



من الشعب الياباني
From the People of Japan

PRESS RELEASE

Support from Japan for Palestine Refugees

11 November 2013
East Jerusalem

At a ceremony at the Representative Office of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, in Ramallah, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Government of Japan celebrated an important occasion, as Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, accepted a generous contribution of JPY 630 million (US\$ 6.4 million).

The latest donation from Japan will help provide 300,000 Palestine refugees across the Agency's fields with food aid during the second half of 2014. Beneficiaries will receive important staples, including wheat flour, sunflower oil and pulses.

Junya Matsuura, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, reiterated the commitment of Japan to supporting the Palestine refugee community. He said: "We are very proud of our relationship with UNRWA. By working together, we are able to provide important support to Palestine refugees – in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza – many of whom are facing such terrible challenges and growing difficulties."

The Commissioner-General expressed the Agency's gratitude for the donation. He said: "We are extremely grateful to the Government and the people of Japan for their continued generosity and support to UNRWA. At a time of increasing challenges for Palestine refugees, it is heartening to note the growing strength of our relationship with partners like Japan."

Mr. Grandi noted that with the latest donation, the Government of Japan had made its largest ever annual contribution to UNRWA, totaling US\$ 28.8 million in 2013. Support from Japan has been a crucial element of the Agency's response to the ongoing conflict in Syria, has provided emergency support in Gaza and has also supported UNRWA human development services across the five fields. Reflecting its importance as a major UNRWA partner, Japan has been a member of the Agency's Advisory Commission since 1973.

– Ends –

Background information

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some five million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty. As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at US\$ 54.3 million.

For more information, please contact:

Christopher Guinness

UNRWA Spokesperson

Mobile: +972 (0)54 240 2659

Office: +972 (0)2 589 0267

c.gunness@unrwa.org

Sami Mshasha

UNRWA Arabic Spokesperson

Mobile: +972 (0)54 216 8295

Office: +972 (0)2 589 0724

s.mshasha@unrwa.org