PRESS RELEASE

United Arab Emirates Contributes US$ 15 Million in Support of UNRWA Education in Gaza

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East Jerusalem

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) today announced a new US$ 15 million contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for its education programme in Gaza.

The UAE contribution will allow UNRWA to enhance its education programme in the Gaza Strip by supporting the continued development of teaching methods and skills and by ensuring a safe learning environment for Palestine refugee children.

This contribution will also include the provision of educational materials, stationery and school bags, alleviating the financial burden that students and their families face at the beginning of every school year.

Announcing the new contribution, the UAE State Minister for International Cooperation Affairs, H.E. Reem al-Hashemi, said, “The United Arab Emirates is committed to providing support and assistance for Palestine refugees. Furthermore, our Emirates and its people believe in the importance of education in building a better future for youth, and we will continue to work with our partners at UNRWA to provide the required support to protect and advocate for the rights of children and youth to education. UNRWA is an important partner in achieving the goals that we strive for, and we look forward to enhancing our mutual efforts to support urgent humanitarian issues.”

From his side, UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl expressed his gratitude for the major role played by the United Arab Emirates in supporting UNRWA

and the Palestine refugees. “The great support that the United Arab Emirates has provided in recent years for UNRWA's operations mainly in Syria and Gaza, had a direct impact on the lives of Palestine refugees. The United Arab Emirates has been one of the Agency’s major supporters for education, which is the largest UNRWA programme and one that preserves the identity and the dignity of Palestine refugees,” said Mr. Krähenbühl.

In Gaza, UNRWA runs more than 267 schools, providing educational services to more than 263,000 Palestine refugee children through nearly 8,700 teachers, most of whom are refugees themselves. Over the past 65 years, UNRWA has run one of the largest and most successful school systems in the Middle East, despite the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip, whichentered its tenth year of blockade, as well as the delay in the reconstruction process following the 2014 conflict.

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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. UNRWA encourages all Member States to work collectively to exert all possible efforts to fully fund the Agency’s Programme Budget. 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, protection and microfinance.

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