Joint Press Release

$547 million funding appeal to address humanitarian needs in Palestine during 2017

Bethlehem, 19 December 2016

Today, the Minister of Social Development of the State of Palestine, H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Al-Shaer, and the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Mr. Robert Piper, launched the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2017, to support the humanitarian needs of 1.6 million Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

“From the holy city of Bethlehem, we call upon the international community to exert the utmost effort to end occupation,” said Minister Al-Shaer. “This occupation has left many Palestinians highly vulnerable, whether 'inside' or 'outside' Palestine. How can Palestinians achieve economic prosperity and social cohesion, while living under occupation without sovereignty; without being able to control our lives and destiny; without being able to enjoy our political, social and economic rights; without enjoying our natural resources; without using our lands; without geographic integrity between West Bank including Jerusalem and Gaza? In Palestine, people look forward to a life without poverty, hunger, violence, and brutal military occupation. Ending occupation is vital to moving forward so that we no longer need to be producing humanitarian appeals like the one being launched today.”

“As Christmas draws near, global attention turns toward Bethlehem,” said Mr. Piper. “What we see in Bethlehem today mirrors the challenges of many Palestinian communities in the oPt; territorial

fragmentation, restrictions on movement, poor access to services and the pressures of a settlement enterprise that continues unchecked. Some 50 miles from here, Palestinians in Gaza are facing their tenth year under a blockade that precludes any vestige of 'normal life'. This humanitarian funding appeal seeks to give a hand to the most vulnerable, the worst affected amongst Palestinian households across the whole occupied territory."

According to humanitarian assessments, some 1.8 million people are in high need of protection in the oPt and 1.6 million people are moderately to severely food insecure. In Gaza, over 50,000 people remain displaced from the 2014 hostilities, while 8,000 people in the West Bank are at high risk of forcible transfer due to a coercive environment. Throughout the oPt, hundreds of thousands of people still have restricted access to essential services.

The 2017 HRP is the fifteenth coordinated appeal in the oPt. It aims to extend protection to Palestinians living under occupation, in accordance with international law, to ensure access to basic services for the most vulnerable Palestinians and to strengthen the capacity of families to cope with the continued pressures of life under occupation.

The Plan seeks US $547 million in donor funding to implement 243 projects by 95 organizations, including 47 national and 35 international NGOs, and 13 UN agencies. Nearly 70 per cent of the requested funds target Gaza, where humanitarian needs are highest due to the blockade and recurrent hostilities, further exacerbated by the impact of internal Palestinian divisions.

"International support is critical to continue providing relief to vulnerable Palestinians," said Mr. Piper. "But we are just trying to buy time – this humanitarian response must be coupled with bold political action to bring the world's most protracted protection crisis to a close."

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