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From the People of Japan

PRESS RELEASE

## Support from Japan for Palestine Refugees

20 February 2014  
East Jerusalem

At the Kalandia Training Centre in Ramallah, Margot Ellis, Deputy Commissioner-General of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), accepted a generous contribution of approximately US\$ 16 million from Junya Matsuura, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative to the Palestinian Authority of the Government of Japan.

"This will prove to be another challenging year for the Agency," Ms. Ellis noted, "and even more challenging for Palestine refugees all across the region. The reliable and generous support we have received from Japan has been crucial in allowing UNRWA to maintain both essential services in education and health, as well as to respond to the pressing emergencies that have created desperate and urgent needs."

Of the total Japanese contribution, the majority, US\$ 10 million, will support UNRWA health activities for Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory. Approximately US\$ 3.7 million will help the Agency provide emergency food, health and education services in Syria, while US\$ 2.3 million will support the UNRWA response to the needs of Palestine refugees from Syria in Lebanon. Some 2.25 million Palestine refugees across the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Syria and Lebanon will benefit.

Ambassador Matsuura emphasized Japan's continued support to the Palestine refugee community. He said: "We in Japan are committed to helping Palestine refugees have access to the support and the services they need. These things - education, food, health care - are basic, but it is only with these needs fulfilled that they can work towards a brighter year."

The Government of Japan has been a major UNRWA partner for many years, and has responded generously to support UNRWA programmes throughout the region. As a

member of the UNRWA Advisory Commission since 1973, Japan has also provided vital advice and support to the Agency's Commissioner-General.

— Ends —

## **Background information**

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

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty. As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at US\$ 65 million.

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