

The economic situation in the Gaza Strip is precarious. Since the introduction of the political and economic blockade in June 2007, a total of 3,800 of businesses in the Gaza Strip – ninety percent – have closed down. Practically all industrial activities have come to a standstill. Unemployment, already high, has reached a new peak as a result of the dismissal of another 40,000 farmers and 70,000 employees in other branches.

In order to tackle this economic crisis by means of “thinking-outside-the-box” solutions and strategies to overcome it, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Jerusalem, in conjunction with the Palestine Trade Center (PalTrade), inaugurated a series of seminars. Major representatives of the private sector took part and worked out a plan to enhance the robustness of the economy in the Gaza Strip despite the blockade. The goal of the project was to develop a joint strategy for the Gaza Strip in order to revitalize the private sector, by determining and identifying scenarios that can be put into practice.



The project lasted for two months. In four consecutive phases, a committee was first set up to



develop scenarios that can be put into practice. Building on this stage, these scenarios were then further improved in focus group meetings by representatives from the individual economic sectors. The results achieved in this way were then presented and discussed at two large-scale conferences in the presence of representatives from all interest groups. Lastly, on September 17 a strategy paper for the private sector was published, covering all

previous considerations. This paper was submitted to all members of the Private Sector Coordinating Council (PSCC), major decision-makers in the Palestinian Authority, and significant international partners such as UNDP, USAID and the EU, for implementation of the strategy proposed therein.