



**Statement by United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,
Nickolay Mladenov, on the situation in Gaza**

Jerusalem, 2 April 2019

“For the past year the United Nations has engaged constructively with Egypt and all concerned parties to avoid escalation, relieve the suffering of people in Gaza, lift the closures, and support intra-Palestinian reconciliation. I welcome the efforts of all sides to do their utmost to avoid escalation and any further unnecessary bloodshed and destruction.

To date significant headway has been made on the implementation of the package of urgent humanitarian and economic interventions endorsed by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) in September 2018 to stabilize the situation in Gaza, prevent an escalation, and support Egyptian-led reconciliation efforts. Since then, nearly USD 110 million for fuel, health, water, sanitation and temporary employment programmes has been raised.

The UN and its partners have mobilized nearly USD 45 million that will allow for the creation of approximately 20,000 temporary jobs in 2019. Discussions with the Palestinian and Israeli governments, and the private sector continue to support sustainable job creation, the expansion of Gaza’s industrial sectors and generally improving economic conditions and movement and access. Improved electricity supply has positively affected the delivery of basic services and the operations of water and wastewater facilities.

Since September, approximately USD 4.6 million in support to the Humanitarian Response Plan has contributed to the delivery of large quantities of 15 types of essential drugs and the performance of some 9,500 emergency surgeries. To increase transparency and credibility with donors, the UN has developed a monitoring framework for medical supplies and drugs in Gaza.

An amount of USD 3 million has been pledged to support immediate needs in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. Over the coming period it is expected that construction on the associated works of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant will also begin.

These efforts will continue in coordination with all stakeholders, yet at its core the crisis in Gaza is political. Significant progress on the lifting of the closures and advancing intra-Palestinian reconciliation remain essential. I call on all Palestinian factions to engage in earnest with Egypt on reconciliation efforts.

I welcome Israel’s decision to increase the fishing zone to 15 nautical miles in certain places and urge for a substantial improvement of the movement and access for goods and people, including between Gaza and the West Bank.

I reiterate that there can be no state in Gaza, and there can be no state without Gaza. Ultimately, only sustainable political solutions will reverse the current negative trajectory and restore hope to Gaza's long-suffering population."

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