Press Release

LANDMARK MULTIYEAR AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE QATAR FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT AND UNRWA

17 December 2018
Jerusalem

On the sidelines of the Doha Forum, H.E. Mr. Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Kuwari, Managing Director of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), signed a landmark two-year agreement in support of the Agency's core services including education, health-care, relief and social services.

This agreement follows the unprecedented $50 M contribution made by the State of Qatar in 2018 in response to the most severe funding crisis ever faced by UNRWA. Qatar's generosity, combined with the funding of UNRWA's other partners, enabled the Agency to overcome a shortfall of $446 M this year and protect the rights of Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

H.E. Mr. Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Kuwari highlighted the importance of this vital partnership: "This agreement with UNRWA will ensure the continued protection and assistance of our Palestine refugee brothers and sisters. They deserve to live decent lives and enjoy the totality of our shared human rights." He added that: "This agreement demonstrates best practices by the State of Qatar, a government dedicated to progress and human development. The State of Qatar will lend its support to any initiative that benefits Palestine refugees."

The Commissioner-General warmly welcomed this strong expression of Qatar's commitment to Palestine refugees: "In 2018, Qatar made a major difference in enabling UNRWA to open the schools on time for 530'000 boys and girls studying in our 711 schools. This will be fondly remembered. The new agreement signed today with the Qatar Fund for Development is an important step in the crucial effort to stabilize UNRWA's financial situation by ensuring increased predictability of funding. I am deeply grateful for Qatar's trust and partnership.

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.

For more information, please contact:

Sami Mshasha
UNRWA Spokesperson
Mobile: +972 (0)54 216 8295
Office: +972 (0)2 589 0724
s.mshasha@unrwa.org