Press Release

Italy contributes EUR 1.9 million to UNRWA Health Programme in Gaza



The Consul General of Italy to Jerusalem Mr. Fabio Sokolowicz and the Chief of Donor Relations Mr. of the UNRWA Department of External Relations and Communications Marc Lassouaoui formalize Italy's contribution the UNRWA health programme in Gaza.

3 May 2019
Jerusalem

The latest contribution from the Government of Italy of EUR 1.9 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will support the provision of primary health care at six health centres in Gaza for a period of six months in 2019. This contribution will help provide some 450,000 medical consultations and benefit approximately 340,000 Palestine refugees.

Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Marc Lassouaoui, Chief of Donor Relations, UNRWA Department of External Relations and Communications, said: “On behalf of UNRWA, I thank the Government of Italy for their continued and generous support towards our health programme in Gaza at this time of great need. This contribution will help us ensuring the provision of health care which directly contributes towards the human development of Palestine refugees.”

The Consul General of Italy to Jerusalem, Mr. Fabio Sokolowicz, restated Italy’s longstanding support of the health sector in Palestine, underscoring the crucial importance of ensuring primary health care in the Gaza strip. “Since 2012 alone,” he added, “the Government of Italy has contributed over EUR 60 million that enabled UNRWA to continue providing vital services to Palestine refugees.”

Ms. Cristina Natoli, Head of Office, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) said: “Through this project, AICS reaffirms both its commitment as a lead donor agency in the health sector in Palestine and its dedication to supporting Palestine refugees in Gaza.”

The Government of Italy is strong supporter of the Agency, in 2018 alone, Italy’s support of approximately EUR 15 million ensured that the Agency would be able to continue to provide vital services to Palestine refugees, as the Agency faced the largest budget deficit since its inception.

- 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.

For more information, please contact:

Tamara Alrifai
UNRWA Spokesperson
Mobile: +962 (0)79 090 0140
t.alrifai@unrwa.org

Sami Mshasha
Director of Communications, Arabic Language Spokesperson
Mobile: +972 (0)54 216 8295
Office: +972 (0)2 589 0724
s.mshasha@unrwa.org