

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 March 2007



2007 18

Japan Contributes \$ 4.2 million to UNRWA's Food Aid Programme

Amman, 18 March 2007 – Today the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) received from the Government of Japan a contribution of \$4.2 million (JPY500 million) in support of the Agency's regular Food Aid Programme.

The Japanese Ambassador to Jordan, Shigenobu Kato, and UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Karen Koning AbuZayd, signed the agreement this afternoon at the Embassy of Japan in Amman. The contribution will be used to purchase pulses (beans) for distribution to Palestine refugees in the Agency's five fields of operations in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The contribution also funds the purchase of wheat flour for the West Bank and Gaza, to be distributed during the second half of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, UNRWA Commissioner-General Koning AbuZayd expressed appreciation for the contribution. "Such generous assistance from the government and people of Japan is deeply appreciated. Now, more than ever, Palestine refugees are in need of increased support from the international community". She thanked the Government of Japan for its continued support, especially its 2006 contribution of \$13.8 million to UNRWA's general fund, emergency appeal and related projects.

Ambassador Kato reaffirmed his government's commitment to helping to improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees. "I reiterate my hope that this grant would give Palestine refugees relief, help to improve their living conditions and ultimately contribute to realizing peace and stability in the region".

UNRWA's Food Aid Programme provides support for the most vulnerable refugees in the form of food aid and food cash subsidies. The 2007 Programme is valued at \$ 28 million for the food component and \$ 10.6 million for cash assistance. The Programme contributes to the food security of an estimated 245,652 Special Hardship Cases (SHCs); and 105,000 Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers (PWNM) who benefit from the Supplementary Feeding Programme.

In addition to food aid, UNRWA provides education, health, relief and social services as well as micro-credit and emergency assistance to a population of more than 4.3 million refugees in the region.

----- ENDS -----