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WFP World Food Programme

Joint News Release

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UNICEF WORKS WITH WFP TO HELP VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN GAZA GET ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR WINTER

JERUSALEM – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have signed a new agreement to provide 6,000 of the most vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip with blankets, clothing and hygiene kits.

The joint initiative is designed to help poorer families - particularly children, women and elderly - cope with winter, following a sharp deterioration in the living conditions of many people living in the enclave.

Based on their level of need, families will receive credit of between US$47 and US$106 on their electronic assistance cards. The cash top-up will allow them to buy, blankets, clothing and children's school uniforms and hygiene items from contracted local retailers. Families benefiting from this programme will also receive awareness sessions on hygiene and on the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

"Ensuring the most vulnerable people in Gaza, particularly children, are able to meet their most pressing humanitarian needs during this winter season is critical," says UNICEF's Special Representative in the State of Palestine, Genevieve Boutin. "Our partnership with WFP to provide an integrated package of essential goods, services, and support aims to help address people's vulnerabilities in an efficient and cost-effective manner."

The new agreement also outlined the different ways WFP and UNICEF would deliver aid in the event an emergency in Gaza, contingent on the availability of funding. It is modelled on the successful collaboration between UNICEF and WFP seen during and after the 2014 conflict in Gaza, when thousands of affected people were able to buy hygiene items, water, and clothing, as well as food, from local retailers using a single electronic card.

"WFP and UNICEF have been working together on several multi-sectorial initiatives that are vital to poor households, given the range of deprivation in Gaza," says WFP Representative and Country Director Stephen Kearney. "Our innovative electronic voucher platform is ideal

for providing a variety of assistance to vulnerable communities while injecting much-needed cash into a faltering economy."

Economic hardship is on the rise in the Gaza Strip as the blockade and movement restrictions continue affecting trade and access to natural resources. This has made life harder for people in Gaza, as have cuts and delays in national social allowances and public servants' salaries from the Palestinian Authority. Latest humanitarian indicators testify to growing challenges, as more than half of the population is affected by poverty (53 per cent), unemployment (55 per cent) and unprecedented food insecurity (68.5 per cent). Most vulnerable families living in deep poverty are surviving on less than US$1 dollar per person per day, making uninterrupted humanitarian aid vital to their survival.

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The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future.

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The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) works day-in day-out in the world's toughest places to reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Delivering results for children and young people is our driving force. All children have a right to survive, thrive and fulfill their potential – to the benefit of a better world.

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