



## Joint Press Release

United Nations Mine Action Service  
Jerusalem  
21 March 2016

### **JAPAN DONATES US \$ 500,000 TO SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION SERVICE INTERVENTION IN GAZA**

**Jerusalem (10 March 2016):** Japan has contributed US \$ 500,000 to UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service) through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action. This critical financial support from the People of Japan will enable UNMAS to continue protecting civilians and supporting reconstruction in Gaza.

Eighteen months after the end of the 2014 escalation of hostilities in Gaza, explosive remnants of war (ERWs) remain a persistent and significant threat to civilians and reconstruction operations in Gaza. Approximately 3,113 of the estimated 7,000 items of ERW left behind by the 2014 conflict are known to have been cleared and destroyed by UNMAS and the Civilian Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams. Despite these significant clearance efforts, 16 people have been killed and 97 injured, including 48 children, in accidents involving ERWs since 2014. UNMAS continues to work closely with the UNICEF and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to reduce these accidents through the widespread delivery of ERW risk education in the entire Gaza Strip.

In addition, posing a risk to limbs and life, ERWs buried in the rubble continue to threaten reconstruction efforts. With Japan's contribution of US \$ 3 million in 2015, UNMAS support enabled the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Rubble Removal project to clear approximately 1 million tonnes of rubble from areas with high levels of ERW contamination with zero casualties. In 2016, as reconstruction gathers momentum, UNMAS support – risk assessments, risk mitigation training, and 24/7 explosive ordnance disposal support – is crucial to ensuring the safe progress of an increasing number of such projects, including some funded by the Government of Japan. In addition, UNMAS is working to complete the clearance of all known aircraft bombs buried deep under the surface, which, prevent much needed rehabilitation and reconstruction work from proceeding safely.

”UNMAS’s activities in Gaza is the fundamental part of Gaza Reconstruction and we highly evaluated the achievement they have made so far. UNMAS plays an integral role not only to protect civilians but also to make reconstruction work go forward through their project,” said Mr. Takeshi Okubo, Ambassador for the Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority. ”As Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe announced on the occasion of the recent visit of President of Palestine Mr. Mahmoud Abbas to Japan, Japan has decided to provide the new package of assistance to the Palestinians amounting to USD 78,210,200 mainly through the international organizations including UNMAS which is one of the important partners.”

UNMAS has worked in the occupied Palestinian territories since 2009 and sent an emergency team to Gaza on 27 July 2014 at the request of the United Nations Secretary-General. During the conflict and in its immediate aftermath, UNMAS conducted 218 emergency deployments, surveying and clearing key infrastructure that was damaged or destroyed, including the Rafah Crossing and Gaza power plant. UNMAS cleared all schools affected by the hostilities at the request of UNRWA and UNICEF, allowing more than 250,000 children to return to studies soon after the end of hostilities. In addition, UNMAS has provided ERW risk education to 28,000 beneficiaries including internally displaced persons, teachers, engineers, construction workers, United Nations staff, humanitarian workers, and other at-risk populations.



من الشعب الياباني  
From the People of Japan

Japan is an important partner to UNMAS programmes in many countries. In 2016 the People of Japan gave more than US \$ 15 million to UNMAS for humanitarian mine action work in seven countries. The Mine Action Service currently supports mine action programmes in Abyei (Sudan/South Sudan), Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur (Sudan), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and the Territory of Western Sahara (MINURSO). In the case of the occupied Palestinian territories, Japan and UNMAS will continue working hand in hand to support the reconstruction of Gaza.

For more information please contact:

Mr. Sasha Logie, UNMAS Palestine Programme Manager (Jerusalem)

Email: [sashal@unops.org](mailto:sashal@unops.org), Tel: +972(0)547693172

Mr. Aditya Tiwathia, UNMAS Palestine Programme Officer (Jerusalem)

Email: [adityat@unops.org](mailto:adityat@unops.org), Tel +972(0)548177027