Under the auspices of the Governor of Bethlehem, His Excellency Abdul Fattah Hamayel, and the presence of a number of representatives of the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Social Affairs, municipalities and village councils, UNRWA and community based organizations, BASR organized a workshop titled "decentralization and cooperation between Bethlehem Governorate and the County of Hainaut in Belgium".

The workshop aimed at capacity building for local government bodies represented by municipalities and village councils and civil society organizations in the Bethlehem Governorate. It focused on participatory planning and coordination between civil and governmental bodies to create joint programs which promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities.

The workshop started with an opening speech by BASR's Vice Chairman, Mr. Mousa Darwish,
in which he stressed the necessity of activating cooperation and participation of all relevant stakeholders in supporting persons with disabilities and facilitating the enjoyment of their rights on equal footing with other citizens by adopting an inclusive development approach based on a human rights perspective.

Mr. Darwish highlighted the importance of coordination and cooperation among all ministries, municipalities and civil society organizations to work on setting strategies and programs that target people with disabilities; “this cannot be done without the collaboration and harmonization of efforts of both the public sector and civil society. Enhancing cooperation and partnership between all relevant authorities is a key issue in this matter”.

In his speech, the governor of Bethlehem thanked the Belgian delegation representing the County of Hainaut for their support of the Palestinian people and cause, and highlighted the strenuous efforts the Palestinian National Authority is making to move forward in developing services and programs targeting people with disabilities. Hamayel emphasized the fact that disability is high on the national agenda resulting in issuing the Palestinian law on the rights of people with disabilities no. 4/1999”.

David Braekwolt, Hainaut’s County representative for international cooperation; stressed the importance of cooperating, exchanging experiences and cultures between Palestine and its partners around the world in order to put forward new approaches that will eventually lead to sustainable development in Palestine.