Japan International Cooperation Agency

Department of Refugee Affairs

Joint Press Release	JICA Palestine Office JICA Ramallah Field Office	Tel: 02-2409558 Fax: 02-2402724

TO: News Editors

EVENT: Record of Discussion Signing Ceremony of Technical Assistance Project: "Refugee Camp Improvement Project".

VENUE: Department of Refugee Affairs, 6th Floor– Ramallah – Palestine

DATE: 31stAugust 2016

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Head of Department of Refugee Affairs (DoRA), H.E. Dr. Zakaria Al-Agha, and JICA's Chief Representative Ms. Yuko MITSUI signed "Refugee Camp Improvement Project" on Wednesday, 31st August, 2016, with presence of representatives of Ministry of Finance and Planning.
The project will be implemented by DoRA and Japanese experts for improving capacity of DoRA and relevant community groups necessary for camp improvement. This is the first cooperation between DoRA and JICA.

Improvement of living and socio-economic conditions of Palestinian refugee camps remains as one of the serious challenges for both refugees and Palestinian Authority (PA). Noting that the rate of unemployment in the camps is 24.8% and poverty rate is 39% which are higher than those found outside the camps which are 17.8% for unemployment rate and 29.5% for poverty rate respectively.

Furthermore, as situations in the camps have changed over the years, there is now a substantial gap between services provided by UNRWA and high demand of the refugees in the camps in terms of both quantity and quality. While UNRWA provides free education, health services, and other relief support to refugees, other development needs such as rehabilitation of worn-out infrastructure and support to livelihood and employment remain mostly unmet, under the limited resources of Popular Committees of the camps and ad-hoc support from international communities. PA recognizes the needs of refugee camp improvement as one of the priority challenges in the National Development Plan (2014-2016).

In order to improve its development, DoRA requested for cooperation to Government of Japan. The objective of this three-year Project (2016-2019) is that capacity of DoRA and camp improvement platforms in target camps in participatory planning and project implementation is strengthened. Three refugee camps are selected as the target camps; Aqbat Jaber Refugee Camp in the Jericho Governorate has already been selected as one of the project site. DoRA staff and Japanese experts shall work together on the activities toward the objective. "Planning manual for camp improvement" and "Implementation manual for camp improvement project" are expected to be developed and utilized in the project.

JICA, the executing agency of Japan, will commit assistance in the protection of socially vulnerable including refugee for the people of Palestine.

In turn; Department of Refugee Affairs will be committed to provide all necessary support and facilitation to JICA to success the project and achieve its objectives.