oPt Humanitarian Fund releases US$2.2 million to alleviate urgent humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip

Today, the UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities, Robert Piper, released US$ 2.2 million from the occupied Palestinian territory Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) to cover urgent additional needs in the Gaza Strip in the areas of health and food security.

The allocation comes in the context of an overall deterioration in conditions in the Gaza Strip in 2017 following the worsening of the electricity crisis that has left Gaza's nearly two million, already suffering from 10 years of Israeli blockade and internal Palestinian divisions, with an average of only four to six hours of electricity per day, severely disrupting daily life and the provision of basic services.

With this support from the oPt HF, humanitarian agencies will enable essential and life-saving child and maternal health interventions in Gaza, through provision of incubators and phototherapy equipment to neonatal intensive care units and intensive care units in Gaza hospitals as well as essential lifesaving medical and non-medical supplies, in order to reduce avoidable deaths and illness.

It will also enable the most vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip to immediately access fresh and nutritious local food through the provision of six-month fresh food vouchers for families falling below the deep poverty line, with insufficient or no access to means of assistance and with limited capacity to meet their households' basic food needs. Finally, it will support livelihoods and improved food security of farmers to overcome the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip, through provision of solar power systems and agricultural supplies.

The oPt Humanitarian Fund is a pooled funding mechanism, operated from donations from the Governments of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

"In spite of political movement towards Palestinian reconciliation in recent months, most of the measures adopted by the Palestinian Authority since March 2017, which triggered the latest deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, are yet to be reversed" said Mr. Piper. "With each day that passes without improvement, hopes diminish and frustrations rise. We must summon the resources and political will to bring change to Gaza."

** The oPt HF is an emergency pooled fund that supports the delivery of strategic humanitarian assistance to address priority needs, while retaining the flexibility to respond unforeseen emergencies or events.*