

8<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Executive Board  
Speech by H.E. Mr KANO Takehiro (Japan)

Madam Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam President of the General Conference,  
Madam Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan is deeply concerned about the further worsening of the humanitarian situation that is already dire due to the protracted fighting in the Gaza Strip, as well as the further deterioration of humanitarian conditions in areas including the West Bank and Lebanon.

Over the legislation recently adopted by the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) on UNRWA, Japan has expressed its grave concern, as it would severely restrict the activities of the Agency. UNRWA plays an indispensable role in providing humanitarian assistance as well as health care and education to millions of Palestine refugees not only in the Gaza Strip but throughout the Middle East region. Japan has been partnering with UNRWA since 1953.

At the same time, ensuring neutrality is crucial for UNRWA. We support UNRWA's efforts to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review Group established under the UN's initiative.

Since October 7 last year, Japan has been actively providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, with a total of approximately 130 million US dollars, including 35 million through UNRWA. Our assistance through UNRWA includes programs to operate elementary and secondary schools, to provide vocational training, and to offer higher education scholarships.

Madam Chairperson,

Japan thanks the Secretariat for organizing a technical information meeting on November 20, which provided us with clearer understanding of the relationship between UNESCO and UNRWA.

Given that UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education, and its long history of supporting and partnering with UNRWA, we are of the view that UNESCO should be properly engaged with UNRWA in the field of Education to ensure all Palestinian refugee children have access to free basic education, technical vocational training, and higher education.

Japan attaches great importance to the role played by UNESCO in Gaza. We have contributed so far USD 100,000 to the Gaza Sub-Account to provide MHPSS support to learners and caregivers. We are keen to see UNESCO continue to implement its measures within its mandate, in close coordination with all relevant organizations including UNRWA.

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