Press Release

Signing of US$ 50 Million Agreement confirming the historic pledge made by Saudi Arabia to UNRWA at the Arab Summit



H.E. Dr Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Rabeeah, Supervisor-General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre and Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) signing an unprecedented US$ 50 million agreement in support of UNRWA services in all five fields of operation.

29 November 2018
East Jerusalem

On 28 November, H.E. Dr Abdallah Al Rabeeah, Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSC) and Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) signed an unprecedented US$ 50 million agreement which confirmed the pledge of US$ 50 million made by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, in support of the Agency's core services.

Expressing his deep recognition and gratitude, Commissioner-General Krähenbühl stated that:

"The disbursement of this landmark donation will make a major contribution to the Agency's global mobilization aimed at reducing an unprecedented shortfall this year. With Saudi Arabia's donation and the support of our other partners, we have brought the deficit of US$ 446 million down to its current level of US$ 21 million, and have been able to open on time the 711 schools run by UNRWA for 530,000 girls and boys in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. It was crucial to ensure that their education is preserved. Similarly, our 140 health centres remained open thanks to the funding received, providing crucial primary health care to 3 million patients."

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with its humanitarian and development bodies, is an important and consistent partner to UNRWA. This year alone, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has contributed close to US$160 million towards UNRWA including projects across its five fields of operations.

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre was established on 13 May, 2015 under the high patronage and guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, aiming to provide humanitarian aid and relief to those in need outside of the Kingdom's borders. The Centre has provided humanitarian and development aid to more than 37 countries through international, regional and local partners in place.

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.

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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