Press Release

Maintaining UNRWA Installations, Maintaining Quality Services and Hope



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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will embark on large-scale maintenance projects that will ensure that 268 schools and health centres in Syria, Jordan, Gaza, Lebanon and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have sound construction and are accessible to all visitors.

This improvement plan of UNRWA facilities is made possible thanks to a generous donation of US$ 23 million from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD).

“We are extremely grateful that the SFD has made this support available, as many of our structures needed maintenance,” said UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl. “Going into a well-kept school or health centre can make a huge difference in terms of respect and morale, and that is exactly what we want people to feel: we care about your dignity.”

This funding comes under a package of three agreements with a total amount of US$ 63 million, signed in November 2018 between the Saudi Development Fund and UNRWA, in support of projects across all five fields of UNRWA operations in the region.

Saudi Arabia is currently the third-largest donor to UNRWA and has contributed over US$ 800 million since 1994, a clear sign of support to Palestine refugees and to their dignity and wellbeing.

“Regular maintenance and upgrading of UNRWA facilities is key to the health and safety of the children, men and women who visit our schools and health centers,’ said Mr. Krähenbühl. Maintenance may sometimes take a backseat in the face of other more pressing needs such as food assistance and healthcare, but we always seek to ensure that our structures are safe and our equipment functions efficiently.”

- Ends -

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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