
KOREAN FUNDING SUPPORTS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GAZA YOUTH[تمويل كوري لدعم فرص التوظيف للشباب في غزة](#)**12 February 2015****Amman**

The Vice President of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Doo Jung Soo and UNRWA Commissioner-General, Pierre Krähenbühl signed a contribution agreement on 11 February 2015 to support the "Gaza Gateway", a social enterprise for outsourcing employment. The three-year contribution of US\$ 1.3 million (2015-2017) will allow young Information Technology graduates from Gaza to acquire highly needed skills and experience. This will create new opportunities within a devastated Gaza economy.

The latest support from Korea is both crucial and timely, addressing the needs of Palestine refugees living through crisis. Describing the importance of this support, Mr. Doo said: "KOICA hopes that, through the Gaza Gateway programme, many talented young people in Gaza will have opportunities to materialize their ideas in the IT field which in turn will contribute to the creation of jobs in Gaza."

Welcoming the new contribution, Mr. Krähenbühl said: "Young men and women in Gaza are highly educated and determined. However, as a result of the Blockade that has been imposed on the Strip for years now, they face very limited employment opportunities and are unable to meet their potential. I thank Korea for increasing its support to Palestine refugees and for recognizing the importance of investing in opportunities for Gaza's youth. This initiative may afford some hope in an otherwise truly desperate situation".

The Head of the Representative Office of the Republic of Korea in Palestine, Mr. Pak Woong-chul, in turn affirmed that "the Korean Government is committed to supporting Palestine and rebuilding of Gaza. It has already transferred the entire amount pledged at the Cairo Conference in October 2014 which includes US\$ 500,000 to UNRWA." The total contribution from Korea to both the General Fund and emergency appeals has increased from US\$ 61,000 in 2012 to US\$ 1.1 million in 2014.

Soaring unemployment is one of the most alarming effects of the eight-year blockade of the Gaza Strip. In its highest level ever reported in UNRWA's records, the unemployment rate among Palestine refugees in Gaza reached 45.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2014.

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\$ 81 million.

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