PRESS RELEASE

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabic Contributes US$ 59 Million to UNRWA to Support Projects in the occupied Palestinian territory and Jordan

4 February 2016
Amman

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), has donated US$ 59 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for projects to be implemented in Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan. This contribution was confirmed through three agreements that were signed in London by SFD Vice-Chairman and Managing Director H.H. Eng. Yousef al-Bassam and UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl on 4 February 2016.

H.H. Eng. al-Bassam said: “UNRWA is playing a vital role in providing basic needs and social services for Palestine refugees. The Government of Saudi Arabia, through the Saudi Fund for Development, will continue its support to the Palestinian people in all fields.”

The first agreement, valued at US $43.5 million, will support ongoing projects in Gaza, including the repair of more than 7,500 shelters for Palestinians whose homes were damaged during the 2014 conflict and the maintenance of three UNRWA schools. The second agreement, valued at US$ 8 million, will provide funds for much-needed maintenance on nine UNRWA schools and 10 health centres in Jordan. The third agreement, valued at US$ 7.5 million, will provide funds for the reconstruction, furnishing and equipping of three health centres in the West Bank.

Paying tribute to this timely and generous contribution, Mr. Krähenbühl said: “I am extremely grateful to the government and the people of Saudi Arabia for the sustained support that the Kingdom has extended to UNRWA over the years. Their

contributions have made an enormous difference in the lives of thousands of Palestine refugees. I would like to express particular appreciation for the role played by the Saudi Fund for Development in delivering Saudi assistance. Our partnership with the Fund is deeply rewarding."

Saudi Arabia has contributed more than US$ 500 million to UNRWA to date. Over the past three years, the Kingdom has become the Agency's third largest donor. It has also been a valued member of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, which advises and assists the Commissioner-General in carrying out the Agency's mandate, since 2005.

– Ends –

Background information

UNRWA is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from a growth in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions and financial support has been outpaced by the growth in needs. As a result, the UNRWA Programme Budget, which supports the delivery of core essential services, operates with a large shortfall, projected for 2016 to stand at US$ 81 million. UNRWA emergency programmes and key projects, also operating with large shortfalls, are funded through separate funding portals.

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and mandated to provide assistance and protection to some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip achieve their full human development potential, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

For more information, please contact:

Christopher Gunness
UNRWA Spokesperson
Mobile: +972 (0)54 240 2659
Office: +972 (0)2 589 0267
c.gunness@unrwa.org
Twitter: @ChrisGunness

Sami Mshasha
UNRWA Arabic Spokesperson
Mobile: +972 (0)54 216 8295
Office: +972 (0)2 589 0724
s.mshasha@unrwa.org