WHO and Japan sign a new agreement to enhance essential health services and public health functions in Gaza and the West Bank

22 September 2025, Jerusalem - The Government of Japan has announced an additional contribution of JPY 861,000,000 (US$ 5.86 million) to the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the Ministry of Health in enhancing essential health services and public health functions in Gaza and the West Bank.

The new project is expected to benefit 1.4 million people across the oPt.

The grant signing event was attended H.E Dr. Maged Awni Abu Ramadan, Minister of Health, H.E. ARAIKE Katsuhiko, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs, and Dr Richard Peeperkorn, the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

The health situation in the oPt remains catastrophic. In Gaza, more than 50% of hospitals are non-functional, while those still operating are overwhelmed by the surge in injuries and crippled by severe shortages of medicines, fuel, and medical supplies. Continuous attacks on health facilities and workers have left thousands without access to care, and the situation is rapidly worsening with the latest evacuation order covering Northern Gaza,

which will further overwhelm the already full hospitals in the south. In the West Bank, movement restrictions and supply shortages continue to strain overburdened facilities.

In line with WHO's Operational plan for 2025, the new project will focus on three critical areas:

Maintaining life-saving health services in Gaza by providing emergency, surgical, primary health care and non-communicable disease supplies; supporting facilities with renovations, expansions, or workforce needs; and enabling the operations of national Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs).

Strengthening public health functions by improving early warning, alert and response systems in Gaza; training and deploying rapid response teams for outbreak emergencies; supporting the Ministry of Health in upgrading the early warning, alert and response system (EWARS) in the West Bank; and equipping facilities with infection prevention and control (IPC) and WASH supplies.

Supporting early recovery through rehabilitation of key primary health care centers and a physical rehabilitation center in Gaza.

H.E Dr Maged Awni Abu Ramadan, Minister of Health said, "In these difficult circumstances, this project, generously funded by the Government of Japan and in partnership with the World Health Organization, represents significant support for the Palestinian health sector. This is not just a document or budget figures, but a lifeline that ensures the continuity of services, strengthens our health capabilities, and gives us hope for beginning the process of recovery and reconstruction. We appreciate the tremendous efforts and thank the Japanese people, government, and leadership for their humanitarian solidarity. We affirm their continued generous support for Palestine, as well as for the World Health Organization, which supports and assists our Palestinian health system in various ways. We need more partnerships, resources, and solidarity to save the Palestinian health sector."

H.E. Mr. Araike Katsuhiko, Ambassador of Japan to the State of Palestine, reaffirmed Japan's commitment to supporting the Palestinian people. "We are gravely concerned by the unprecedented humanitarian and health crisis unfolding in Gaza and the West Bank. The

destruction of hospitals, shortages of medicines, and the daily struggle to access even the most basic services have pushed millions to the brink. Supporting WHO's Operational Response Plan 2025 is a humanitarian imperative—not only to save lives and safeguard dignity, but also to ensure that essential health care remains accessible to Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank."

Dr Rik Peeperkorn, WHO Representative for oPt said, "WHO thanks the Government of Japan for its steadfast support. At this critical moment, Japan's support and solidarity is vital to ensure health remains a fundamental right for all Palestinians. We will continue working with the Ministry of Health and partners to help ensure equitable access to essential health services, advocate for the protection of health, and support in improving the resilience of the fragile health system."

Since October 2023, Japan's support to oPt through WHO has totaled US$ 11.4 million through two grants for Gaza and the West Bank. This timely assistance has played a vital role in sustaining the life-saving health response during the ongoing unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The additional contribution will further strengthen and sustain essential health services for Palestinians at a time of critical need.