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PRESS RELEASE

**Legislation on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
in the Near East (UNRWA) Adopted in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset)
(Statement by Foreign Minister IWAYA Takeshi)**

- 1) Japan expresses its grave concern over the legislation adopted by the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) that would severely restrict the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
- 2) Since 1953, Japan has been financially contributing to UNRWA and working closely with the Agency to assist Palestine refugees. UNRWA plays an indispensable role in providing humanitarian assistance as well as health care and education to millions of Palestine refugees not only in the Gaza Strip but throughout the Middle East region.
- 3) Japan is deeply concerned about the further worsening of the humanitarian situation that is already dire due to the protracted fighting in the Gaza Strip, as well as the further deterioration of humanitarian conditions in areas including the West Bank and Lebanon. It is extremely important to sustainably ensure an enabling environment for humanitarian assistance activities by UNRWA and other international organizations, and Japan strongly urges the Government of Israel to maintain such an environment in a sustainable manner.
- 4) At the same time, ensuring neutrality is crucial for UNRWA as it operates in a challenging environment. Commissioner-General Lazzarini has stated that he is fully committed to implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review Group, which was conducted in response to allegations of involvement in the terror attack. Japan will continue to monitor this process and support UNRWA's measures to improve governance.(END)