PRESS RELEASE

UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl Concludes Three-Day Visit to Japan

28 October 2016
East Jerusalem

The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Pierre Krähenbühl, concluded a three-day mission to Japan in recognition of the long-standing partnership between UNRWA and Japan and to draw attention to the current situation of Palestine refugees in the Agency's fields of operations.

The Commissioner-General met with the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga, with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nobuo Kishi, with former Prime Minister of Japan and Representative of the Government of Japan for the World Humanitarian Summit, Yasuo Fukuda and other senior government officials. The discussions focused on the importance to improve prospects for Palestine Refugees, in particular youth, and on avenues to further expand the exemplary cooperation with Japan.

Mr. Krähenbühl also met with the Director-General of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Takio Yamada. He expressed deep appreciation for Japan's genuine solidarity and record-level support to UNRWA in 2016. The Commissioner-General further met with the Director-General of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs , Tsukasa Uemura, and with the Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for the Middle East Peace Process, Masaharu Kohno.

A meeting took place with the Senior Vice-President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Kazuhiko Koshikawa following a seminar that was

organized by the JICA Research Institute, where Mr. Krähenbühl delivered a lecture on the Agency's work and on the importance to keep a strong focus on Palestine refugees.

He also met with several parliamentarians, including Taro Kono, Toshiko Abe, Mitsunari Okamoto and Keiichi Koshimizu from the House of Representatives, as well as Natsuo Yamaguchi, Keizo Takemi and Masaaki Taniai from the House of Councilors. Furthermore, Mr Krähenbühl met and exchanged views with representatives from several Japan-based NGOs working on Palestine refugees issues.

The Commissioner-General expressed his sincere gratitude and said: "The level of concern for the Palestine refugee community, the interest in UNRWA's work and the respect for our staff was a source of great encouragement during the visit. I look forward to our continued partnership with Japan."

In 2015, Japan was among the top five donors to the Agency's core programmes and services, including education, health care, and relief and social services. Earlier this month, Japan announced an additional contribution of JPY 420 million (approximately US$ 4 million) to support the UNRWA food assistance programme in Gaza, bringing the total contributions to UNRWA in 2016 to U$ 44 million. A record year for Japan's support to UNRWA.

– Ends –