



Japanese Donation Protects Communities against Explosive Remnants of War in Gaza

08 August 2017

Gaza

The Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, Ambassador Takeshi Okubo, and the Programme Manager of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Palestine Programme, marked the completion of the Japan funded project to clear and remove explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Gaza. The event, held in Gaza City included ERW risk education demonstrations, as well as a photography display showcasing the completed DBB activities.

Japan through its support to a multi-donor funded project enabled the UNMAS in April 2017 to clear the last known accessible unexploded aircraft bomb in Gaza, marking an important milestone in addressing the legacy of unexploded ordnance contamination in the conflict-affected area. Since the 2014 conflict, UNMAS has cleared and destroyed 29 tons of explosive material derived from 149 unexploded aerial bombs in Gaza. This important work protects Gazan communities directly impacted by the presence of unexploded ordnances.

In addition to clearance of ERW, UNMAS undertook further activities to mitigate against the threat posed by explosive remnants of war by providing risk education to impacted communities including children, farmers, construction workers and all those at risk of death or injury from explosive remnants buried in rubble and below ground. During the period of the project, UNMAS delivered risk education to 28,500 people including 18,370 children.

Through the Japan contribution, UNMAS also provided support to projects rebuilding Gazan communities by ensuring construction activities could be conducted safely. UNMAS supported 31 construction projects including three JICA water management projects, by providing targeted risk assessments on the threat of ERW.

In this context, the Government of Japan, contributed on behalf of the people of Japan a grant of USD 500,000 to the multi-donor UNMAS intervention from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

UNMAS deeply welcomes the ERW clearance activities funded by Japan, which enables Gazans to rebuild their communities following the 2014 escalation in hostilities, secure in the knowledge that they are safe from the threat of ERW.

At the event on 8 August 2017, Ambassador Takeshi Okubo said: "Today, women, men, and children in Gaza are exposed to an increasingly wide range of explosive hazards in debris of destroyed or damaged infrastructure. It made clean-up efforts extremely dangerous, obstructed socioeconomic development, and threatened the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza. Therefore, Japan funded this project to support early recovery efforts as well as to protect the civilians in Gaza". He also added that Japan marked the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on Sunday, and conveyed Hiroshima's message of peace and prosperity to the world and Palestine in pursuit of a lasting end to the conflict".

UNMAS Programme Manager Mr. Sasha Logie said: "We extend our sincerest words of appreciation and respect to the government and people of Japan for the generous donation, which will make such an important contribution to improving the lives of those impacted by explosive remnants of past conflicts. To quote the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres "No one should have to live in fear of dying even after the fighting stops". The solidarity and support shown yet again by Japan with this donation are remarkable."

Japan has long been a valued donor to UNMAS. In the 12 month period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, Japan contributed a grant of USD 3 million to the same project in Gaza, and in the current year, 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, Japan contributed USD 905,000.