



The Civic Forum Institute



British  
Consulate-General  
Jerusalem

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Ramallah, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

**Civic Forum Institute and the British Consulate partner to support women serving on local councils in the West Bank**

On 19<sup>th</sup> December, Civic Forum Institute (CFI) and the British Consulate in Jerusalem signed an agreement to implement a six-month project providing support to women serving on local councils throughout the West Bank. This important agreement marks the third collaboration between the two parties, and emphasizes their ongoing commitment to building and strengthening democratic development in Palestine.

Muhammed Abu Diab, Director of CFI, welcomed the partnership, saying, *'CFI are delighted to be working with the British Consulate on this important project and hope to continue this collaboration into the future. This project is at the heart of CFI's work, empowering and enabling women to participate as decision makers in the political sphere and play an active role in their communities.'*

The project will include training in a range of areas including communication skills, media outreach and community interaction. The Ministry of Local Government welcomed the initiative which will complement the technical training program being implemented internally. Initial meetings to introduce the project to the newly elected women will take place over the next few weeks, with the workshops scheduled to begin in all districts of the West Bank early in 2013.

The British Consul General, Sir Vincent Fean, expressed his hopes for the success of the project, saying:

*'We strongly encourage the participation of Palestinian women in local and national elections and the wider democratic political process here in the Palestinian Territories. I am proud that the British Consulate in Jerusalem is funding this highly significant initiative which will enable talented Palestinian female leaders to compete equally and successfully in fair and democratic elections at all levels, including the Palestine Legislative Council. The British Government is committed to supporting a future democratic and pluralist Palestinian state with the full contribution of both Palestinian men and women.'*

An earlier, larger scale project in 2006-08, also funded by the British Consulate, worked with around 2000 local council members (predominantly women). One participant in this project said, *'There was a lot of pressure on us from the community, the families and even fellow council members. The trainers discussed these pressures with me, and gave me advice on dealing with them. Frankly, without this support I would have resigned'*. Mr. Abu Diab added, *'following the feedback we received from the earlier project it was clear that these activities were valuable to the participants and contributed to building successful local councilors to support their communities. This encouraged us to seek to implement similar activities linked to the recent local elections.'*

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**About Civic Forum Institute:** Since our launch in 1995, the Civic Forum Institute (CFI) has worked to raise awareness and promote the principles of democracy and civil society in Palestine. Working with a wide range of partners including community grassroots associations, volunteers, local government bodies, the public and private sector and academics, CFI undertakes voter education, supports local government and civic awareness and encourages people to access and participate in the democratic development of their country.

**About the British Consulate, Jerusalem:**

*“Our Mission in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: to advance the United Kingdom’s security and prosperity through a just peace between a stable, democratic Palestinian State and Israel, based on 1967 borders, ending the Occupation by agreement. To strengthen ties of friendship between the Palestinian and British peoples”.*

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