

**First Draft**



**Ministry of Education and Higher Education**

**Mid-Term Strategy for  
Higher Education Sector**

**(2010, 2011-2013)**

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## **1- Introduction:**

Palestinian higher education has witnessed fast developments in the past four decades; it started to present educational and learning models whose outcomes brought out students and graduates capable of engaging in the local, regional and international labor markets as a competent human power with high qualifications.

These developments were accompanied by many challenges and problems, such as the problem of expansion resulting from the urgent demand which came as result of the fast-rate increase in number of secondary schools graduates (Tawjihi), and the problem of competence and quality due to unplanned and random development of the higher education, in addition to the problems of funding resulting from the decreased Arab financial support to the PLO after the Gulf War in 1990.

Moreover, there is the current severe financial crisis facing the PNA, which has raised concerns regarding the financial sustainability of this sector and its ability to survive vibrantly serving the citizen and the society.

In light of the above-mentioned challenges and problems, the priorities of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research which was established in 1996 included the establishment of a rationalization plan for the higher education sector for the period 1997-2001 because the Ministry believed that strategic planning is one of the most effective and useful administrative works as it defines priorities and fields of change and provides the necessary resources and follow up mechanisms. The status quo was assessed and steps were prepared to rectify the situation in the form of a rough draft. Notable success was achieved then: the emergence of Law no. (11) for Higher Education.

In 1999, the Ministry felt that the five-year rationalization plan was incomplete in terms of vision and message, and formed a committee or a team to set up a ten-year plan for higher education. The committee didn't complete its work and didn't produce the strategy in its final form. Thus, work on the strategy was frozen for some time, and then it was revived once again. Work in this field has fluctuated between action and suspension depending on changes in the government and external funding availability until this year.

This year, the decision to set up a ten-year strategic plan for higher education was renewed. Preparatory work started, making use of previous surveys of the sector; work is still underway and is expected to be finalized in the last quarter of 2010.

In line with the above-mentioned decision, and upon a decision by the Council of Ministers on August 17, 2009, the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development demanded the formulation of medium-term sector strategies, aiming to achieve a national plan for the period 2011-2013. Based on the above, the following is the medium-term strategy.

## 2- Methodology:

Due to the special features of higher, vocational and technical education, a special committee was formed, consisting of the following: Assistant Deputy for Higher Education as a coordinator, the general directors in charge of planning at the Palestinian universities and officials in charge of planning in four community colleges, and a representative of Palestine Academy for Science and Technology, and a representative of the Chambers of Commerce and a representative of the Industry Union.

The committee held a first meeting to define the required role and clarify the demands of the Ministry of Planning and agree on the working mechanism. During another larger meeting which included also representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Economy, Planning, Labor and Social Affairs, the discussion tackled strategic themes, goals, and relevant policies and the interventions pertaining to the implementation of every policy. All were conclusions from analysis of the current situation and the weaknesses – as we will see later – in addition to the review of several surveys and former studies. After that, several internal meetings were held at the level of employees of the Ministry (higher education sector and policies committee) who reached a consensus on the goals, policies and implementation programs. All this happened within the general comprehensive vision of the Ministry and the general principles that guide its work and the main policies that were ratified by the governance representatives, such as the Higher Education Council. All the process came as translation of the comprehensive view and commitments of the PNA and the medium-term reform and development goals and the needs and the aspirations of the Palestinian society.

This draft in its current form was distributed to all planning officials at the universities and community colleges with the hope to get their feedback during the period allotted for amendments as defined by the Ministry for Planning and Administrative Development.

## 3- Vision of the higher education sector

Based on the set of expertise and interactions by the people in charge of Palestinian higher education with their counterparts in other regional and international; countries, and based on the analytical exploratory view of the situation and structure of higher education in the advanced countries and the newly established countries and based on the meticulous diagnosis of the situation of the PLO and the PNNA and the general national goals, and the Palestinian society and its values, philosophy and capacities and vision towards the future in terms of needs for higher education, the following higher education vision has been formulated:

To achieve an accessible higher education (open to all academically qualified individuals regardless of their social and economic conditions and regardless of their citizenship and place of residents and their handicap); a higher education system that has multiple fields and specializations in science and knowledge in government public and private institutions that grant scientific degree to the various levels, and diverse (several teaching methodologies), and sustainable (covered financially by various financial sources) and flexible (capable of adjusting quickly with the needs and changing conditions), serving and supportive (meeting the needs of the society, the local and regional market), and **competitive qualitatively** (its criteria competes with the criteria of higher education regional and international systems) and **distinguished** (scientific research environment, creativity and innovation), and a **vehicle** for economic and social development.

Thus, the message of the Ministry and the higher education sector focuses on developing higher education through following up the implementation and assessment of the strategic plan and offering all kinds of necessary support in order to reach the aspired vision.

#### 4- The current situation of the Palestinian higher education

This part tackled the distribution of the higher education institutions by kind and geographical location, and the distribution of the registered students by gender and specialization, and the number of workers and their job classifications, and description of the administrative governance and the economies of higher education and scientific research and admission.

##### 4-1 Palestinian higher education institutions and their students

The current number of higher education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is 49 institutions (including 6 newly licensed and accredited but not included in the statistics here). Table (1) shows the distribution of these institutions by kind and location and a distribution of the registered students according to the required certificate and the kind of institution.

**Table (1)**  
**Students' distribution by kind of institution and required certificate**

Kind of Institution	Location			Less than BA		BA		Higher Studies		Total
	WB	Gaza	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total	
<b>Open Education</b>	*(16)	*(7)	1	1527	2824	34429	57816			<b>60640</b>
<b>Traditional Univ.</b>	8	3	11	1002	1926	53137	93349	2384	5626	<b>100901</b>
<b>University Colleges</b>	8	4	12	1959	3998	1347	2137	8	17	<b>6152</b>
<b>Community Colleges</b>	14	5	19	5757	14872					<b>14872</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10245</b>	<b>23620</b>	<b>88908</b>	<b>153267</b>	<b>2397</b>	<b>5678</b>	<b>182565</b>

\* Education centers belonging to al-Quds Open University.

The table shows that there are 11 traditional universities (added to them are two private universities recently licensed in Gaza) which are different from the open university which is spread in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through several education centers.

The reader might note that the number of universities is too large compared with the small size of the area and the population, but this is due to the conditions under which these universities were established, especially that these universities aimed to provide the Palestinian young people with chances to pursue higher education and reduce the immigration in the absence of a national authority and government and in the presence of the occupation. The universities vary in terms of size and absorption capacity – as we will see later – and grant various levels of degrees starting with a specialized technical education and ending with a Masters degree (with the exception of one sole PhD program in chemistry).

The table also shows a rise in the number of university colleges (12 colleges). The number doubled within the past three years because of the accreditation of new BA programs in the colleges that used to grant a diploma only.

The last kind shown in the table is the community colleges that grant diplomas in vocational and technical programs.

There is one sole private university which is the Arab American University in Jenin, and two traditional government universities which are al-Aqsa University in Gaza and Khadouri University in Tulkarem. The rest of the institutions are public non-profit universities. As for the community colleges, three of them are under the UNRWA supervision and the rest are either government, public or private.

Total number of students registered in the higher education institutions for year 2008/2009 is 182,556 students as shown in the table, including 5678 students in higher studies (higher diploma or Masters) which is around 3%. In the community colleges or specialized technical

colleges, there are 22,679 students (around 13%) while the programs that grant BA degree include 153267 students who make the highest ratio (84%).

The above-mentioned distribution of students according to the required degree or certificate reveals several facts: the overwhelming majority of the students are BA students while the community college and specialized technical college students make up a slight ratio.

This reflects the real tendency and attention of students who aim to get a BA degree, even if the specialization or field of study is not desired in the local economic market. Moreover, the fact that there is no PhD degree (with the exception of the PhD in Chemistry that includes three students and which is semi-frozen) reflects that the first basic function of the Palestinian higher education institutions is teaching and that scientific research is marginal. Students who study for the BA degree do not need to conduct research and the same applies to the majority of the Masters programs. Therefore, research in most cases is limited to the teaching faculty and administration academics only.

The table also shows that the ratio of students in the Open University make up around 33% of the students body. This ratio points to the strong approach towards the Open University, especially that it provides opportunities to working sectors and people who hold old general Secondary education certificates, to join a university and get a BA degree. In addition, the Open University accepts new students who are secondary stage graduates with success grades less than the minimum required grades at the traditional universities (entrance for the preparatory year). Al-Quds Open University has more than 22 centers and this enables the students to study in their own areas with less cost and time.

The table also shows a slight difference between the numbers of male and female students at the level of the required degree with the exception of the higher studies level. Male students in the higher studies make up 58%. At the level of the universities and colleges, ratio of females is higher than ratio of males in the ten traditional universities and in al-Quds Open University (59%) and the community colleges (60%) but the ratio was less in the community colleges (47%). The first discrepancy can be accounted for in the difference between grades of males and females in the general secondary examination. The average grades of females was 10 points higher than the average grades of male students, thus giving female students better chances to join universities in light of the strong competition.

Moreover, the ratio of female students who travel abroad to pursue their higher studies is less than male students due to the social norm that shows more acceptance to the male student to travel abroad. The second discrepancy lies in the lesser female students in the community colleges because females do not approach the vocational or technical programs with the exception of some programs and because of lack of industrial and agricultural colleges for females.

If we divide the number of students registered in the higher education institutions by the total number of population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2009 (3,935,249 persons – PCBS, 2009), we get the raw average enrollment which is 4.6%. The general enrollment rate can be calculated by dividing the number of students registered in the higher education institution by the number of population within the age group (18-24) in 2009 (556,600), **we get 33%. This is a high and deceiving ratio and when compared with international ratios, we have to take into consideration those who are in technical education and those who are in higher studies.**

For planning purposes, it might be useful to calculate the ratio of the total number of students to the higher education-age group (18-30) (906,248 persons), and the ratio would be 20%.

#### **4-2 Major study areas of registered students**

We will deal here with the students registered in the major specialization areas in the first level of International Standard Classification of Education. These areas are: Education, arts and humanities, social and administration sciences, sciences, engineering, agricultural

science, medical and health sciences and services. It is noteworthy to see that education makes up 35% of the students body (24% females and 11% males) distributed among 124 education programs (70 programs without repetition). This is followed by the social and administration sciences which form 31% of the students' body (12% females and 19% males) distributed among 172 programs (85 programs without repetition). Students in the engineering made up around 6% distributed among 111 programs (64 programs without repetition). Medical and health fields had a similar ratio of 6% distributed among 98 programs (46 programs without repetition). As for agricultural sciences, they included 1% of the students' body. This means that less than one quarter of the students is registered in the applied sciences.

#### **4-3 workers in the higher education institutions:**

Total number of workers in the Palestinian higher education institutions in 2008/2009 is around 12,433 (21.7% part time) including 76% males and 25% females distributed according to job classification of the Ministry as follows: **44% educational academic, 4% academic administrator, 0.1% academic researcher, 4.5% administration, 15.2% clerical work, 7.4% assistant teacher and researcher, 3% specialized professionals, 8% technicians and artisans, 13.8% unskilled laborers.**

The above-mentioned distribution shows that the teaching faculty make up 44% of the workers (around 55% with the research and teaching assistants) and this ratio is not in harmony with the international distribution (two thirds for teaching and the rest as administration and services). Members of the teaching faculty do not enjoy job security and often look for jobs abroad or part time work with companies, industries and NGOs, meaning an increase in emigration of the qualified competent people abroad. On the other hand, and in light of the current conditions in the higher education institutions, it is extremely difficult to attract teaching expertise from abroad into Palestine.

On real grounds, 34% of the members of the teaching faculty in the Palestinian universities hold PhD degrees and more than 50% hold Masters Degree (database of higher education, 2006), and as we go higher in the academic degrees, we notice lower female representation. Ratio of part-time members of the teaching faculty is 21.7%.

#### **4-4 Enrollment, admission and graduates in Palestinian higher education institutions:**

First, we need to diagnose the scope of demand on higher education as the results of the Tawjihi exams is its main source. Number of students who passed the Tawjihi Exam in 008/2009 was 42,992 male and female students, including 12,972 students in the scientific stream with a ratio of 30% and 27,745 students in the literary stream with a ratio of 64.5%, and 275 students in vocational education with a ratio of 2.5% only. According to estimates and statistics of the higher education database, a ratio of 5% can be added for those who passed the Tawjihi Exam in previous years. As for the number of students who were admitted to the higher education institutions and from the same year, it reached 33,482 male and female students in the BA program (including 13,000 students at al-Quds Open University) and 5,205 male and female students in the community colleges.

As for the number of graduates, there were 27,000 male and female students who graduated last year (around 16,000 from traditional universities, 6,000 students from al-Quds Open University, and 5,000 students from community colleges).

#### **4-5 Economies of higher education**

Since the establishment of the higher education institutions in the mid seventies, the PLO assumed the task of supporting their operational expenses and this support was reinforced in the beginnings of the eighties to the point that students were exempted from paying any tuition fees and higher education became almost free of charge. In the late eighties, the eruption of the Intifada and the closure of several higher education institutions and the Gulf

War led to the reduction of the financial support from the PLO and students started to pay all their tuition fees.

But these tuition fees did cover only 40% of the educational cost of the students in some public universities. In some other institutions, the tuition covered around 60% of the cost, thus emerging a real deficit in the budgets of the universities. With the establishment of the PNA and when the ministry of higher education and scientific research assumed authority over higher education in the mid nineties, the ministry was able, with full financial support from the EU, to cover the salaries of workers in the Palestinian universities for three years.

The office of the President offered partial support to the universities and the Ministry continued with its attempts to solve the deficit problem. In cooperation with the World Bank, the Ministry was able to formulate a strategy to finance higher education which was applied in 2002. The strategy focused on finding mechanism to provide students with loans so that the universities can collect the tuition. It also worked on finding a quality development fund to support projects that develop capacities and programs on a competitive basis and start to conduct reforms of units and governance bodies in the higher education, such as the Council for Higher Education and the National Commission for Accreditation, and reinforce the capacities of the higher education institutions in the field of planning, management and quality, and focus government support to the scientific and applied specializations and programs. The Ministry worked on applying this strategy through support from the World Bank and the European Union to a project that will be concluded in 2010. However, the final results have not released yet, but what appeared so far reflected development and improvement but did not reflect financial sustainability.

We need to recall that the Finance Ministry cooperated with the PNA on the deficit and allocated government support to the Palestinian public universities reaching around \$20 million annually but it failed to offer this annual support in full. In 2003, the Finance Ministry distributed \$12 million only and in 2004, the universities were supported with \$14 million and in 2006, only \$10 million were offered while in 2008, all the amount was paid. Support increased in 2009 to reach \$37 million but an amount of \$23 million was disbursed so far.

In parallel lines, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education was able in 2002 to establish a student loan and aid fund which received dozens of millions of US dollars in student assistance from the brotherly country Saudi Arabia. Several millions were also injected to this fund from several sources and the funds were distributed in accordance with a clear mechanism in terms of criteria, principles and repayment assurances. But the fund failed to collect the amount of loans from the graduate students who benefited from the loans. In 2009, the fund succeeded in setting up a new lending mechanism along with a repayment mechanism through which the student pays 4% of the loan value during the semester and the fund succeeded in collecting around half of a million Jordanian Dinars and work is underway to regain the old loans.

Despite this, the financial crisis is escalating gradually, and even if the tuitions are paid in full, they wont cover on average more than 60% to 70% of the operational expenses of the eight public universities (with the exception of al-Quds Open University). In 2007, the total amount of operational expenses of the eight universities reached more than \$112 million (around \$80 million for salaries and \$32 million for other operational expenses). Revenues reached around \$90 million without government support (\$80 million for fees and tuition, and \$10 million in revenues of research and community activities and assistance (Kamal, 2008). This difference between the revenues and the expenditure will increase if the Ministry implemented its quality criteria through defining a certain ratio of students per teacher, and the ratio of the Masters holders to the PhD holders and ratio of the graduates and non-graduates and number of hours in addition load, etc. there is a direct proportional relation between financial deficit and poor quality for teaching.

Around the end of 2008, public universities witnessed protest union measures demanding the improvement of the standard cadre scale and the protests were ended after reaching an agreement on a new standard cadre scale that has major financial ramifications on the public universities, thus causing further worsening of the deficit.

In general, the sector of education and higher education had around 12% of the general budget in 2008, the share of higher education out of the total amount of the budget did not exceed 5% and this is one of the lowest ratios in the world.

The deficit of the budget of several higher education institutions had negative impact from several aspects:

a- Resorting to accepting students under the umbrella of “Parallel or Continuing Education” where the student pays higher fees for the credit hour compared with regular admission.

b- Salaries were not paid on the set time every month; the saving funds were used to achieve sustainability.

c- “Artificial” reduction of the cost of the student through refraining from increasing the number of faculty members to meet the increasing number of students.

d- Expenses of libraries were reduced.

e- The Masters Program was opened as a source of high tuition and fees.

f- The load of the faculty member was increased.

g- Number of part time workers was increased.

h- Expenditure on attending scientific conferences was reduced and budgets of scientific research were also reduced.

i- Scholarships and similar chances were reduced.

#### **4-6 Institutes of higher education and scientific research**

The Palestinian universities place major attention to university teaching at the expense of scientific research. Since their establishment, the general tendency of universities was to take in as many students as possible in order to reduce the chances of their immigration abroad and support the student’s steadfastness, in addition to the attempt to lay the pillars of an infrastructure that can confront the schemes of the military rule which made quantitative expansion a goal in itself and university teaching because their major priority and focus. The Palestinian universities were established in the first place to grant the first university degree (BA) which requires an infrastructure that is not adequate to support and establish active scientific research. Thus, officials in universities focused their attention on providing a climate conducive to the teaching process and the majority of the time of teaching faculty was spent on teaching and other kinds of administrative tasks at the expense of scientific research which almost did not exist.

This explains the late emergence of the majority of the higher studies programs which started in the middle of last decade only. With this development, scientific research was activated slowly in the local universities and will become more active in case the programs move to the higher PhD degree. Scientific research is a vital field where societies and countries compete to achieve their interests and superiority.

In this, it is a targeted and guided field and not neutral and must be exploited to serve the surrounding community. In order to achieve this, scientific research must be linked to the priorities of the society’s economy, needs and plans. This, in itself, raised several questions pertaining to the organization and administration of scientific research and its venues.

In most of the advanced countries, scientific research started in universities and was spread to government and private research centers, but the universities remain the major incubator of most of the research activities. Here, it is natural to see scientific research start in the universities where there are the thinking brains but the beginnings are still fragile and weak because there isn’t enough financial support and because it has not been placed as one of the priorities.

But now, and as the features and pillars of the Palestinian state started to emerge and as the Palestinian society started to define its economic priorities, there is a need for having scientific research that accompanies and supports the economic activities, and it has become necessary to show support and encouragement to scientific research in the Palestinian universities.

Scientific research has witnessed notable activity after 1995 due to the attention displayed by the donor countries on development in Palestine. This was due to funding to projects in order to promote regional cooperation in the field of science and technology through bilateral and multilateral assistance. Palestinian researchers were able to participate in several joint cooperation programs in the field of research and technological development, in addition to the bilateral programs that were devoted to Palestine.

Research activity in Palestine is undertaken by four basic parties: higher education institutions, mainly the Palestinian universities, and the government institutions, the NGOs and the private sector.

There are more than 30 centers for scientific research in the Palestinian universities in the fields of Agriculture, Environment, Water, Nanotechnology, Energy and Health. Most of these fields suffer from weak planning, administration and funding. These centers cover a small part of the sectors that are related to sustainable development. Very few research activities implemented in Palestine had impact on economy and industry.

At the level of the government institutions, some of them established their own research centers, such as the National Center for Agricultural Research at the Agriculture Ministry and the Water Research Administration in the Water Authority. At the level of the private sector and the NGOs, the non-governmental organizations established research centers with most of them focusing on social studies and research. The private sector focused on research activities dealing with existing industries, such as pharmaceuticals.

In general, all scientific research centers in Palestine depend on external assistance, mainly from the donor countries, and this affected the priorities of scientific research and whether such research meets the real needs. The study prepared by Science and Technology Unit at the Planning and International Cooperation Ministry in 1998 showed:

- A large ratio of the research cannot be classified as scientific research according to the international definition.
- There are no indicators on the use of innovation and finding solutions to existing problems.
- Economic feasibility of the research projects is not considered a priority.
- There is absence of coordination between those centers and strong competition between them.

With the start of the current decade (al-Aqsa Intifada), there has been decrease in research activities which were affected by the restrictions on movement through the policies of closure and siege which were imposed by the Israeli occupation, and support from the donor countries was transferred to meet the emergency needs.

In general, scientific research in Palestine lacks clarity of goals and weakness in planning and administration. Despite dozens of scientific research in the various fields of science on an annual basis, the situation of scientific research lacks the administration process elements, especially planning, monitoring and follow up. On the other hands, most of the research activities come in the context of routine work or the job or might be for purposes of promotions for the teaching faculty in the Palestinian universities. Research for purposes of publishing in journals is conducted in a random way without plans. Moreover, the investment of scientific research to upgrade national economic barely exists because of the absence of guidance and best use of such research trends and because there is no system to protect

intellectual property, and the absence of scientific accredited journals that can publish the scientific research.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has strong conviction on the importance of planning scientific research and of providing it with all enabling means, in addition to the need to develop the research institute as part of the Ministry's responsibilities in the next phase.

Thus, the Ministry has acted as follows:

- 1- The Ministry has attempted to formulate a policy for science and technology in Palestine and prepared a draft in 2000 which was called then the "Green Paper".
- 2- The Ministry has established a scientific research council which deals with general policies of scientific research in the higher education institutions in Palestine and defines the priorities of scientific research plans and provides financial support to research projects that are conducted by the higher education institutions and their research centers.
- 3- The Ministry tried to transform the Green Paper into a White Paper in 2005 but it failed. This year, the Ministry started in cooperation with the UNESCO to formulate a science and technology strategy based on a survey of the current situation of scientific research.
- 4- The Ministry allocated 2% of government support to the Palestinian public universities for the sake scientific research. This is relatively a small ratio.
- 5- The Ministry established a database for scientific research as part of the universities research activities and coded in the database around 1400 questionnaires from faculty members, then its work has been frozen because of administrative changes and transfers.
- 6- A unit has been established to link Palestinian researchers with European FP7 Research Program in order to encourage and conduct joint research.
- 7- The Ministry contributed 25% of the French funding to the Joint French-Palestinian Committee projects.

#### **4-7 Higher Education Governance**

The Higher Education, which was established in the late seventies, is considered the most important governance body in higher education especially that its establishment came before the Ministry. The Council played the role of the coordinator, the supervisor, and the funding party to higher education institutions that existed before the PNA. The Council was mentioned in the Higher Education Law no. 11 of 1998 which said: "the Minister may establish an advisory committee or council". The Council continued to work on the basis of the bylaws as a draft that the Ministry prepared in 2003 and it has not been ratified by the Council of Insults yet.

In accordance with the bylaws draft, the Higher Education Council is headed by the Minister and consists of all presidents of the public and government universities, one representative (on a rotational basis) from the private universities, one representative from community colleges for two years, Finance Minister Undersecretary, Planning Minister Undersecretary, Education and Higher Education Undersecretary and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and six academic members and one general secretary. The draft by laws mandates the Council to perform the following tasks and responsibilities:

- To ratify and approve general policies of higher education.
- To develop and assess higher education institutions from all aspects and guarantee coordination between the institutions.
- To set up the general principles on admission of students and determining their numbers on an annual basis.
- To ratify the minimum and maximum ceiling of education fees in the various academic programs in the government and public higher education institutions.
- To review the annual budget of higher education institutions.
- To discuss annual reports submitted by the higher education institutions and get acquainted with their work progress and difficulties and have them abide by the general policy of higher education.

- To ratify the general policies related to students assistance programs.
- To ratify the national priorities of academic programs in the higher education institutions.
- To ratify the general principles in funds distribution to the higher education institutions.

Currently, the Higher Education Council focuses on distribution of annual government support and funding to the public higher education institutions and proposes the admission policy and ratifies the loans policies and the cost of living rate and prepares the standard cadre Scale in the public universities.

The Higher Education Council is criticized on lacking the correct structure when dealing with policies as bias might exist due to the larger representation of the presidents of the universities in its membership.

As for the quality and accreditation commission, it was established based on a administrative decision and not by the Higher Education Law no. 11. Despite this, an internal draft has been drafted to organize the work of the commission which is criticized because it does not have a neutral board since the board members are the higher education institutions and the commission does not have an independent head of commission who does not work in any of the higher education institutions. As for its authorities, there is a tendency to reconsider them, especially if the structure of the Higher Education Council is changed.

With regards to the scientific research council, Law no. 11 stipulated its establishment and the Minister did establish this council in 2003 and the council works in accordance with a bylaws draft that has not been ratified yet by the Council of Ministers. The council is not effective because it lacks funding and resources. Law no. 11 of 1998 pertaining to higher education is good but it needs amendments and additions. For example, the classification of universities needs to be amended to become more similar to the world countries and the form of enrollment needs to be clarified. There are many bylaws coming from the law which didn't set up a certain timetable to complete the relevant legislations.

On the issue of university-related legislations, there might be a need to reconsider the mechanism of appointing the presidents of universities and the structure of board of trustees and agreement among the universities on unified instructions and regulations to handle some issues.

## **5- Main accomplishments during the reform and development plan period**

Under the umbrella of the main goals of the reform and development plan that started in 2008, in particular, the goals to develop a human and social capital, and regain economic growth on the path towards national prosperity and improve the life quality of Palestinians, one can summarize the achievements as follows:

### **The capacities of the Ministry/higher education sector have been reinforced through:**

- Enriching the library of the Ministry of Higher Education with a set of books and resources in various fields that deal with governance, planning and other topics.
- Conducting an analytical study about the decision-making parties in higher education and the Higher Education Council and the labor market costing \$99,591.
- Designing a program to follow up the graduates costing \$57,381. The program has been disseminated to all higher education institutions to follow up their graduates and get feedback in a manner that benefits the development of the academic programs inside the institution and this will serve and meet with the needs of the labor market.
- Upgrading and developing the electronic webpage of the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality.
- The National Commission for Accreditation and Quality participated in regional and international electronic networks in the field of developing quality.
- Conducting a comprehensive assessment study for al-Quds Open University costing \$150,890. The study analyzed and assessed the university from all administrative, financial, academic, and legal aspects and came up with a set of recommendations.

- Concluding a project to develop mechanisms of gathering higher education data (costing \$67,635) which is considered extremely important in terms of organizing the information flow between the higher education institutions and the Ministry. It is also an important support tool to follow up the development of academic programs in the institutions and link them with the society needs.

#### **Enhancing higher education institutions capacities through:**

- A comparative study was concluded on the administrative structures in the higher education institutions costing \$130,530.
- A special guidebook was prepared for the process of institutional self-assessment and strategic planning inside the higher education institutions costing \$127,338. This guidebook was the reference used by the higher education institutions in conducting institutional self assessment and strategic planning.
- Twenty grants were granted to higher education institutions costing \$2,150,905 to support institutional self-assessment and strategic planning inside the institutions. Twelve universities and 23 community colleges benefited from the grants.

#### **Supporting quality developmental projects inside the higher education institutions through quality development fund:**

- The third round specialized in ICT costing \$2,882,576 which included 14 grants to higher education institutions.
- The third normal round costing \$2,014,542 which included nine grants to higher education institutions.
- Fourth round specialized in education programs and teacher rehabilitation costing \$1,863,974 which included six projects to higher education institutions.
- Eleven projects served Gaza Strip out of a total number of 45 quality development projects inside the higher education institutions through the Quality Development Fund.

#### **Developing the infrastructure of vocational schools**

- Building a female unit inside Tulkarem Industrial Secondary School as part of the project to build the school costing \$2.7 million (The Norwegian Project).
- Building Jenin Industrial Secondary School costing \$2.5 million (the Korean Project).
- Developing Nablus Industrial Secondary School costing \$2 million (Islamic Bank for Development).
- Work to establish female units in the industrial schools (a Norwegian project)
- Following up maintenance works in the industrial schools.
- Opening new specializations in the industrial schools.
- Opening new classes for the commercial sector in the various districts.
- Introducing and equipping several workshops through the Brazilian Project (\$250,000).
- Equipping the workshops in the vocational schools with necessary annual supplies.
- Providing the colleges with financial resources and lab equipment according to tenders.
- Building two floors at Palestine Technical College – Arroub
- Start of work to launch electronic webpages for the vocational schools.

#### **Increase in rate of enrollment in vocational education and input quality improvement**

- Implementing the project “vocational awareness and counseling” – through the UNESCO (\$150,000).
- Implementing the project “Get to know to Workers” through the ILO (\$630,000).

- Implementing the project “From School to Labor” (STC) through support from the USAID (\$170,000).
- Implementing vocational awareness program through GTZ costing 12,000 Euros.

### **Developing specializations in the colleges**

- New specializations were accredited in cooperation with the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality.
- Some diploma programs were developed into BA programs in the colleges.
- Plans of programs in colleges were developed.

### **Developing and improving vocational education curricula on the basis of linking the with the labor market**

Through the Belgian Project (2 million Euros). Currently, work is underway to develop the electricity curriculum.

### **Scholarships offered from internal and external parties**

The Ministry offered many internal scholarships to secondary school graduates, such as the scholarships from the President to outstanding students on an annual basis (50 students) who represent the top ten students in the literary and scientific streams in the West Bank and Gaza, and the top student in his district in the literary and scientific streams, and the top three students in the industrial and commercial streams. The annual budget allocated for this grant is 400,000 Jordanian Dinars per year. Total number of students who benefit from this grant on a permanent basis is 244 male and female students.

There are also the internal scholarships offered by the Council of Ministers to the outstanding students in the general secondary education exams. Around 2700 male and female students benefited from this kind of grant in the past three years costing around \$3 million. Moreover, the Ministry offered full scholarships to around 450 students through exempting them from the tuition fees as part of the “Ministry grants from the Palestinian universities”. Total number of beneficiaries from this grant who are studying in universities reaches 615 male and female students. The Ministry announced 1686 scholarships offered from brotherly and friendly countries in coordination with the Higher Committee for Scholarships, in addition to 1200 seats in Jordanian universities within the three past years at the BA, MA and PhD levels; these external scholarships and seats are distributed between the inside and the Diaspora.

### **Loans Fund Activities**

The Ministry developed a new system for the loans fund through which students will start repaying during the study period. The student shall pay 4% of the tuition fees every semester. This system succeeded for the first time to implant the culture of repayment and gathered half a million Jordanian Dinars. Moreover, The Ministry implemented through the loans and assistance fund the grant from the Council of Ministers to assist the students (\$4 million).

### **Equivalence Certificates**

The Ministry issued equivalence certificates during the period for more than 1780 certificates (292 Tawjihi, 35 diplomas, 535 BA Degrees, 549 Masters Degrees, and 369 PhD Degrees). As for validation, the Ministry validated around 2500 higher education documents every month and verifies around 20 certificates every month.

## Scientific Research

The Ministry implemented the following in the past few months:

**First:** The Ministry continued to enhance participation of Palestinian researchers in European FP7 Program:

The Ministry launched the electronic website [www.euncp.ps](http://www.euncp.ps) which offers a lot of information and services, mainly registration as member to receive all information on the new call for proposals that is published by the European Union, in addition to the announcements related to the program and the inquiries service, and some important instructions on participation in FP7 program. The website includes a whole set of brochures and lectures on FP7 in Arabic and English. The Ministry appointed, in coordination with the Palestinian universities, contact points in some local universities which can act as the middle party between the university and FP7 unit in the Ministry and in order to assist in publishing information pertaining to the dates of new calls for proposals.

The Ministry established a database on the active centers, individuals and institutions in the field of scientific research. Number of entries in the database reached around 800 entries. Information and announcements and calls for proposals and their dates are disseminated to them on a regular basis.

The Ministry organized workshops to introduce and talk about FP7 and means of benefiting from it in the Palestinian universities. The last workshop was organized at Bethlehem University on October 15, 2009, and at al-Najah University on December 9, 2009 and another workshop at al-Quds Open University on December 12, 2009.

**Second:** As part of the Joint Palestinian-French Committee activities in the area of research led by the Ministry: Nine research projects were presented in the field of environment in partnership with French researchers in French universities and research centers in the past two months. The research projects will be assessed and around four or five projects will be elected with total financial coverage reaching around 80,000 Euros and the Ministry will contribute with 25% of the cost.

**Third:** As part of the Tempus Office activities which is funded by the EU and hosted by the Ministry During the new phase in Tempus IV which aims to develop the higher education sector, extending from 2007 until 2013. Two calls for proposals were announced for joint projects in the program and Palestine participated in four projects as part of the EU-funded projects:

\* The first project in the field of quality. The Ministry Unit for Quality participates in the project with al-Najah University with a total amount of 763, 162 Euros, and the share of the Palestinian universities in the project is 80,000 Euros.

\* The second project aims to establish a program in the e-business field, and a Masters program in Administration and Services offered to the students with a total amount of 131,521,4 Euros. Birzeit University participates in this project. The share of Palestinian universities in this project is 105,000 Euros.

\* The third project is a national project led by Birzeit University with a total amount of 504,368 Euros. The project aims to build a strategic plan at the national level for the environment curriculum in the Palestinian universities. The participants include the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, al-Quds University, and al-Najah University. The share of Palestinian universities reaches 380,000 Euros.

\* The fourth project aims to establish central offices for international relations in the academic field. Al-Quds and Hebron Universities participate in this project with a total amount of 720,378 Euros. The share of Palestinian universities in the project reaches 154,000 Euros.

**Fourth:** The Ministry signed a contract with Arij Center to conduct a survey on the research infrastructure and human resources pertaining to scientific research in Palestine with support from the UNESCO.

The Ministry – higher education sector – started implementing the first steps in preparing higher education strategy for the next ten years 2101-2020 through a participatory consultation mechanism supported by scientific tools, questionnaires and surveys, such as

Delphi Survey. The strategy will be concluded in the last quarter of 2010. The Ministry has prepared the medium-term strategy as part of the ten-year strategy.

## **6- Assessment of the situation**

Based on the above-mentioned data in item 2 which deals with description of the current situation, one can diagnose the weak and strong points and available opportunities and challenges as follows:

### **6-1 Strong points**

- Rise in ratio of females registered in the Palestinian higher education to reach 54% out of the students' body.
- Increasing demand on Palestinian higher education.
- The officials in the Palestinian universities are fully aware of the need for reform and development.
- General acceptance to diversity in the higher education institutions and presence of higher education institutions in all regions.
- Participation of 33% of the population with age group (18-24) in higher education.
- The majority of institutions have programs to absorb older students who desire to pursue their education.
- Presence of an independent commission on accreditation and quality
- All existing programs are accredited by the Accreditation and Quality Commission which reinforces the credibility of the programs.
- External assessment is endorsed to accredit the programs.
- Increasing trend of the higher education institutions towards scientific research.
- Gradual and increasing participation of young researchers in important research projects.

### **6-2 Weak points**

- The increase in number of Palestinian universities faculty members is not in harmony with the accelerating pace of students joining the Palestinian universities.
- The highest ratios in enrollment are in the BA programs and not in the higher studies programs.
- Absence of PhD programs in the higher education institutions, with the exception of one single program at al-Najah University in the field of chemistry.
- The inputs of Palestinian higher education in terms of specialization are distributed as follows:  
Around 74% in the literary stream and 20% in the scientific stream and the rest of the students are in the various vocational branches and this reflects its negatively on the students body structure in the higher education institutions.
- The students who come from lower socioeconomic levels study in fields that are more prone to unemployment, thus impeding the social role of higher education.
- The ratio of Masters degree holders to the ratio of PhD degree holders who teach in the higher education institutions is high (60%) and the ratio of those holding the title of professor or associate professor is low.
- Ratio of the universities faculty members to the students is high; on average, it is 1:35
- Performance of the faculty members in general is not high as certain factors affect their performance, such as the salary, heavy teaching load, and absence of educational preparation.
- High unemployment among university graduates.
- The employees are dissatisfied with the performance of the graduates.
- Unbalanced development between the various institutions.

- High ratio of withdrawal, especially in Gaza Strip.
- The higher education institutions desire to open Masters programs even with the absence of basic requirements for such programs and the reason for that is that students joining the Masters programs have better capacities to pay their tuition fees.
- Limited contribution from the private organizations and sector in the assessment process.
- Results of the programs reviews are not published.
- The assessment process focuses on assessing the input more than assessing the output and outcomes.
- Major differences in the criteria used for internal assessment by the higher education institutions.
- Minimal usage of the results of the assessment in the development process in general.
- Inadequate financial resources and dependency on external funding.
- Very few research projects include creativity and inventions.
- Inadequate number of qualified researchers.
- Some research projects are repeated because of weak coordination and cooperation between the existing scientific research institutions.
- Low capacity to attract foreign experts to work in the higher education institutions.
- Absence of adequate support to transfer new information and technology.
- Simple and inadequate intervention by the higher studies students to participate in research and development during their study periods.
- Absence of laws on intellectual property.
- Heavy teaching load on the lecturers, thus reducing time allocated for research.
- Inadequate financial support by the government and private institutions to scientific research.
- Absence of national policy for scientific research.
- Weak infrastructure.
- Relations between industry and research are weak.
- Very few accredited scientific journals.
- Lack of incentives.
- Slow decision-making process.
- Inadequate intervention by the people concerned in the decision making process.
- Continuous changes in the higher cadre scale.
- Unqualified human resources, especially in the medium-level posts.
- Gaps and overlaps between the various administration levels.
- The financial system is not transparent.

### **6-3 Available opportunities**

- To focus on investment that takes into consideration the expected qualitative and quantitative needs of the sector.
- To respond to the future needs of the labor market as one of the strategies to develop human resources.
- All those who have the desire and capacity to study must enroll in fields that match their preferences and respond to the labor market.
- To unify the existing programs in order to avoid redundancy.
- To maintain the current high quality Masters programs.
- To accept long-term education.
- The Council of Ministers shows real tendency to reform the higher education sector and confront its problems.
- Moral support and guidance from Arab academic institutions and the Arab League institutions.
- Gradual development of the internal assessment system.

- To make use of the current assessment measures as part of international cooperation.
- To enhance the capacities of the Masters program through having students participate in research projects.
- To increase cooperation with the private sector (amending the Tax Law).
- The Boards of Trustees of the universities are aware of the need to seek new financial resources.
- To have Palestinian funding parties who can pay the capital expenses in the universities (new buildings, facilities, services, etc).
- External support from some countries and international organizations to the higher and general education sectors, such as the
  - a- UNESCO, the World Bank and the EU.
  - b- Arab assistance (Saudi assistance, assistance from Arab funds).
  - c- The higher education institutions show desire and readiness for development.

#### **6-4 Challenges and threats**

- Unplanned and unguided expansion away from the strategies.
- The quality might decline due to lack of capacity to control the number of higher education institutions (increasing expansion).
- The current infrastructure is incapable of coping with the expansion in the sector.
- A High ratio of students who do not meet the academic requirements join the Masters Programs.
- It is possible that there is “too much” education more than the labor market needs.
- Chronic conflict between the universities administrations and the Ministry on one hand and the workers union on the other hand because of the bad economic and political conditions.
- Lack of qualified academic cadres in some new fields that are needed in the society because it is difficult to attract back immigrant Palestinian expertise.
- Globalization might succeed in supporting technological, electronic and financial specializations at the expense of humanity, identity and culture.
- The meaning of assessment has changed to become an artificial process that highlights the shortcomings of the program.
- The condition of human resources is almost constant and does not improve (example: very few researchers).
- A high ratio of basic research while applied research barely exists.
- Bad organization in the field of management of research and development in the higher education institutions.
- Quality of teaching will worsen if the financial problem is not solved.
- Even more, some non-profit universities might collapse if they do not get financial support.
- Incorrect and inadequate targets.
- Unsound selection of criteria that might lead to less effective quality and performance.

## 7- Challenges and Goals

Through analyzing the current conditions of Palestinian higher education and the existing weak points, one can view the weak points as branches of a tree of problems and challenges. This tree makes up the basis in formulating the tree of goals, strategies and programs.

### 7-1 Challenges

If we classify the weak points and challenges in groups (sort of factors analysis), we get a group of factors or challenges that can be listed as follows:

- To achieve equity in admission between various social sectors.
- To achieve financial resources sustainability in order to support development, scientific research, academic and vocational and technical education and all reform strategies.
- To have the necessary development and reform in order to govern and manage the higher education and the authorities of its council and its higher units and increase competence.
- To have the necessary follow up in order to control quality and upgrade education quality.
- To upgrade scientific research and work on providing the research environment with all its elements to serve the development priorities.
- To reduce unemployment among the graduates and work on enabling the students to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to get a proper job. This requires reviewing the curricula and teaching methodologies in order to have a human resources base that continues to sustain and develop on the long term.

### 7-2 Goals

Based on the above, the following tree of goals has been deducted:

**First goal:** It deals with enrollment: “To meet the increasing demand on higher education at all levels and raise the rate of enrollment for the lower socioeconomic sectors and those with special needs.”

**Second goal:** It deals with relevancy: “the higher education outputs must be relevant to the needs of the Palestinian society and the local and regional labor market.”

**Third goal:** It deals with funding: “To guarantee sustainability of funding which is necessary to cover the deficit in the operational, developmental and capital expenditures of higher education institutions.”

**Fourth goal:** It deals with scientific research: “To upgrade level of scientific research so that it can become effective in the process of economic and social development”.

**Fifth goal:** It deals with management and governance: “To reform and develop the administration and governance of higher education at the level of the Ministry and institutions.”

**Sixth goal:** It deals with quality: “To improve and control quality.”

**Seventh goal:** It deals with vocational and technical education: “To upgrade level of vocational and technical education qualitatively and quantitatively.”

## **8- Policies and relevant interventions**

### **The goal pertaining to enrollment**

#### **Policy 1: To expand base of enrollment of students from lower socioeconomic levels in the education programs:**

- To enhance the capacities of loans fund and assistance to students in order to cover the expenses of this sector either through loans or financial assistance.
- To encourage the universities to grant the students from this sector partial tuition exemption.
- To direct grants and scholarships from the private and industrial sectors to this sector.

#### **Policy 2: To facilitate the enrollment process of students with special needs in higher education:**

- To have an exceptional admission system for this sector in the programs according to the kind of impairment.
- To conduct amendments on the infrastructure in terms of health facilities, corridors and elevators in order to facilitate their integration.
- To conduct amendments on the libraries and information sources for their sake.
- To establish a voluntary unit that can follow up on them inside the higher education institutions.

#### **Policy 3: To conduct semi-annual development of the admission criteria inside the higher education institutions:**

- To conduct an annual study in May of every year with focus on the effectiveness of the admission policy of the previous year and study the new developments.
- To take into consideration the results of the study.
- To work gradually on freezing admission in non-technical fields in the university colleges.

#### **Policy 4: To open a PhD program in certain fields and strengthen the open masters programs:**

- To form a committee with the task of studying the priority fields in order to open new PhD programs.
- To encourage qualified universities to open these programs whether individually or in partnership with other foreign or local universities.

#### **Policy 5: To check the extent of internal and legislative need and readiness to use other higher education models in the traditional universities, such as distance learning and On-Line learning:**

- To study experiences of universities those use these models.
- To conduct a study in order to know the extent of need for such models.
- To define requirements and impediments if such an approach is adopted.

### **The goal pertaining to relevancy**

#### **Policy 1: To introduce Entrepreneurial learning in the higher education institutions:**

- To raise awareness of officials in the Palestinian universities on the importance of Entrepreneurial learning.
- To start with an Entrepreneurial course as a university requirement in a government university and government technical colleges.
- Participation of businessmen with rich experience in university teaching and training.
- To train students in the community institutions.
- To open and encourage continuing education programs in the universities.

#### **Policy 2: Participation and representation of the industry and business sector in the governance structures of higher education that operate the higher education institutions:**

- Representation of the business sector and chambers of commerce and industry in the Higher Education Council membership.

- Representation of business sector in the Board of Trustees of universities.
- Representation of the business sector in the councils of commission and others.

**Policy 3: To review the student's body structure according to the fields in the higher education institutions in order to expand the science field and applied fields and vocational short-term programs:**

- To increase enrollment rate in scientific fields such as Mathematics and Physics, especially among males, and medical sciences.
- To decrease enrollment rate in social sciences and humanities (with focus on quality development to maintain the identity and social cohesion) and bridge them with short-term technical fields.
- To grant students partial tuition exemption in the fields to be expanded.
- To increase transfer to scientific and vocational fields starting from the phase after graduating from the secondary stage.

**Policy 4: To integrate the higher education institutions with their surroundings through partnerships with economic institutions and civil society organizations:**

- To organize dialogue sessions between the higher education institutions and the business sector in order to define the need of each side in the fields of training and transfer of technology.
- To appoint employees or contact persons (relevancy unit) for the sake of continuous dialogue and coordination on the possible employment of graduates and improve the students readiness to work.
- To start joint developmental projects through competitive grants.
- To allow faculty members to take sabbatical leave to work in the business sector with tax exemption.

**Policy 5: To set up qualifications frameworks (competences that the graduate has to acquire in every field) and upgrade study plans accordingly:**

- To define the outputs of the intended learning process at the level of each program.
- To upgrade and amend the curricula and courses according to the intended outputs.
- To gather more than one subfield in one program.
- The study plan or course outline must include hours allocated for practical application in community services, industrial or educational institutions.

### **The goal pertaining to funding**

**Policy 1: To diversify sources of funding:**

- To develop mechanisms and programs of scholarships and assistance to students.
- To develop the student loan fund in order to secure repayment and sustainability.
- To encourage private investment in higher education.
- To encourage graduates from higher education institutions to participate in partial coverage of higher education expenses.

**Policy 2: To keep government financial support to higher education:**

- To allocate annually a set amount of money from the PNA budget to support higher education in accordance with a committed and improved disbursement mechanism based on standard cost.
- To encourage funding organizations such as the UNESCO, the EU, the World Bank and Japanese Agency and the Korean...) to finance developmental projects in higher education through the Ministry.
- To encourage the Arab governments to finance developmental projects in higher education institutions.

**Policy 3: To develop self-financing methods from research activities and community services:**

- To support joint projects with the industrial sector instead of individual self-project.
- To encourage higher education institutions to open services and commercial facilities on campus and outside campus.

- To encourage the universities to open continuing education programs and consultancy programs.

#### **The goal pertaining to scientific research**

##### **Policy 1: To formulate science and technology policy at the homeland level:**

- To conduct a survey study to diagnose the current status of scientific research.
- To come up with recommendations towards formulating developmental strategic approaches.

##### **Policy 2: To diversify and develop financial resources allocated to scientific research:**

- To increase government support to scientific research in the Palestinian universities to reach a ratio of 5% of the allocated fund per year.
- To establish a national fund to support scientific research.
- To allow the private sector to join in scientific research.
- To support internal and external cooperation between the university research institutes.
- To allocate a special budget in the universities to support research and publishing and participation in conferences.

##### **Policy 3: To link Palestinian universities and research centers with international networks and encourage joint research:**

- To establish a database that includes all information about the scientific research centers and the results of the annual research and where the research was published.
- To join the Euro-med network for scientific research.
- To join the Arab network for scientific research.

##### **Policy 4: To establish scientific research distinction centers at the Palestinian universities and open PhD programs in certain fields and improve the Masters Program:**

- To transform cone research centers that belong to the universities into distinction centers.
- To provide a mature scientific research climate in order to start a PhD Program.
- To decrease the teaching load for the sake of scientific research and develop the instructions that promote conducting research.

##### **Policy 5: To develop legislations and legal regulations pertaining to scientific research standards and patent rights and publishing rules:**

- To develop a system for publishing.
- To develop a system for patent rights.
- To develop a code of ethics for scientific research.

#### **The goal pertaining to management and governance**

##### **Policy 1: To review, assess and change the structure and authorities of the Higher Education Council and the National Commission for Accreditation and Quality:**

- To change the structure and membership of the Higher Education Council in accordance with recommendations from some studies in this field.
- To change the authorities of the Higher Education Council.
- To change the authorities of the National Commission to become one of the arms of the Higher Education Council.

##### **Policy 2: To increase internal competence in the work of the Ministry in the area of higher education:**

- To develop mechanisms of accrediting Arab and foreign higher education institutions.
- To develop the currently used mechanisms for certificate equivalence in order to shorten the period.
- To set up measurements and criteria to direct grants and assistance towards developmental processes.
- To reconsider management of daily time and means for best investment of time.
- To reconsider the mechanism used in preparing the annual budget of higher education.

**Policy 3: To amend and develop higher education legislations:**

- To amend Law no. 11 of 1998.
- To develop regulations taken from the law in order to govern the work of all councils, commissions, units and committees in the Ministry and government education institutions.
- To review the universities regulations and legislations and work on unifying clauses in them for purposes of retirement and other issues.

**Policy 4: To develop university administration and adopt the principles of decentralization, accountability, competence and competition:**

- To set up specific mechanisms and clear criteria when selecting those who will assume administrative and academic posts.
- To work towards the independence of universities along with accountability mechanisms.
- To shorten the cycle of decision-taking mechanism and support it with regulations, information and semi-automatic and regular reports.

**The goal pertaining to quality**

**Policy 1: provide adequate and proper infrastructure for the teaching/learning process:**

- Appropriate classrooms, halls, and laboratories in terms of ventilation, air conditioning and sound system.
- Internet and computers ready for use by the students and staff.
- A library riche with reference books and connected with international libraries electronically.
- A supportive academic, psychological and social environment (to care for the students and reinforce trust between the students and the university, and support extracurricular activities and organize the work of the students' council).

**Policy 2: To provide an adequate number of faculty members and work towards professional development in order to reduce ratio of part time staff and extra load:**

- To work on attracting the competent staff who have immigrated.
- To find participatory programs with international universities in order to exchange teaching experiences.
- To conduct rehabilitation training on modern teaching methods.
- Instructions pertaining to reduction of extra load and partial load.
- To encourage scholarships and training.

**Policy 3: To set up criteria that can guarantee quality and develop systems of assessment and comparison and rank classification according to performance:**

- To prepare a set of criteria by the Ministry pertaining to the ratio of students to teachers, ratio of books to students, ratio of Masters degree holders to PhD degree holders, ratio of computer terminals to students, ratio of full timers to part timers, teaching load per hours,..etc.
- To develop system of self assessment.
- To measure performance of higher education institutions.

**Policy 4: To develop teaching methodologies in order to make the student the center of the learning process and use modern methods:**

- To adopt the student-based learning.
- To use the computer in the teaching/learning process.
- To use E-learning as a method in some courses.

**The goal pertaining to upgrading vocational and technical education**

**Policy 1: To develop admission capacities and human resources in the vocational and technical schools and colleges:**

- To provide adequate financial support to new buildings and labs.
- To ensure geographical distribution of the schools and colleges.
- To cooperate with the relevant international organizations.

- To set up programs to develop teachers in technical aspects.

**Policy 2: To upgrade status of vocational and technical education and raise the social and economic value of the graduate from such institutions:**

- Awareness campaigns and programs at the level of students, parents and teachers.
- To issue legislations banning the licensing of car mechanic workshops and other workshops unless there is a technical qualification.
- To grant specialization allowances to those who graduate from vocational and technical colleges and work in the civil service.
- To encourage students to enroll through granting them partial exemptions from tuition.
- To open the prospects of vocational and technical education so that it won't appear closed from the viewpoint of students and teachers.
- To prepare brochures, films and radio programs to raise vocational awareness.
- To follow up the training and employment of the graduates through agreements with the various economic sectors.

**Policy 3: To assess the existing programs and curricula in the vocational and technical schools and colleges:**

- Gradual freezing of some non-technical programs.
- To introduce priority technical programs.
- To develop some existing programs.
- To develop curricula and include in them entrepreneurial and creative education.
- To develop the Comprehensive Exam.
- To develop the mechanism of general secondary exam/practical training.

**Policy 4: To link and network vocational and technical education with the production and manufacturing sector:**

- To apply professional apprenticeship (shifting between the school and the productive institution).
- To exchange experiences with the productive sector in teaching and training.
- To activate the higher council for vocational and technical education with participatory membership.

**9- Mechanism to follow up the strategy implementation**

The successful implementation of the strategy depends on sound understanding of the contents of the strategy and the existing higher education system and the relation between them. The implementation process means a continuous planning process that might lead to amending some of the goals and partial measures and rearrangement of priorities. It also includes certain actions, such as field visits and holding meetings with the partners and documentation and reporting.

Moreover, the follow up mechanism requires a monitoring process to keep on the right track and it also requires a regular monitoring process on the accomplished tasks and to check their relevance to the accomplishment indicators and expected results.

The official parties in charge of the follow up are the same party that coordinated the strategic planning process. These official parties will depend on the reports presented from the units and departments which are formally commissioned to implement the activities within their own jurisdictions, in addition to the reports that come from the planning units in the higher education institutions. Then, the reports are studied and commented on and then they are submitted to the Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs who in his turn will submit them to the Undersecretary and to the Minister who will present them to the Policies Committee in order to get feedback. The feedback will then go to the authorized parties for follow up.