



PRESS RELEASE

## **Japan Contributes JPY 630 Million to Support Food Assistance for Palestine Refugees**

30 October 2015

Japanese Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority Takeshi Okubo and UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl signed an agreement earlier today for a JPY 630 million (US\$ 5.73 million) contribution from Japan to support the Agency's food assistance programme for the fourth year in a row.

This generous contribution will benefit nearly 300,000 Palestine refugees in Syria, Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan and Lebanon by allowing for food distributions in the second and third quarter of 2016 that will provide families with basic necessities, such as wheat flour, pulses and sunflower oil. Food insecurity remains a critical issue in all of the Agency's five fields of operations, as armed conflict, restrictions on access and movement, and chronic poverty make it increasingly difficult for many Palestine refugees to meet their minimum food needs.

"We are profoundly grateful for this latest contribution from Japan, which remains one of our most committed and reliable partners," said UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl. "This support will help ensure that UNRWA can continue providing critical food assistance to Palestine refugees as part of our broader efforts to stem the devastating effects of the ongoing turmoil and political insecurity in the region."

Takeshi Okubo, 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 food insecurity in such terrible challenges and growing difficulties.”

Japan has contributed JPY 630 million to the UNRWA food assistance programme every year since 2012. This latest commitment brings the total of Japan’s contributions to UNRWA in 2015 to US\$ 39.5 million.

– Ends –

### **Background information**

UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, and financial support has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, deepening poverty and conflict. As a result, the UNRWA General Fund, which supports core essential services and most staffing costs, operates with a large deficit. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large deficits, are funded through separate funding portals.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

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