PRESS RELEASE

UNRWA and EU Celebrate the Launch of a Project to Improve UNRWA Health and Educational Facilities



Tomas Niklasson (center), EU Deputy Head Representative for the oPt makes some comments during the inauguration ceremony of the Healthy Living, Healthy spaces campaign launched in Dheheisheh refugee camp yesterday. Also pictured (from left to right): Mustafa Younes, Camp Service Officer of Dheisheh Camp; Mohammad Laham, Community member and Palestinian Legislative Council member; Kazem Abu Khalaf, Senior Advisor for Political and Local Affairs; Scott Anderson, Director of UNRWA Operations West Bank; Eissa

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the European Union (EU) yesterday jointly launched the *Healthy Living, Healthy Spaces* (HLHS) campaign to improve the facilities in UNRWA schools.

The EU-funded campaign aims to improve UNRWA educational facilities and provide a healthy and safe environment for Palestine refugee students by improving the educational environment. This initiative includes the improvement, rehabilitation decoration of playgrounds and outside school areas. Facilities at UNRWA health centers and health points will also be improved through renovation and maintenance works to enhance medical services provided to Palestine refugees as part of EU sponsorship linked to the HLHS campaign.

Such rehabilitation works were recently completed in the UNRWA Dheisheh Girls' School where the launching ceremony of the campaign was organized. The ceremony was attended by the Director of UNRWA Operations in the West Bank, Scott Anderson, Tomas Niklasson, the Deputy EU Representative to the West Bank and Gaza, and Mohammad Al-Laham, a representative of the local camp services committee. The ceremony included learning stations, glass art and face painting, an EU trivia competition, and a Dabkeh dance performance. During the ceremony, students and UNRWA staff played a friendly volleyball match, representing Team Healthy Living and Team Healthy Spaces, respectively.

"Our partnership with UNRWA is based on a mutual understanding of the need to support Palestine refugees. Today's event is an excellent illustration of this partnership, as we celebrate together the launch of a vital campaign linked to the EU's sponsorship programme of 50 schools, as well as 15 health centres in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Lebanon," said Deputy EU Representative Tomas Niklasson. "The campaign opts for better education, better health, and better futures – and this is exactly what we wish to achieve together with UNRWA for children and their families present today," he added.

The Director of UNRWA Operations in the West Bank, Scott Anderson, praised the initiative saying, "The European Union remains a stalwart donor of UNRWA and the Palestine refugee community. We are very grateful to the EU for their generous contribution toward improving the environment of several health centers and schools throughout the West Bank including Dheisheh Girl's School. The EU's contributions to the programme budget continues to allow UNRWA to provide critical and core services to Palestine refugees in a dignifying way."

Upon its completion, the *Healthy Living, Healthy Spaces* campaign will have seen through the improvement of a total 50 schools and 15 health centres under sponsorship, across the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan.

EU AND UNRWA: TOGETHER FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES

Since 1971, the European Union and UNRWA have maintained a strategic partnership governed by the shared objective to support the human development, humanitarian and protection needs of Palestine refugees and promote stability in the Middle East. Today, the European Union is the largest multilateral provider of international assistance to Palestine refugees. This reliable and predictable support from the European Union enables UNRWA to provide core services to more than 5 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, including quality education for roughly half a million children and primary health care for more than 3.5 million patients. Collectively, the EU and its Member States are also among the largest contributors to the Agency's humanitarian emergency appeals and projects in response to various crises and specific needs across the region. The partnership between the European Union and UNRWA has allowed millions of Palestine refugees to be better educated, live healthier lives, access employment opportunities and improve their living conditions, thus contributing to the development of the entire region.

In addition to the EUR 91.5 million EU contribution to the Programme Budget in 2017, the EU funds ad hoc projects and humanitarian programmes in response to specific needs.

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