Press Release
With Funds from the Government of Japan
Over 40,000 Temporary Workdays Generated through the Youth Employability and Protection Project in Gaza

Gaza, 05 March 2017 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Japan concluded the Gaza Youth Employability Protection in the Gaza Strip project through a ceremony that took place in Rafah City in the presence of H.E Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority and UNDP Head of Gaza Office Mr Basil Nasser. Through the project, 430 youth were given the opportunity to develop their skills and livelihoods.

H.E. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for the Palestinian Affairs, Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority, emphasized Japan’s firm commitment to supporting Palestinian people, especially youth in Gaza. “Youth is the main pillar for the future of the Palestinian Society, especially in Gaza, where youth represents the highest percentage, almost 53% of the population. The poverty and unemployment rates in Gaza, especially among youth, continue to increase due to the constant blockade and wars,” said Ambassador Okubo. “Therefore, Japan provided this particular grant to support recovery efforts in Gaza through livelihood stabilization, including the creation of short and medium term employment opportunities, which will not only enhance the local economy but promote the peace and stability as well.”

The project, funded by the Government of Japan for the amount of USD 800,000, aims at supporting early recovery efforts in Gaza through livelihood stabilization initiatives that increase job opportunities for youth and fresh graduates. Within the current adverse environment, where youth unemployment in Gaza is over 58%, the project will strengthen the coping ability and productive capacities of 430 youth and offer employment to the most vulnerable by using different schemes and job placements that are geared towards sustaining stability and contributing to strengthening social cohesion.

Mr Basil Nasser, Head of UNDP Gaza Office, highlighted that unemployment is becoming an increasing challenge for Palestinian youth, who represent over 30% of the Palestinian population. “The youth unemployment in the Gaza Strip is one of the highest in the world and it is critical for us to create opportunities that contribute substantially to the generation of jobs in many fields,” said Mr Nasser. “This project has revived the hopes of youth as they developed their skills and were provided with decent job opportunities. We have to create similar opportunities for other disadvantaged youth so that they also contribute to their communities.”

The project included the development of a Geographical Information System (GIS) for the Municipality of Rafah by engaging 70 graduate youth in the coding and numbering of around 18,000 buildings in Rafah, the provision of employment opportunities for 60 lifesavers placed on the Gaza seashore in support of the Safe Summer Sea initiative, and finally the organization of apprenticships for 300 youth to improve service provision for the Gaza population mainly in the health, education, sport and reconstruction sectors.
During his speech, Mr Badr Al Husseini, Head of the JCP in Gaza thanked the Government of Japan and for their generous contributions to employability of Gaza youth “This project comes to achieve one of the main objectives of JCP strategy, to create job opportunities in targeted governmental institutions through the development of these institutions and reduce the operating expenses by helping to cover 100% of the salaries of fresh graduates from this project.” He also added “The Job Creation Program – Presidency Bureau and the Palestinian Organizations working in the civil society have common interest and faces a lot of challenges in all aspects (Health, Water, Education, Agriculture, Electricity and Environment), if we united our efforts, we can solve all these problems.”

It is worth noting that the Government of Japan is considered one of UNDP’s largest partners. Over the years, the Government of Japan has provided more than USD 420 million worth of assistance through UNDP in the areas of infrastructure, rubble removal, health, education, agriculture, access to justice, and others.

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