Message from Professor Amanda Howe, President, World Organisation of Family Doctors.

I was honoured to be invited to Palestine to share in the first National Conference of the Palestinian Association of Family Medicine in April 2017. It was a profound learning experience to see the challenges in the West Bank, but also to experience the excitement of the GPs and the first generation of family medicine residents at the 200+ person conference. I also visited the first academic member of WONCA for Palestine - the academic unit of family medicine at An Najah National University in Nablus, where I met Dr Lubna and colleagues to congratulate them on their leadership.

There are many strengths in the developing situation in Palestine. The strong strategic and personal relationships between the Ministry of Health, WHO, UNWRA, and of course FIDFMP and its supporters at MAP and the British Council, the success in establishing family medicine as a speciality, the motivation for training and the upskilling of existing GPs, plus overall improvements in health coverage at primary health care level, are admirable.

Continued leadership, with further expansion of the family medicine workforce and improved recognition and status for the role of these community based medical generalists, will be needed to consolidate the progress made to date. And I note the very adverse political context in which all this is being done – both staff and patients sometimes need to tolerate very long journeys and practical challenges simply to attend clinic or hospital, and there are known instabilities continuing to face most parts of the nation. But the hard work and early success of family medicine gave me hope, and I congratulate all involved.

Message from Dr Asad Ramlawi, Deputy Minister of Health, Palestinian Authority.

The Ministry of Health is committed to supporting the family medicine programme at the national level, jointly with An Najah University and the Palestinian Medical Council.

This will be the best step towards universal health coverage which is the only way to improve the Palestinian health system by providing health access for every Palestinian.
C**ollaborative Research:** FIDFMP is dedicated to supporting the integration of research into academic life at ANNU and efforts are underway to help faculty free up academic time for funded research. Work began in April on a ground-breaking UK MRC-funded project into the primary care response to Violence Against Women, starting with a systematic review of impact and risk factors in the eastern Mediterranean Region. The project, led by ANNU researchers in collaboration with UK researchers, involves the Public Health Department at ANNU, Juzoor and FIDFMP members. A pilot training and referral programme will be run in two primary care centres in Spring 2018.

**Missions and Events**

The April mission by members of FIDFMP and MAP, accompanied by Professor Amanda Howe, President, The World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA), was very busy and successful. Highlights included:

- **2 day Supervisors Workshop:** This focused on preparing health centres for practice-based learning. It was attended by board certified Drs, senior Residents, primary care clinicians from UNWRA, and the Medical and Nursing Directors of Primary Care from MoH. It culminated in a Draft Action Plan and is an important step in the direction of building a community of educators.

- **OSCE Workshop:** 18 members of the Palestinian Medical Council (PMC) attended. Dr Amal, Educational Lead for the MoH, gave positive feedback and suggested further links for the future.

- Congratulations to all involved in making the inaugural Palestinian Association of Family Medicine (PAFM) Conference such a success, more details can be found here: www.palsfm.com

**Forthcoming missions and events:**

30th July – 3rd August 2017: Preparations are well underway for a MoH leadership mission to the UK which will include visits to primary healthcare clinics in Bristol and London.

15th October – 18th October: Dr Bishara Bisharat, a senior family practice educator from Nazareth, is leading the development of a communication skills course for family medicine to be delivered in collaboration with FIDFMP and An Najah University.

**FIDFMP Summer update:**

- The Transitional Training Programme (TTP) to support healthcare workers become better family practitioners, is developing well. It is on course to be piloted online in the West Bank from July.

- A draft report for the FIDFMP Mid Term Evaluation is expected this Autumn.

- The first HESPAL (British Council) PhD studentship in University of Bristol has been awarded to an ANNU medical graduate for cardiological research.

- WHO delivered their report Towards Family Healthcare in Palestine at the PAFM conference.