



UNRWA

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Japan Donates \$5.9 million to Palestine Refugees

Gaza –

The Government of Japan has announced a donation of US\$ 5.9 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The donation includes an emergency grant of US\$ 1,513,200 to support UNRWA's emergency activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip where the refugees have been suffering the effects of violence, curfews and closures.

The emergency grant will enable UNRWA to provide equipment and supplies to its health centres in Gaza to meet the increased medical care the refugees there. It will also be able to provide mobile medical services for 700,000 Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank denied adequate medical services and distribute self-learning materials for 190,000 Palestinian primary school students in Gaza whose schooling has been affected by the intifada.

In addition to Japan's prompt response to UNRWA's 2004 Emergency Appeal, it has recently announced the decision to extend assistance of approximately 4,400,000 dollars in total to UNRWA to support its implementation of four projects in the educational sector and to assist its general budgets in education.

The project assistance includes the construction and equipping of 28 classrooms, two computer laboratories and outbuildings in Gaza. The introduction of an associate nursing course in Amman Training Centre for refugees in Jordan (about \$230,000) and the funding of a Japan Scholarship Programme for university applicants residing in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

The remaining US\$ 3.36 million will be contributed to UNRWA's regular budget, including US\$ 1 million earmarked for the Agency's education programme.

The Agency, which provides direct humanitarian assistance for more than 4 million Palestine refugees, is grateful for Japan's generous commitment to the refugees. During a visit to Japan last month, Mr. Peter Hansen, UNRWA's Commissioner General, urged Japan and UNRWA to work together to improve the humanitarian conditions for the Palestine refugees.

Japan's contribution to UNRWA's 2004 Emergency Appeal is particularly timely. The Agency launched its appeal for \$193 million in December to allow it to provide food aid, job creation programmes and other emergency relief. So far just over 20 per cent of the Agency's needs have been pledged but very little actually received. If funds are not forthcoming UNRWA will be forced to slash some of its planned programmes, thereby causing great hardship in the refugee community.

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