22 March 2018
East Jerusalem

Italy Contributes EUR 2 Million to Support UNRWA Vocational Training, Job Creation and Graduate Training Programmes in the Gaza Strip and Gender Equity within UNRWA Schools in the West Bank.

The Consul General of Italy to Jerusalem, Mr. Fabio Sokolowicz, and the Director of External Relations and Communications of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Ms. Francoise Vanni, along with Ms. Cristina Natoli, Representative of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation Office in Jerusalem, signed on 20 March 2018 a general agreement for an **Italian contribution in support of UNRWA Vocational Training, Job Creation and Graduate Training Programmes, as well as gender equity within UNRWA schools in the West Bank in the total amount of EUR 2 million.**

EUR 1.35 million of Italy's contribution will go towards supporting the Agency's initiatives to generate short-term employment opportunities and provide alternative tertiary educational opportunities through its two Technical and Vocational Education Training Centers in Gaza in 2018. It is hoped that this will generate a certain degree of economic activity in the Strip. In addition, the contribution will support the UNRWA Job Creation Programme and Graduate Training Programme in Gaza with the aim to generate short-term employment opportunities for poor and vulnerable Palestine refugees.

Italy will contribute up to EUR 650,000 in support of an UNRWA pilot project to promote gender equity within its schools in the West Bank. The recognition that the experiences and realities of Palestine refugees with respect to child protection and gender equity vary greatly is at the core of the UNRWA mission. In particular, the risks and threats that impede the realization of their rights are different between women, men, girls and boys. The fulfilment of the rights of women and girls is indivisible from the UNRWA mandate to serve Palestine refugees.

Italy has long been one of the Agency's most reliable donors, contributing a total of EUR 91,762,678 since 2007. In 2017, the Italian Government contributed up to EUR 12,250,592 to support UNRWA in its five fields of operations and plans to continue its substantial contribution in 2018.

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.

AICS JERUSALEM (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation) is the Italian Governmental Entity dedicated to the implementation of development cooperation projects in Palestine. Currently, among grants and soft loans, Italy is implementing development projects and humanitarian AID Programmes for a **total amount of Euros 187 million**. AICS Jerusalem is also EU Lead Donor in the sectors of GEWE (Gender Equality and Women Empowerment) and Health Care, in addition of being active donor for the Economic Development of Palestine.

For more information, please contact:

Marco Giallonardi
AICS Communication Officer
Mobile:
+972 (0)54 8118513
giallonardi@itcoop-jer.org

Christopher Gunness
Spokesperson, Director of Advocacy & Strategic Communications
Mobile:
+972 (0)54 240 2659
Office:
+972 (0)2 589 0267
c.gunness@unrwa.org (link sends e-mail)

Sami Mshasha
Chief of Communications, Arabic Language Spokesperson
Mobile:
+972 (0)54 216 8295
Office:
+972 (0)258 90724
s.mshasha@unrwa.org (link sends e-mail)