Posted on 17 September 2018

oPt Humanitarian Fund releases US$1 million in funds to avoid collapse of services in the Gaza Strip; additional funds needed urgently

Today, the Humanitarian Coordinator, Jamie McGoldrick, announced the release of US$1 million from the Humanitarian Fund for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt HF)to prevent the collapse of life-saving services in the Gaza Strip. The allocation will go to the UN-Assisted Emergency Fuel Programme, which provides emergency fuel, mainly for back-up electricity generators, at around 250 critical health, water and sanitation facilities in the Gaza Strip.

“This allocation is critical to prevent a complete collapse of services and a potential outbreak of disease,” said Mr. McGoldrick. “Unfortunately, it comes in the absence of action from the relevant authorities, who have responsibility for the well-being of Gaza’s citizens, or predictable donor support.”

With daily power outages of up to 20 hours per day, approximately 950,000 litres of emergency fuel are needed per month to enable life-saving services in the Gaza Strip. Funds donated for emergency fuel in 2018 have been exhausted, and the UN delivered its final stocks on 5 September. With this allocation, at least $2 million in additional support is still needed to cover the bare minimum of health and water and sanitation services relying on emergency fuel through the end of 2018. The emergency fuel funding gap comes against the backdrop of an overall humanitarian funding crisis, with record-low support levels in 2018.

Gaza’s water and sanitation facilities have a near zero stock of emergency fuel, while public hospitals currently have only enough fuel to maintain essential services for a few more weeks, on average, with some facilities facing even greater risks. Another 42 private and public health facilities have even fewer fuel stocks. Critical facilities have implemented strict mitigation measures to extend, as much as possible, fuel resources provided to date. The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, however, reports that sewage overflow into the streets is already occurring near Nuseirat sewerage pumping station near Gaza City. The Municipality of Gaza reports that due to lack of fuel, garbage collection is taking place only once every 5-7 days, leaving 40,000-50,000 tons of trash accumulating on the street, posing associated health risks.

The oPt HF is an emergency pooled fund supported in 2017 and 2018 by Australia, Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

and Turkey. It is managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator to support humanitarian responses to unexpected emergencies as well as the delivery of strategic humanitarian responses identified under the Humanitarian Response Plan. This allocation brings the total amount of oPt HF support to Gaza in 2018 to $10.5 million.

“A $1 million allocation will support the delivery of life-saving services for around 1.5 months at critical health, water and sanitation services,” said Mr. McGoldrick. “But additional action is urgently needed to ensure sustainable delivery of emergency fuel. Palestinian families in Gaza should not be deprived of their right to access essential services.”

Follow this link(link is external) to support people in the occupied Palestinian territory through the oPt Humanitarian Fund.

To learn more about the UN-Assisted Emergency Fuel Programme and access interactive dashboards on distributions and donors, click here.