

## GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL FUNDING PAVES WAY FOR HEALTH CENTRE RECONSTRUCTION FOR GAZA REFUGEES

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### Rafah, Gaza

UNRWA opened a newly reconstructed health centre on 11 March that will serve Palestine refugees across the Southern Gaza Strip. The improved Rafah Health Centre, reconstructed with funding from the Gulf Cooperation Council through the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), will serve over 135,000 refugees and last year carried out over 335,000 medical consultations.

Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza Robert Turner welcomed the contribution. "We are grateful for the generous contribution from the Gulf Cooperation Council through the Islamic Development Bank, which will allow us to continue providing quality health care to Palestine refugees in Gaza. Access to quality health care remains a hallmark of the right of all people to live in dignity and UNRWA, with its partners, remain committed to providing the best possible standard of care."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr. Turner stressed the Agency's commitment to its priority programmes of providing quality health care and education to all Palestine refugees living across the Gaza Strip. The Agency seeks to complete further health centre reconstructions in Maen, Beit Hanoun, Shaboura and Beach Camp and construct a new health centre in Jabalia Camp in the coming years as part of this ongoing commitment.

With a staff of 67 specialists, the 7,000 square metre health centre in Rafah will dramatically improve access to outpatient care, dental care, and rehabilitation for refugees with disabilities. Moreover, UNRWA provides, in addition to basic health services, supporting services in non-communicable disease care, maternal and family health, preventive medicine, and laboratory and radiological services.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, and microfinance.

Financial support to UNRWA has not kept pace with an increased demand for services caused by growing numbers of registered refugees, expanding need, and deepening poverty.

As a result, the Agency's General Fund (GF), supporting UNRWA's core activities and 97 per cent reliant on voluntary contributions, has begun each year with a large projected deficit. Currently the deficit stands at US\$ 100 million.

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