to gather international support in defence of the basic human right to education, of academic freedom and university autonomy;*
- *To seek, to co-ordinate and to channel academic support to higher education in Palestine, by meeting badly felt needs and enhancing the quality, relevance and efficiency of academic programmes and research at Palestinian universities.*

II. Status and Objectives

Over the 10 years since it was established, the PEACE Programme has made full proof of its potential to:

- a) serve as a framework which facilitates the exchange of information on the situation of Palestinian universities and calls for expression of solidarity by the international academic community, whenever the human right to education and their academic freedom is disregarded.
- b) act as a flexible and efficient instrument to establish bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the overall development of the Palestinian institutions.
- c) sensitise governments and the international donor community, to co-operate closely with UNESCO, the European Union, IGOs, NGOs, agencies and foundations to support the Palestinian higher education institutions.
- d) secure financing for academic projects.

However, ten years after its establishment, the existing 11 Palestinian universities are still operating under very difficult conditions and unacceptable constraints. The PEACE Programme, as an **inter university network**, should continue and reinforce its action, with the following objectives:

a) **To secure continuity of action**, particularly for those types of action, which have proved successful in the past, namely:

- *awarding grants for study abroad to Palestinian students and young faculty;*
- *establishing new academic programmes at Palestinian universities and setting up stable, long term-relations with them, particularly through consortia of universities which help pool resources for the implementation of concrete projects;*
- *training of Palestinian specialists and securing the transfer of know-how and expertise in priority areas for self sustainable development in Palestine.*

b) **To expand its range of action** and to involve universities in different regions, which have expressed interest in the Network.

It should do this with particular attention paid to **full transparency and constant evaluation** of its activities.

III. Strategy

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the PEACE Programme should:

- a) provide and facilitate the exchange of information about the needs of Palestinian universities and about existing projects of bilateral and multilateral co-operation.
- b) initiate new projects, in close co-operation with the Palestinian universities and the Ministry of Higher Education, by integrating its activity **within the strategy for the development of Palestinian higher education**, as adopted by the Ministry and the Palestinian Rectors' Conference.
- c) secure a stable funding base for its programme, by seeking financial support from a broad range of potential sources.

IV. Programme of Action for 2002-2003

The Peace Programme will focus its action in the following areas during the forthcoming biennium:

A. Human Resources Development and Academic Mobility

This will continue to be the first priority of the PEACE Programme to be implemented through **grants for Palestinian students** and through **faculty exchanges**. The objectives pursued are:

- to upgrade the level of the training of the Palestinian teachers at a PhD level, through study abroad, with the obligation to return to their institutions of origin upon completion of studies.
- to encourage foreign academics and researchers to spend various periods at Palestinian universities, in order to teach or to undertake research.

The following targets are set for these activities during the biennium:

- at least 12 grants to Palestinian students to obtain postgraduate degrees abroad.
- an additional 5 grants will be included in the bilateral co-operation programmes with Palestinian universities.
- faculty exchanges, involving at least 15 Palestinian teachers and 5 European ones, will be organised within the framework of bilateral and multilateral agreements with Palestinian universities, as well as part of the academic programmes mentioned under **B.** below. Funding for these exchanges will be provided within the respective projects.

The grants will be offered by member-universities and will cover, to the extent possible, all expenses. The PEACE Programme will, as in the past, supplement the grants, the conditions offered by the receiving universities. The award of grants to Palestinian students will follow strictly the rules stipulated in the **General Guidelines for the PEACE Programme Scholarship Scheme (Annex I)**.

B. Capacity-Building, and Quality Assurance at Palestinian Universities

Action in this field will be carried out through **bilateral** and **multilateral** co-operation with Palestinian universities. Building on the experience acquired thus far, the Network will encourage the setting up of **consortia** of member universities, capable to launch, secure funding and implement large-scale academic projects.

1. Resuming and reinforcing current projects

As soon as favourable conditions are created, the academic programmes launched in the past, which were interrupted because of the situation in the Palestinian territories, will be resumed and reinforced. This concerns in particular:

- *The Programme on Mathematics Applied to Economics*, with the support of the consortium of French universities;
- The academic programme *Transitional Co-operation, Local Development and Transfer of Innovation in Palestine*, initiated by the universities of Pavia and Sienna. Other universities will be invited to join.

2. *Initiating new projects*

- The plans to establish a *UNESCO Chair on Marine and Water Sciences*, with the support of UNESCO (the Science Sector) and the Flemish Government, will be pursued. Interested member-universities will be invited to form a consortium to implement this project. A request for funding within the MEDCAMPUS will be submitted to the European Commission.
- *Teacher Training Project*. A consortium of PEACE member-universities will be set up in order to launch a major teacher training project in Palestine. There is a badly felt need for such a project, given the fact that enrolments in primary and secondary education are growing very fast in Palestine and there is a shortage of teachers at the pre-universities level of education. Moreover, even the existing teachers need up grading of their training. The situation is particularly serious in relation to science teachers. The Teacher Training project will be linked to the plans of the Ministry of Higher Education to set up a Faculty of Education in Palestine.

Funding for this project will be sought from various sources the member-universities and their national authorities, UNESCO, the European Union, IGOs, NGOs and donor agencies and foundations.

- *E-Learning, Distance Education and Alternative Delivery Systems of Higher Education*. The new information and communication technologies have completely changed the face of international co-operation in higher education. They open up tremendous possibilities for Palestinian universities. The specific conditions in which they function and their dispersion over a relatively small area, with physical communication and mobility often rendered impossible, call for the intensive and imaginative use of alternative delivery systems and of the distance mode as a main instrument to overcome these difficulties. The PEACE Programme will launch a major programme in this area. It will aim to develop infrastructure facilities, methodologies and teaching materials for use on the distance mode at all Palestinian universities and to reinforce the programme of Al Quds Open University.

A consortium of universities, including some of the major open universities in Europe and North America, will be set up in order to prepare project proposal, which will be submitted, to potential donors to secure its funding.

- To the extent to which financial support is obtained for the other projects mentioned in earlier Plans of Actions, namely: *Microelectronics Faculty at Palestinian universities, Research in Biotechnology and Management and Business Administration*, they will be launched, through consortia of member-universities. The consortia will also be encouraged to submit application for support to their national authorities, and to other potential funding sources, especially through MEDCAMPUS.

C. Reinforcement of the PEACE Programme

Action will be taken to reinforce the PEACE Programme through expanding its membership and securing a stable funding base for its activities.

1. Membership

Following discussion held at previous sessions of the General Assembly, it is proposed to launch a campaign for expanding membership to the other regions. In the age of advanced electronic communication, which renders interconnectivity accessible, this is a necessity.

At the same time, it is necessary to consider ways of diversifying memberships. Some universities have expressed interest to associate themselves to PEACE Programme projects, without becoming full members. Others undertake co-operation projects with Palestinian universities on a bilateral basis. The General Assembly could consider the necessity of introducing a category of **associate members**, which has in the past, been limited to NGOs only.

2. Funding of the PEACE Programme

As indicated in the Financial Report, the PEACE Programme budget relies at present exclusively on membership fees. Activities have continued mainly through support extended by member-universities, which have secured financing from their national authorities. While this practice will be continued, it is necessary to secure a **stable funding base** for PEACE Programme, which would allow it to properly plan and carry out its activities. It is, therefore, proposed to entrust the Steering Committee to be elected by the General Assembly with the task of developing a funding strategy and a concrete plan to seek funds from the organisations and agencies in the UN System, from the European Union, from IGOs, NGOs and private donors.

3. Reinforcing the structures of the PEACE Programme

Action will be taken to continuously improve the activity of the **Steering Committee** and of its **Bureau**, through better communication in order to reach decisions collectively.

The **Office of the PEACE Programme at UNESCO** remains vital for continued contact with the international academic community, as well as with UNESCO, with the IGOs, NGOs, and other co-operation partners. It is therefore important to secure continued support by UNESCO for its efficient functioning.

At the same time, the **Office in Ramallah** working closely both with the Ministry of Higher Education and with the Palestinian Rectors' Conference, should be reinforced.

**General Guidelines
for the
PEACE Programme Scholarship Scheme**

**Annex 1
to
Working Document 5**

The PEACE Programme is a network of European and North American universities, committed to promoting international co-operation with, and extending assistance to the Palestinian universities in various forms, including scholarships for study abroad. Although it is not a foundation with a substantial budget of its own, the PEACE Network has been able, with the strong support of its member-universities, to provide opportunities for study abroad for a number of Palestinian graduate students and young academics.

The guidelines below indicate the conditions to be met by Palestinian applicants in order to be considered for assistance, the procedures to be followed in submitting requests, the selection process by the PEACE Programme and further requirements to be met by Palestinian graduate students during their period of study abroad.

Candidates:

1.
 - i. Must have successfully completed a graduate programme and meet the requirements to apply for a higher graduate level.
 - ii. Must be recommended by their university.
 - iii. Must attach to the request certified copies of all educational certificates, diplomas/transcripts and study records, other relevant certificates, etc. and recommendations by professors of their university.
 - iv. Must have a good command of a foreign language.
 - For universities where English is the language of instruction, a TOEFL (or other, equivalent) test is required with a score of at least 500 - 550. (Some universities may require higher scores).
 - For French-teaching universities, a French language test, must be taken at the French Consulate in Palestine, or at any recognised Palestinian institution or university.
 - For any other language (i.e. Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese, etc.) preparatory language courses are to be taken at Palestinian institutes or universities. The receiving institutions usually provide opportunities to pursue further language training after arrival in the respective country.

- v. Must choose a field of study in which they can successfully pursue graduate studies.
 - vi. Must submit a detailed description of the study programme they wish to pursue, and of the research topic for the MA/MSc or PhD thesis.
2. The University should then officially submit the request to the Chairman of the Steering Committee of PEACE.
 3. A Local Selection Committee, made up of representatives of all Palestinian universities and of the Ministry of Higher Education, examines all applications and selects the candidates, which will be supported by the PEACE Programme. In taking the decision, the Selecting Committee takes into account the academic qualifications of the candidates while also paying attention to equity in providing assistance to all Palestinian universities.
 4. When decision for support is taken, the PEACE Programme Office at UNESCO, will send the request to member-universities in Europe and North America, for consideration and acceptance.

Application deadlines

1. Applications with all the required documentation, should reach the PEACE Programme Executive Office, represented by the Chairman of the PEACE Programme Steering Committee, not later than 31 December of the year.
2. Applicants will be notified about the decision concerning their applications as soon as possible, but not later than mid May and mid June of the following year.

Contacting the Receiving Institutions

Successful applicants (and their institutions) are then requested to immediately contact the appropriate units or departments of the receiving institutions, in order to settle all the necessary arrangements: scientific supervisor, detailed programme of studies to be pursued, any other special requirements of the respective university, as well as technical arrangements concerning visa, housing, meals, library and laboratory facilities, exact time of arrival at the receiving university, etc.

Records of Study Progress

The PEACE Programme Office keeps records of the academic standing of the Palestinian students, which receive assistance to study abroad. For that purpose, it requests the receiving universities to send adequate information, allowing the Steering Committee to decide on prolongation or cessation of such assistance.

Financing

1. PEACE Programme member-universities are the main source for assistance to Palestinian students and young academics to pursue studies abroad. Contributions have also been received from the European Commission and from UNESCO. A campaign to receive donations from foundations, agencies, NGOs and from individual contributors has to be launched repeatedly.
2. Assistance for study abroad may be either in the form of a full scholarship, covering the whole period of study (which may vary from one to four years). All receiving universities agree to exempt Palestinian students from any fees. Those which cannot offer a full scholarship, cover accommodation costs (student hostel and meals) medical and dental care, provision of other facilities (such as library and laboratory use, reference books, access to PCs, etc.)
3. The PEACE Programme provides, in some cases, additional assistance to students, such as international transportation and a supplement grant, if and only if, the scholarship offered to them is not sufficient to cover living expenses.

Agreement

Each grant recipient signs a statement stipulating his/her acceptance of the conditions of the grant offered, and undertaking the obligation to return to his/her university upon completion of studies abroad

“To whom it may concern”

I the undersigned,

Mr./Ms. _____

of _____ University,

accept and abide to the conditions offered to me by the University of _____,

within the frame of the PEACE Programme assistance, during the (one, two, three, or four) years of study granted to me to fulfil the requirements of a MA/MSc or PhD degree.

I also pledge that, upon completion of my studies at the University of _____

I will return in due time to my home University _____.

If I fail to return, I will be obliged to repay all scholarship funding.

Signed (Student)

Signed (Reference)

ANNEX VI

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Address of

Professor Roberto Schmid
President, Pavia University

Mister Chairman
Minister Munthir Salah
Ladies and Gentlemen

Ten years since its establishment, value and significance of the PEACE Programme do not only remain intact, but should be increased in light of the present situation.

As mentioned by Professor Baramki, no educated people in any part of the world can accept bombs, war and terrorism as a way to solve political problems. Therefore, any effort to increase the cultural level of the new generations is an effort in the direction of peace. All historical universities, like my university, which have always kept freedom and tolerance in high esteem, must consider their mission to help to develop higher education all over the world as their own direct responsibility.

We all hope that a just permanent and secure peace agreement could take place in Palestine, with the recognition of full security for all the people involved and the possibility to move in a Palestinian State and even across its borders to neighbouring countries. Free movement of people and ideas is an essential component not only of culture and the development of science and hence of society, but also of a true, just and lasting peace. This is the best hope for the young people and for the development of Palestine and of the entire Middle East.

This is a situation that we hope it will materialise soon. In the meantime, we feel the Palestinian universities still need the support of a larger academic community in order to guarantee to their students the possibility to improve their capabilities and their knowledge and hence contribute to the well being of the Palestinian people and of the people of the region. In the past, the PEACE Programme has been crucial element in helping the working of Palestinian universities; but the PEACE Programme must be revitalised, this is an absolute necessity of the present.

UNESCO and the European Union should intervene with concrete support for the projects of the PEACE Programme. No further time must be wasted in order to bring new energy and resources to this Programme. Of course partner universities of the programme, both in Europe and in other regions should participate in this effort with ideas, concrete projects and their resources. The Agenda of the Meeting especially the Plan of Action contain many interesting suggestions and recommendations in this respect.

For the last two years, the University of Pavia, with the essential help of the University of Siena and of Professor Grementieri, has been working on a project, which should help three Palestinian universities, Birzeit, An-Najah and Bethlehem to establish a Master degree programme. We are grateful to the Ministry of Higher Education and to the PEACE Programme itself for the invaluable work of co-ordination with three universities in Palestine and for the important advice it has provided to finalise the project. The project has now been presented to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for possible financing.

The Palestinian Minister of Higher Education himself and several colleagues from Palestinian universities have visited Pavia during the last two years, including the President of An-Najah, Dr. Rami Hamdallah. We have now with us four graduate students from Palestine.

These are important achievements but the present situation requires *further efforts and new initiatives of a wider range* than those limited to graduate studies. Some important aspects and content of modern university life must be guaranteed to all the students, including, of course, the young graduates. Modern techniques of distance learning offer the possibility of improving the knowledge and the ability of the young girls and boys. I think that an essential component of basic education can be guaranteed also by supporting the colleagues in Palestinian universities with appropriate courses, which can be partly delivered through distance learning techniques. The content of these courses should be decided by the universities in co-ordination with the Ministry of Higher Education and the partner universities of the Programme. But, I believe that possible examples of useful courses could be the following:

1. information technology and the media;
2. the institutions and the functioning of the European Union;
3. applications of information technology to production (EU experiences);
4. the trade relations between the EU and the Middle East.

These are just few examples, which could surely be of great importance for the Palestinian students and could be usefully provided mainly via distance learning technology. Of course, personal knowledge of teachers in all partners universities and the exchange of visits by faculty members and by some students could be an important component of the programme, but distance learning could be extremely helpful in improving the curricula of Palestinian universities. This project could require substantial support by international institutions, but the European and other universities participating in PEACE are already a formidable network, which could guarantee the success of the project.

Moreover, there is already some experience acquired through the initiative of Professor Grementieri and the EDEN Network to develop a project of Distance Learning with the Open University in Jerusalem, within the framework of the PEACE Programme.

Pavia has now the chairmanship of the Steering Committee of the Coimbra Group of Universities, if the PEACE Programme agrees Pavia University will present the above ideas and projects to the next Steering Committee of the Coimbra Group. We shall ask the General Assembly of the Coimbra Group, which will take place in Louvain, when the discussion will be precisely on distance learning, for the participation of other universities in this project, while seeking, of course, their full support to the activities of the PEACE Programme in general.

ANNEX VII

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Working Document 6

Adoption of Changes in the By-Laws of the PEACE Programme

The By-Laws were approved by the General Assembly at its 3rd Session, in Nablus, 7-9 November 1996. The Steering Committee, at its meeting held in Paris on 13-14 May 2001, discussed the usefulness of appointing as Honorary Members, those academics who had laid the foundations of the PEACE Programme and have contributed significantly to promoting international co-operation with Palestinian higher education institutions. This requires a change of the By-Laws.

The Steering Committee submits to the General Assembly the introduction of a new **Article IV** in the By-Laws, which will read as follows:

IV. Honorary Members

Honorary Members are individuals, appointed by majority vote of the PEACE Programme General Assembly, in recognition of their contribution to the development of the PEACE Programme and for their personal contribution to co-operation with Palestinian higher education institutions.

Duties

Honorary Members may:

- be called upon at all the PEACE Programme meetings
- be consulted for orientation in decision making
- present their views in support of international co-operation with the Palestinian higher education institutions.

If the General Assembly adopts this amendment in the PEACE Programme Bylaws, *the current Article IV, will become:*

V. PEACE Programme Office at UNESCO

ANNEX VIII

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

Closing Address of

**Professor Manuel Hassassian
Executive Vice-President,
Bethlehem University**

Allow me on your behalf to extend my deep admiration and commendation to the outgoing Steering Committee who left their distinguished mark on the PEACE Programme. They did an excellent job, which deserves our highest regards and appreciation. However, the longevity of this Programme attests to the diligent and resilient work accomplished by the veterans of such an academic venture.

This Programme was created at a time when there was a power vacuum in Palestine (the absence of the Authority). It performed and continued to fill a certain gap, by playing the role of what we call today the third sector.

The PEACE Programme institutionalised in Palestine a culture of higher education and research, that engulfed within its parameters the defence of basic human rights, academic freedom and university autonomy. It goes without saying, that the PEACE Programme has bolstered the Palestinian Universities academic programme and opened avenues for international co-operation through garnering support of various European and American universities.

Fostering co-operation in joint research and faculty exchange - not to mention professional development of our faculties and students - is one of the distinguished achievements of the Programme, driven by the vision, commitment and resilience of the founding members.

They successfully concretised their ideas, projects and long-term planning into a success story the benefits of which are already being reaped.

Backstopping and lateral thinking are the keys to innovation, creativity and critical thinking. What we need at this stage is an Action Plan that is more accommodating to the objective conditions and to the steep challenges and high hurdles they pose. They could only be met by openness, inclusion and tolerance.

In fact, more emphasis should dwell in a systemic way on Human Resources Development and Academic Mobility, in addition to Capacity-Building and Quality Assurance at Palestinian universities. Structurally, the PEACE Programme should be reinforced and emboldened by maintaining rigorous continuity in networking and planning.

We, the Palestinians universities are highly appreciative of the benefits of the PEACE Programme and its repercussions on the qualitative developments of their academic programmes. An alert observer cannot overlook the consequences of building a culture of education of peace that entails, human rights, a participatory culture, based on politics of inclusion, pluralism and unity in diversity. Regardless of the sluggishness in the process of qualitative transformations of Palestinian universities under harsh policies of occupation, one cannot deny that the accomplishment of Palestinian Higher Education should be acknowledged and capitalised for future challenges.

Our objective is to act as problem-solving institutions that could cater to the needs of the Palestinian society, with all its substructures and layers. Transparency, openness and total co-operation should be encouraged in order to avoid duplication and overlapping, let alone mainstreaming, which should be our guiding force and principle, with our frugal and strangulated economy, the impediments are quite staggering and the challenges are steep, we need to be innovative and visionary.

Let me conclude by emphasising on continuous networking, dissemination of knowledge, development of priority projects and activities, being hard core academic programmes or outreach programmes, that form the nexus between society and the universities. Hence, International Co-operation and support should pave the way for further progress and qualitative development.

We wish the new Steering Committee all the success in its future ventures, hoping that they will be on a par with their predecessors in shouldering this great responsibility at a time, when we all use and live the lexicon of globalisation, new world order and the global village.

Thank you.

ANNEX IX

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

List of Participants

Belgium

Professor Vincent Hanssens
Catholic University of Louvain
Place de la Neuville, 3
B – 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve
Tel & fax : +32.10.45.06.38
E-mail : vhanssens@hotmail.com

Professor Luc François
Universiteit Gent
Director of Educational Affairs - Professor
in Contemporary History
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 25
B-9000 Gent (Belgium)
Tel : +32.9.264.30.68 or +32.9.264.40.07
Fax : +32.9.264.41.89
E-mail: luc.francois@rug.ac.be

Mr. Simone-Pierre Nothomb
General Delegate
European Union Cross Identity Network
University Foundation
11 rue d'Egmont
B - 1000 Bruxelles
Tel : +32.2.512.00.59
Fax: +32.2.502.99.01
euxin@fltr.ucl.ac.be

Dr Pierre Devos
Facultés Universitaires -
Notre Dame de la Paix
Administrator, Professor,
Representative of the rector
61 rue de Bruxelles,
5000 Namur, Belgique
Tel: (00)32-81-72 43 37
Fax (00)32-81-72 44 20
E-mail: pierre.devos@fundp.ac.be

Dr. Heinz Hurwitz
Université Libre de Bruxelles, ULB
Professor
CP256 Blvd. Du Triomphe
B 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique
Tel : 00.32.2.650. 29.96
Fax : 00.32.2.650.29.34
Hhurwitz@ulb.ac.be

Dr. Paul Jacobs
Université Libre de Bruxelles, ULB
Research Unit on Biotherapy and
Oncology (RUBIO)
Chargé de mission à la Coopération au
Développement
Coopération au Développement
44 Avenue Jeanne CP161
B 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique
Tel : 00.32.2.650. 31.00 or 0478/24.05.34
Fax : 00.32.2.650.35.12
Pjacobs@ulb.ac.be

Mme An Huts
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
International Relations Officer
Naamsestraat 22
B - 3000 Leuven
Tel : +32.16.32.40.46
Fax: +32.16.32.40.22
E-mail : an.huts@dir.kuleuven.ac.be

Mr. Roland Vermeesch
Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen
General-Director
Sint-Martens-Latemlaan 2A
8500 Kortrijk
Tel: +32.56.24.12.90
Fax: +32.56.24.12.92
vermeeschr.cd@hogeschool-wvl.be

Prof. Pauline Donceel-Voute
Member of the
PEACE Programme Steering Committee
Université Catholique de Louvain
1, Place de l'Université
B – 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve
Tel: +32.10.47.48.79
Fax & Tel: +32.84.21.24.53
E-mail: vervaren@arke.ucl.ac.be

Dr. Christian Duqué
Director of International Relations Office
Université Catholique de Louvain
1, Place de l'Université
B – 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve
Tel: +32.10.47.30.95
Fax : +32.10.47.40.75
E-mail: duque@sco.ucl.be

Ms. Inge Piryns
Joint Co-ordinator, International Office
Arteveldehogeschool
Hoogpoort 15, B - 9000 Gent
Tel: +32 9 2352042
Fax: +32 9 2352001
E-mail: inge.piryns@arteveldehs.be

Danmark

Dr. Brian Dennis
Head of Agricultural Sciences Department
Royal Veterinary & Agricultural
University
Agrovej 10
DK-2630 Taastrup
Tel: +45 35.28 35.60
Fax: +45 35.28 35.80
E-mail : bde@kvl.dk

France

Professor Ivar Ekeland
Vice-Chairperson, PEACE Programme
Steering Committee
Institut de Finance
Université Paris-Dauphine
75775 Paris CEDEX 16
Tel: (01) 44 05 48 26
Fax: (01) 44 05 48 49
E-mail : ekeland@dauphine.fr

Professor Paschos
Vice-President for research
Université Paris-Dauphine
75775 Paris CEDEX 16
E-mail : paschos@dauphine.fr

Professor Guy-Réal Thivierge
Secretary General
International Federation of Catholic
Universities (IFCO/FIUC)
21, rue d'Assas
75270 Paris Cedex 06
Tel : +33.1.44.39.52.26
Fax : +33.1.44.39.52.28
E-mail : sgfiuc@bureau.fiuc.org

Professeur Pierre BECKER
Recteur
Université Catholique de l'Ouest
1 place André Leroy, BP808
4900 Angers Cedex 01, France
Tel : 33.2.41.81.66.01
Fax : 33.2.41.81.67.88
E-mail : pierre.becker@uco.fr

Professor Annick Weiner
Director
Office of International Relations
University Paris-Sud XI
Les Algorithmes
Bat. Euripide
Université Paris-Sud,
91405 – Orsay Cedex
Tel: +33.1.69.15.77.50
Fax: +33.1.69.15.67.77
E-mail: annick.suzor-weiner@ppm.u-psud.fr

Professeur Isam Shahrour
Scientific Director, Civil Engineering
Ecole Universitaire d'Ingénieurs de Lille
(EUDIL)
59655 Villeneuve d'Ascq cedex
Tel: +33.3.20.43.45.45
Fax: +33.3.20.43.45.83
E-mail: Isam.Shahrour@eudil.fr

Monsieur Jean Kawecki
Chef du Service des Relations
Internationales
Université Paris 1
Panthéon-Sorbonne
58 bdv Arago, Paris 75013
Tel: +33.1.44.07.76.70
Fax: +33.1.44.07.76.76
E-mail: relinter@univ-paris1.fr

Monsieur Daniel Lepage
Vice-président
Université Paris 8
2, rue de la Liberté
93526 Saint Denis Cedex
Tel : +33.(0)1 49 40 68 60
Fax : +33 1 49 40 65 16
E-mail : lepage@ipt.univ-paris8.fr

Monsieur Thierry Laurent
Université d'Evry-Val d'Essonne
4 bd. François Mitterrand
91025 Evry cedex, France
Tel : (33) 1 69 47 70 48
Fax : (33) 1 69 47 70 50
E-Mail : laurent@eco.univ-evry.fr

Professor Jean Deprez
IUT Chachan
Université Paris Sud, CICUP
BP 140
94234 Cachan Cedex
Tel: +33.1.01.41.24.11.50
Fax: +33.1.01.41.24.11.99
E-mail: jean.deprez@iut-cachan.u-psud.fr

Monsieur Gerard Fay
Président
Collective Inter universitaire pour la
coopération avec les universités
palestiniennes (CICUP)
57, Avenue des Gobelins
Paris 75013
Tel: 01.43.36.35.74
Fax: 01.43.07.26.52
Mgfay@club-internet.fr

Ms. Nabila Nashashibi
Membre du CICUP
Bureau Administration
8 bd. St. Marcel
75005 Paris
Tel: 01.43.31.20.69

Dr. Fouad Badran
Professor
Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers
(CNAM) - CICUP
292, rue Saint Martin
75141 Paris cedex 03
Tel: (33) 1 40 27 22 69
Fax (33) 1 42 71 93 29
E-mail: badran@cnam.fr

Germany

Dr. Viktoria WALTZ
University of Dortmund
Faculty of Spatial Planning
Lecturer, Representative for Birzeit-
Dortmund-Partnership
Universität Dortmund
Fak. Raumplanung
D - 44221 Dortmund
Tel : +49.231.755.2246
Fax : +49.231.755.4853
E-mail : waltz@rp.uni-dortmund.de

Italy

Professor Valerio Grementieri
Secretary-General
PEACE Programme Steering Committee
University of Siena
Via Cavour 82
50129 Florence
Tel: +39-055-26.57.683
Fax: +39-055-23.81.485
E-mail : brogi.uetp@dada.it

Professor Dr. Roberto Schmid
Rettore
Universita degli Studi di Pavia
Strada Nuova 65
I - 27100, Pavia
Tel: +39.0382.50.42.01/02
Fax: +39.0382.50.46.33
E-mail: rettore@univp.it

Professor Gianni VAGGI
University of Pavia
Director, Centre for International Co-
operation and Development
Via S. Felice 5
I - 27100 Pavia
Tel : +39.03.82.50.62.22
Fax : +39.03.82.30.42.26
E-mail : gvaggi@eco.unipv.it

Dr. Emanuela Chiriaco
ISUFI - University of Lecce
Innovative Materials and Technologies
Via Monteroni, sn
73100 Lecce – ITALY
Tel: + 39 0832 421 203
Fax: + 39 0832 421 221
manuela.chiriaco@unile.it

Ms. Caterina Brogi
Project Manager
UETP-TOSCANA
Via Cavour 82
50129 Florence
Tel: +39-055-26.57.683
Fax: +39-055-23.81.485
E-mail : brogi.uetp@dada.it

Professor Cosimo Notarstefano
Université de Lecce
Via B. Buozzi B/2
I - 70123 Bari
Tel & fax: +39.080.57.42.531
e-mail: notarst@tin.it

Dr. Fiona Hunter
Diettore
International Relations
Carlo Cattaneo University
Corso Matteotti 22
I – 21053 Castellanza, Varese
Tel : +39.0331.572.255
Fax : +39.0331.483.445
E-mail : fhunter@liuc.it

Netherlands

Drs. René Vermeulen
International Relations Office
University of Nijmegen
P.O. Box 9102
NL - 6500 HC Nijmegen
Tel.: +31-24-3615832
Fax: +31-24-3612757
E-mail: r.vermeulen@dcm.kun.nl

Norway

Ms. Topnes Mette
Senior Executive Officer
International Relation Office,
University Of Oslo,
P.O.Box 1081 Blindern,
N - 0316 Oslo
Tel: _+ 47 22 85 84 90
Fax _+ 47 22 85 84 88
E-Mail: Mette.Topnes@admin.uio.no

Kjell G. Pettersen
Senior executive officer
Office of international relations
University of Bergen
P. O. Box 7800
N - 5020 Bergen
Tel: +47 55584986
Fax :+47 55584981
E-mail: kjell.pettersen@fa.uib.no

Palestine

H. E. Professor Munthir Salah
Chairperson, PEACE Programme
Steering Committee
Ministry of Higher Education
P. O. Box 17360
Jerusalem – Palestine
Tel : +972.2.29.82.603
Fax : +972.2.29.87.833
E-mail : msalah@gov.ps

Professor Gabi Baramki
Treasurer of the PEACE Programme
Ministry of Higher Education
P. O. Box 17360
Jerusalem – Palestine
Tel : +972.2.29.82.617
Fax : +972.2.29.87.833
E-mail : gbaramki@gov.ps

B. Prof. Maher Natsheh
Vice President for Academic Affairs
An-Najah National University
P.O. Box 7, Nablus, Palestine
Tel: 00.972 9 23.81.114
Fax : 00.972 9 23.87.982
E-mail: info@najah.edu

Dr. Manuel Hassassian
Executive Vice President
Bethlehem University
P. O. Box 9
Bethlehem - Palestine
Tel : +970.2.274.12.41
Fax : +970.2.274.44.40
E-mail : mhassass@bethlehem.edu

Dr. Adel Zagha
Dean of Faculty of Commerce &
Economics
Birzeit University
P. O. Box 14
Birzeit - Palestine
Tel: +972.2.298.20.00
Fax: +972.2.281.06.56
E-mail: aalzagha@birzeit.edu

Dr. Daoud Zatari
President
Palestine Polytechnic Institute
P. O. Box 198
Hebron, Palestinian National Authority
Tel : +972.2.22.28.912/+972.2.22.20.620
Fax : +972.2.22.17.248
E-mail : info@ppi.edu

Dr. Radwan Barakat
Dean of Graduate Studies and Academic
Research
Hebron University
P. O. Box 40
Hebron - Palestine
Tel: +972-2-22.57.654 / +972-2.22.20995
Fax +972.2.22.93.03
E-mail: radwanb@hebron.edu

Dr. Kholoud DAJANI
Executive President's Assistant
Al Quds University, Jerusalem
P. O. Box 51000
Jerusalem
Tel : +972.2.62.74.980
Fax : +972.2.62.77.166
E-mail : khuloud@alquds.edu

Dr. Waleed Deeb
President
The Arab American University-
P. O. Box 240
Jenin, Palestine
Tel: +970.6.25.10.801/4
Fax: +970.6.25.10.810
E-mail: wdeeb@aauj.edu

Professor Jawad Wadi
Member of the PECE Programme Steering
Committee
Vice Rector for Administration & Finance
Al-Azhar University
P. O. Box 1277
Gaza – Palestine
Tel : +972.7.82.40.10/20
Fax : +972.7.82.31.80
E-mail : jwadi@hotmail.com

Permanent Observation Mission of Palestine

H. E. Ahmed Abdelrazek
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of
Palestine to UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris
Tel: +33.1.45.68.33.39
Fax: +33.1.45.68.33.40
E-mail: a.abdelrazek@unesco.org;
dl.palestine@uneso.org

Spain

Mr. Javier Jordan
Researcher
University of Granada
Departamento de Ciencia Politica y de la
Administracion
Facultad de Ciencias Politicas y Sociologia
Cuesta del Hospicio s/n
E – 18071 Granada
Tel: +34.958.24.41.23
Fax: +34.958.224.89.69
E-mail: jjordan@ugr.es

Ms. Monica Margarit
University de Barcelona
Director International Relations
Gran Via 585
S – 08007 Barcelona
Tel : +34.93.402.17.09
Fax : +34.93.403.53.87
E-mail : monica@pu.ges.ub.es

Dr. Xavier López in Arnabat
Director
Fundació Solidaritat (FSUB)
University of Barcelona
Tel: + 34 93 403 59 57
Fax: + 34 93 403 55 39
E-mail : xlopez@pu.ges.ub.es

M. Jorge Andrés Cortés Roland
Project Manager
Solidarity Foundation Observatory (FSUB)
- Human Rights and Peace -
University of Barcelona
C/ Balmes 21, baixos
E - Barcelona 08007
Tel: + 34 93 403 59 57
Fax: + 34 93 403 55 39
E-mail : jcortes@pu.ges.ub.es

Dr. A. ABELLÀ Carles
University Of Girona
Vice-Rector Institucional Relations
Plaça Sant Domènec
3 (Edif. Les Aligues) 17071 Girona
Tel: + 34 972 418042
Fax : + 34 972 418031
E-mail: vicerec.institucionals@udg.es

Sweden

Ms. Charlotta Nordenberg
International Coordinator/ EU-programmes
Örebro University
International Office
Sweden - 701 82 Örebro
Tel.+46-19-303132
Fax+46-19-303488
Mobile: +46-70-2118297
charlotta.nordenberg@adm.oru.se

Switzerland

DR. Matteo Gianni
University of Geneva
Assistant Professor
Department of Political science
102, Bd. Carl-Vogt,
CH - 1211 Geneva 4
Tel: +41-22-705.83.78
fax: +41-22-705.83.64
E-mail : matteo.gianni@politic.unige.ch

United Kingdom

Professor Colin Matheson
Westminster University
International Office
Chief Executive of the Coalition of
Modern Universities
4 Little Titchfield Street
London W1 W 7UW
Tel : +44.207.911.5000 Ext. 2608 or
+44.207.911.5405
Fax : +44 207 911 5169
E-mail : mathesc@wmin.ac.uk;
blunden@wmin.ac.uk

United States

Professor Edward Jennings
The Ohio State University
President Emeritus and Professor of
Finance
154 West 12th Avenue
USA - Columbus, OH 43210
Tel : +1.614.292.4006
Fax : +1.614.247.6234
E-mail : Jennings.9@osu.edu

Ms. Barbara Jennings
Spouse

UNESCO

Mr. Komlavi Francisco Seddoh
Director
Higher Education Division
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
Paris 75700
Tel : +33.1.45.68.11.06
Fax : +33.1.45.68.56.27
E-mail : k.seddoh@unesco.org

Mr. Omar Massalha Coordinator
ERC/RMS/UPP
Director /ERC/RIO
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
Paris 75700
Tel : +33.1.45.68.12.97
Fax : +33.1.45.68.56.27
o.massalha@unesco.org

Ms. Khawla Shaheen
Regional Ed advisor for the Arab States
Education Sector
7, Place de Fontenoy
Paris 75700
Tel : +33.1.45.68.13.07
Fax: +33.1.45.68.56.27
E-mail: k.shaheen@unesco.org

Ms. H. Tortian
Higher Education Division
UNESCO
7, Place de Fontenoy
Paris 75700
Tel : +33.1.45.68.09.37
Fax : +33.1.45.68.56.27
E-mail : h.tortian@unesco.org

PEACE Programme Office at UNESCO

Professor D. Chitoran
Advisor to the PEACE Programme
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris
Tel: +33.1.45.68.41.07
Fax: +33.1.45.68.58.14

Ms. Karimeh Shomali
Assistant Programme Specialist
1, rue Miollis
75015 Paris
Tel: +33.1.45.68.41.55
Fax: +33.1.45.68.58.14

ANNEX X

PEACE Programme 5th General Assembly

PEACE Programme Member-Universities

October 2001

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Università degli Studi di Foggia
University of Lecce
Istituto Universitario Orientale,
Napoli
Università degli Studi di Pavia
Università degli Studi di Pisa
Università degli Studi di Siena
Università degli Studi di Torino
Università della Tuscia, Viterbo

Malta

University of Malta

The Netherlands

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Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden
Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen
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Norway

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Universitetet i Oslo
Norwegian University of Science
and Technology, Trondheim
Hogskolen i Vestfold

Palestine

Al Aqsa University
Al-Azhar University, Gaza
Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
Al-Quds Open University,
Jerusalem
An-Najah National University,
Nablus
Arab American University of Jenin
Betlehem University
Birzeit University
Hebron University
The Islamic University of Gaza
Palestine Polytechnic Institute

Portugal

Universidade de Aveiro
Universidade de Coimbra

Spain

Universidad de Almeria
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Universitat de Barcelona
Universidad de Granada
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