



**Statement by Maxwell Gaylard,
United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
in the occupied Palestinian Territory
On the Dissolution of Sharek Youth Forum in the Gaza Strip**

Gaza, 20 July 2011

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian Territory, Mr. Maxwell Gaylard, has encouraged the de facto authorities in Gaza to reconsider the decision of 12 July 2011 to dissolve the non-governmental organization Sharek Youth Forum.

The decision to dissolve the Sharek Youth Forum was taken while judicial proceedings were ongoing and in the absence of any conviction of the NGO or individual staff members for malfeasance. “I am concerned that the principles of rule of law and due process may not have been followed”, Mr. Gaylard said.

Mr. Gaylard added, “NGOs are a mirror of the strength of civil society and rally people behind important ideas in the realms of justice, freedom, and human rights. NGOs are agents of social change but can only play this role with organizational independence. Arbitrary actions and attempts at controlling their activities threaten the very nature of NGOs and their considerable contribution to civil society.”

In Gaza as elsewhere in the world, the United Nations relies on NGOs as important partners to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian and development activities. The Sharek Youth Forum has been an important partner of the United Nations on behalf of children and youth. Mr. Gaylard noted that the closure of NGOs inevitably leads to the disruption of assistance programmes and denial of much needed services to beneficiaries.

Contact:
Arzu Hatakoy
Special Assistant to the Humanitarian Coordinator
Tel: 054 562 78 19
Email: hatakoy@un.org