

# **USAID ADMINISTRATOR VISITS THE PATRIARCHATE TO MEET WITH COUNCIL OF HEADS OF CHURCHES**

On August 8/21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Mr. Mark Green, administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), visited the Patriarchate together with other representatives of USAID and the United States administration.

The delegation was received by H.H.B. our father and Patriarch Theophilos along with other members of the Hagiotaphite Brotherhood and members of the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, including Bishop Ibrahim Sari from the Lutheran Church, Secretary of the Council Fr. Husam Naom from the Anglican Church, as well as the former Mayor of Bethlehem Mrs. Vera Baboun.

During their meeting, H.H.B. Patriarch Theophilos thanked USAID for its contribution to the region, especially in Gaza, where the humanitarian situation especially impacts the growth of young people. The multi-faceted Christian contribution to the community at large, irrespective of religious or ethnic background, is vital to the everyday lives of individuals and families, as well as for reconciliation in the region.

It was emphasized that the quality of life in Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories could be significantly improved through meaningful projects and aid in the areas of education, housing, and employment, especially until lasting political solutions are found. The Churches of the Holy Land look forward to working with USAID to this effect. While the Churches have for centuries supported the community through their own infrastructure of schools, hospitals, community centers, and outreach to the needy, they bear a burden that is increasingly heavy.

The continued vibrancy of Jerusalem and the Holy Land is dependent upon the Christian presence being able to thrive in its ancient birthplace. Bishop Sari, Fr. Husam, and Mayor Baboun gave illustrations as to how the Christians of the Holy Land, the "little flock" to which the Lord said, "Fear not," and as the "small piece of yeast," which "made the whole flour leavened" (Luke 13:21), is worthy of the support of Christians around the world in order to remain in the cradle of Christianity. A lasting peace in the region must also include the Christians presence in the Holy Land.

**From Secretariat-General**