



من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan



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**Joint Press Release**  
**Funded by the Government of Japan**  
**UNDP concludes "Dreams and Friends 2" Summer Camp**  
**and Volleyball Tournament- sitting in Gaza**

**Gaza, 16 August 2017-** Reflecting their mutual commitment to empowering youth in the West Bank and Gaza, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Japan, in partnership with Cannan Institute of New Pedagogy and the Palestinian Olympic Committee, celebrated the end of the summer camps "Dreams and Friends 2" and the Volleyball Tournament-sitting in Gaza. The summer camps and volleyball tournament were organized as part of the Tamkeen- Emergency Response to Palestinian Youth through Sport Initiative project, funded by the Government of Japan for the amount of USD 386,000. Around 5000 male and female youth participated in Tamkeen's various sport activities.

H.E. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to Palestine thanked the efforts made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Cannan Institute of New Pedagogy, and the Palestinian Olympic Committee. "Some believe that summer camps are merely about having fun activities, but in addition to that, summer camps hold moral and spiritual values, which help Palestinian children be active, resilient, creative and exposed to diversity of the community," he stated. "The Government of Japan is committed to improving the quality of life for Palestinian people, especially here in Gaza, and we believe that everyone, regardless of abilities, is entitled to achieve his or her full potential despite the severe political and economic situation," he added.

With around 1,200 children participating, the summer camp initiative builds on the success of the "Dreams and Friends 1" summer camp organized in 2016 for children who lost one of their parents during the hostilities on Gaza. The children celebrated the closing of the camp by participating in various activities and games, Dabkeh, painting and others. These activities have helped the children deal with the psychological distresses they were subjected to.

Mr Essa Saba Director of Cannan Institute of New Pedagogy said during the closing ceremony "the programme of summer camps this year is a historical development of summer camps we started forty years ago, the first summer camp was conducted in this place with the participation of 60 children and 10 facilitators. Since then, numbers of children increased and activities ranged from education built on democracy, human rights, active education, protective and psychological support for children especially under the difficult situation of wars, siege and socio-economic condition."

During the ceremony, Dr Assaad Al Majdlawi Deputy Head of Palestinian Olympic Committee said "the tournament we are celebrating today is part of so many sport activities supported the Palestinian youth in Gaza, we thank the Government of Japan for



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their support and I would like to announce that all Palestinian tournaments of the Palestinian Olympic Committee in September will be called Takeshi as Okubo tournament.”

In addition, the Volleyball tournament-sitting was held in cooperation with the Palestinian Olympic Committee and the Palestinian Volleyball Federation-sitting with the participation of eight teams and more than 100 players, who did not give up hope despite their disability. Players participated in different tournaments that raised their spirit and self-appreciation and physical fitness. The closing match was between Al Sadaqa and Al Hilal teams and Al Sadaqa team was crowned as the champion of the tournament.

Mr. Khaled Shahwan, Deputy of Special Representative of the Administrator, thanked the Government of Japan for its continuous support to Palestinian youth, and the partners and youth who participated in the Tamkeen’s activities. “Empowering youth is a priority for UNDP as they are the future. Creating an enabling environment for them to contribute to is critical and sports is one way of giving them that encouragement and hope,” he added.

It is worth noting that the Government of Japan is considered one of UNDP’s strongest partners. The Government of Japan has provided more than USD 344 million to UNDP/PAPP since 1993 for project implementation in the areas of infrastructure, rubble removal, health, education, agriculture, access to justice, and others. The Government of Japan has been providing over USD 1.8 billion worth of assistance to Palestine since 1993, contributing to improving the lives of the Palestinian people.