French Consulate General in Jerusalem

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Press Section

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

France and UNICEF partner to strengthen maternal and neonatal health in Gaza

Jerusalem, 15 April 2019

France and UNICEF agreed on a partnership to strengthen maternal and neonatal healthcare for vulnerable women and newborn babies in Khan Younes, Gaza, Palestine. The €1 million partnership agreement is funded both by the Crisis and Support Center of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and by the French Development Agency. After the Crisis and Support Center of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs concluded an agreement with UNICEF in November 2018, Mr. Pierre Cochard, Consul general of France in Jerusalem, Ms. Catherine Bonnaud, French Development Agency Country Director and Ms. Genevieve Boutin, UNICEF Special Representative to Palestine, signed yesterday in the French Consulate General in Jerusalem a complementary agreement.

The joint funding from the Crisis and Support Center of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the French Development Agency will build upon previous investments which have resulted in growing health indicators and allow UNICEF to work on the humanitarian-development nexus. A delegation led by the Director of the Crisis and Support Center of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eric Chevallier, met yesterday the medical team of the project and UNICEF representatives at Khan Younes hospital in Gaza.

Since March 2018, the health system in Gaza is under considerable pressure, with a huge flow of injured people resulting in poor quality services for mothers and children who are often discharged prematurely from hospitals. The continuum of maternal and newborn health care is not well insured. If immunization coverage has progressed, much remains to be done to reduce neonatal mortality, which accounts for two thirds of infant mortality and half of the under-five mortality rate.

To answer the specific needs of mothers and children, the new partnership between France and UNICEF will provide newborn infants the resources they require to grow into healthy children. It will also help to ensure the sustainability of humanitarian and life-saving assistance for some of

the most vulnerable newborn babies and their mothers in Palestine, more specifically in the Gaza Strip.

Through this partnership, some 35,800 pregnant and lactating women and children will benefit from improved access to essential and lifesaving maternal, child health, nutrition, and developmental services delivered at maternal and neonatal hospitals and primary healthcare clinics.

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