Suez Cement, WFP and the Governor of El Minya promote Corporate Social Responsibility and local development

El Minya 27 November 2008. The Governor of El Minya Dr. Ahmed Diaa El Din received today the Managing Director of Suez Cement Company, Mr. Roberto Callieri and the United Nations World Food Programme Representative and Country Director, Mr. Gianpietro Bordignon.

This visit took place in the framework of the cooperation and partnership between the World Food Programme (WFP) and Suez Cement group of Companies, which provided a grant of one million Egyptian Pounds to fund a food-for-education project implemented by WFP in coordination with the Ministry of Education, in the Governorates of El Minya. This project supports the Government's efforts to improve by 2015 the quality of education, in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Dr. Ahmed Diaa El Din praised the active role played by the World Food Program in El Minya, where in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the National Center for Motherhood and Childhood (NCCM) it is implementing several projects to combat poverty and reduce malnutrition.

He stressed as well the crucial importance of the private sector corporate social responsibility, initiated in El Minya Governorate by Suez Cement, in contributing to the development of the communities in which their factories are located. The school feeding project financed by Suez Cement, which covers all the schools in the village of Bani Khalid in the Samalut district, is an excellent example of this social responsibility, and of attention to the needs of the employees' community.

Mr. Gianpietro Bordignon, WFP Representative for Egypt Country Office, added how WFP's food-for-education activities are part of a wider 5-year Country programme which also comprises food-based projects to support the establishment of new communities. These activities comply with the Election Campaign Program of President Mubarak, who emphasized the need to channel the available resources to the development of Upper Egypt.

Mr. Roberto Callieri, Managing Director of Suez Cement Company, highlighted how, in accordance with the Company's strong belief in corporate social responsibility towards their employees, this project covers fifteen different schools in the least privileged areas of the Governorates. The schools are located in the village of Bani Khalid in the Samalut district of Menya, where the Helwan Cement factory, owned by the Suez Cement Company, is located. The supported schools comprise primary schools, one-class community schools and schools part of the Girls' Education initiative.

So far, around 3757 children have benefited of this project in the Samalut district, receiving along the school year a daily breakfast strengthened with iron and folic acid. This in-school meal has the threefold objective of increasing children's enrolment and

regular attendance, improving their attention at school, and reducing malnutrition in young age.

The United Nation World Food Program is implementing several projects in the El Minya Governorate. In coordination with the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood (NCCM) WFP supports the Girls' Education Initiative by providing children with a daily snack and a monthly take-home ration of rice. Since 2005 about 3850 children in El Minya have benefited from this project, mostly girls.

In 2007, WFP launched a project in cooperation with the World Bank and the Canadian cooperation to, support Egypt's goal to expand pre-school enrolment from 13 percent to 60 percent of the population by 2010. Through this Early Childhood Education Enhancement Project (ECEEP) WFP is currently supporting 50,000 children, (about 20,000 in El Minya), with daily snacks in seven of the poorest governorates of Egypt. The number of beneficiary children is expected to potentially reach over half a million pre-school children by the end of the project.

After the meeting, the Governor of El Minya and his guests visited some schools supported by the partnership between WFP and Suez Cement.