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From the People of Japan



MEDIA RELEASE

Japan grants \$11.66 million to improve the lives of children in Gaza

RAMALLAH, State of Palestine, 11 March 2015 – The Government of Japan is contributing USD \$11.66 million in support of UNICEF's humanitarian response to children and women in Gaza.

The grant will enable UNICEF and partners to help children and their families to start rebuilding their lives amid the rubble and psychosocial distress left by last summer's 50-day conflict in Gaza.

"This USD \$11.66 million grant is a token of Japanese people's support and dedication to improving the lives of the most vulnerable children. Japan recently decided to disburse USD\$100 million mainly through international organizations including UNICEF. We will continue working closely for children and their families in Gaza," said **Junya Matsuura**, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority.

This latest grant will provide opportunities to increase children's resilience and strengthen their coping mechanisms, including support to remedial and catch-up learning opportunities; psychosocial support; and opportunities for young people to learn new skills and positively engage in their communities.

It will also enable UNICEF and its partners to rehabilitate the structures and services damaged in the latest escalation of violence, in particular those providing safe drinking water and sanitation, and to further strengthen partners' capacity in terms of emergency preparedness.

"We are extremely grateful for the Government and the people of Japan's continued commitment and support to Palestinian children," said **June Kunugi**, UNICEF State of Palestine Special Representative, noting that Japan has a long history of supporting UNICEF to improve the lives and well-being of Palestinian children and their families.

"We hope this support will help bring hope and stability to the children and people of Gaza, and will be the first step towards relief and recovery that is critical for development and nation building," Kunugi added.

Japan has continued to support Palestinians since the 1993 Oslo Accord and provided UNICEF with around USD 63 million for its work with Palestinian children, including grants for emergency relief work during rounds of armed conflict. Japan is one of the five largest contributors to UNICEF in the world.

The nearly one million children and adolescents who live in Gaza were exposed to unprecedented levels of violence and destruction during this summer's 51-day armed conflict. 539 children were killed and 2,956 injured, and nearly 400,000 are in need of psychosocial support.

The conflict also had a tremendous impact on education: at least 281 schools were damaged, of which two government schools were completely destroyed. The shortage of over 200 schools, and the fact that two-thirds of schools operate on double shifts make it difficult for students to resume learning and to recover.

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