PRESS RELEASE

United Arab Emirates makes extraordinary contribution of US$ 50 million to UNRWA

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Jerusalem

UNRWA warmly welcomes a US$ 50 million contribution announced upon the directives of the President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Khalifah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This remarkable support by the United Arab Emirates comes as UNRWA faces the most serious financial crisis in its history. It represents an important step towards preserving UNRWA's crucial services to 5.4 million Palestine refugees in the Middle East.

Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl commended this unprecedented decision, saying: "The UAE is a valued and dynamic partner, standing with UNRWA and for the dignity and rights of Palestine Refugees. I am immensely grateful for this outstanding announcement, which confirms the UAE's commitment to our mandate and the preservation of hope for Palestine Refugees." Mr Krähenbühl added: "I would like to take this opportunity to honour the UAE on the occasion of the 'Year of Zayed', marking a centenary since the birth of its founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan."

Since its establishment in 1972, the UAE has been a consistent supporter of the UNRWA education program. Its funding has grown significantly in recent years and allowed to keep schools open and preserve access to education for 526,000 girls and boys - among them 270,000 in the Gaza Strip alone.

"The UAE is an ardent supporter of UNRWA and the life-saving work that the organization accomplishes for the Palestinian people. We pledge to provide an additional US$ 50 million to mainly support UNRWA's education and health care

activities," said Minister of State for International Cooperation Her Excellency Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashimy.

The partnership plays an important role in empowering Palestine Refugee youth, developing skills and preserving opportunities. In a Middle East marked by instability and radicalization, the ongoing investment in UNRWA's mandated activities is of vital importance. The UAE's trust in the Agency is a source of encouragement and incentive to strive for innovation and creativity.

"We believe that the Agency's strategic human development priorities and humanitarian activities are fit for the purposes to help Palestine refugees acquire knowledge and skills, lead long and healthy lives, achieve decent standards of living and enjoy human rights to the fullest possible extent. This assistance to UNRWA aligns with the UAE's foreign assistance policy and its prioritization of rights to children, to education, to women's empowerment and support and vocational training to teachers," said Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy.

UNRWA also enjoys strong partnerships with Dubai Cares and the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, in addition to other institutions in the UAE. The Agency looks forward to further developing this essential cooperation.

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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 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA across its five fields of operation. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank, including East Jerusalem 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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