WFP/Japan ODA News Release

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Japan continues support to the food insecurity in Gaza

Ramallah, 25 August 2011 – A signing ceremony today between Japan and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) marks Japan's continued commitment to provide food assistance to the poorest of the poor in the Gaza Strip, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Japan's generous contribution of US$ 3.3 million comes in support of the Palestinian Authority (PA) Ministry of Social Affairs Social Safety Net reform plan. Under this plan, Palestinian people living in extreme poverty receive a food ration, a cash grant and health insurance on a regular basis. The distribution of the food rations is ensured by WFP as part of the Assistance to the Destitute (ATD) activities in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs. This new allocation comes in addition to the US$ 3.1 million already received from Japan in August 2010 for the ATD activity in the West Bank.

With Japan's new assistance, WFP will purchase over 3,300 metric tons of food in the region, including wheat flour and chick peas. Together with an in-kind donation of Japanese canned fish, WFP will be able to cover the basic food needs of 92,000 people for three months in 2012.

"The Japanese Government is determined to continue its support to the Palestinian people", said Mr. Naofumi Hashimoto, Representative of Japan to the Palestinian National Authority. "This support comes from a human security perspective as well as from its firm stand for supporting the Palestinian efforts to establish a viable independent Palestinian state and to develop the capacities of governmental and local institutions in providing basic daily services to people."

The food assistance provided by WFP to the destitute in Gaza covers 70-90 percent of the daily caloric requirements for a healthy diet, depending on the family size. The WFP food basket makes a big difference for these families, all of

whom live below the deep poverty line, earning less than NIS 1,870 (USD 550) per month per family.

According to the 2010 Socio-Economic and Food Security survey carried out by WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), food insecurity in the Gaza Strip is estimated at 52 percent. It is a direct consequence of the blockade which is crippling the local economy. While food is available in the market, a general lack of income earning opportunities for Gaza households makes the food items inaccessible to most.

Since 1993, Japan has contributed more than US$18.5 million to WFP operations in the oPt, which is a part of Japan's total assistance to the Palestinians exceeding USD 1.2 billion since 1993.

"Despite the major disaster that affected Japan in March 2011, Japan is showing the world once again that it will not give up its leadership in the fight against hunger and poverty worldwide", said Christine van Nieuwenhuyse, WFP Country Director in oPt.

Today's ceremony in Ramallah is attended by H.E. Mr. Naofumi Hashimoto, Representative of Japan to the Palestinian National Authority, the PA Minister of Social Affairs, H.E. Mrs Majida Al-Masri, the PA Minister of Planning and Development, H.E. Mr Ali Jarbawi, and WFP's Representative and Country Director Mrs. Christine van Nieuwenhuyse.

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Scene of the signing ceremony

Exchanging Notes