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## PRESS RELEASE

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UNHCR News

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### Japan contributes USD 6 million in support of UNHCR refugee programme in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has announced a generous contribution of USD 6 million in support of the UNHCR's refugee programme in Pakistan. The new funding will bolster UNHCR's interventions in the areas of education, healthcare and the provision of legal assistance to some 1.6 million Afghan refugees in the country.

The largest portion of this amount, USD 2.3 million will go to the health sector and benefit approximately 600,000 Afghan refugees residing in 76 refugee villages, through improved healthcare services.

Around USD 2.2 million of the total donation will be spent on the improvement of education sector to ensure that refugee children have unhindered access to education in refugee villages. Other activities in the area of education include provision of salaries to more than 1,000 teaching staff in refugee villages, maintenance costs for schools, training and capacity building activities, and awareness raising sessions. Some 96,000 children are expected to benefit from the activities.

A sum of USD 1.5 million has been allocated to strengthen the legal aid services offered to all registered Afghans across Pakistan. UNHCR aims at preventing refoulement of refugees by monitoring border crossing points and by capacity-building of border guards and other government officials. Sensitization and training for law enforcement bodies, government officials, and the judiciary will be carried out to ensure respect for refugee rights. The amount will also help continue the provision of free legal advice and legal aid as well as court representation for refugees who have been detained on immigration charges.

H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata, Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan, emphasizes the importance of meeting basic human needs of Afghan refugees. "These people have only limited access to basic services and require assistance. Moreover, assistance to these refugees will help to alleviate the burden of host communities in Pakistan, thereby promoting stability of the country." Mr. Inomata says, "Japan is committed to fulfilling our responsibility as a member of international society for promoting peace and stability in this region."

The UNHCR Representative in Islamabad, Mr. Neill Wright, while paying gratitude to the Government and the people of Japan said, "The Japanese contribution is essential to UNHCR operations in this country. The unstinting generosity and funding from the

people of Japan allows UNHCR to continue assisting the most vulnerable refugees to have access to better primary healthcare facilities and to improve the condition of schools, enabling more children to attend school while they are in Pakistan.”

Japan is one of the biggest donors to UNHCR’s Afghan refugee programmes in the region. This year, the Government of Japan has provided USD 15 million to assist Afghan refugees, of which USD 6 million each for Pakistan and Iran and USD 3 million for Afghanistan has been allocated to support UNHCR’s work to assist the world’s most protracted refugee situation.

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