PRESS RELEASE
Government of Japan and UN-Habitat Support Reconstruction and Peacebuilding of Liberated Cities in Iraq

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) welcomes a contribution of USD 4 million from the Government of Japan to support reconstruction and peacebuilding in Iraq by providing shelter and livelihood assistance to vulnerable returnees in key liberated cities.

As of the end of March 2018, more than 3.6 million displaced persons have returned to their areas of origin. Many more are willing to return, however the damage to houses is one of the main obstacles that is preventing many displaced persons from returning. Support to address the housing crisis in the liberated cities is an urgent need, not only for displaced persons who are willing to return but also for communities who have been bearing the heavy burden of hosting large number of displaced persons for more than three years.

Under this project, UN-Habitat will target the rehabilitation of “severely damaged” houses and the construction of low-cost core housing units to accommodate vulnerable returnees whose houses are “destroyed.” These low-cost core housing units can be incrementally expanded, providing affordable and durable shelter solutions to returnees and thereby facilitating their reintegration and rebuilding of lives in the areas they return to. Self-reliance and ownership of the returnees in the targeted communities are also expected to be enhanced through vocational training and increased employment opportunities for construction activities.

H.E. Mr. Fumio Iwai, Ambassador of Japan to Iraq, stated “It is the fourth year in a row since Japan started the assistance for vulnerable Iraqi/Syrian people affected by ISIL through its Supplementary Budget. This assistance shows Japan’s strong and faithful commitment to addressing the basic needs in the camps and the areas of return in Iraq”. He added, “The assistance to UN-Habitat comes as part of the new package of humanitarian and stabilization efforts to Iraq amounting to approximately $100 million announced in February. Japan is determined to serve displaced persons, returnees, refugees and host communities in Iraq, while supporting Iraq’s efforts for its development”.

On his part, Erfan Ali, Head of UN-Habitat Iraq Programme, confirmed that the continuous and generous support of Japan, enabled UN-Habitat not only to address the shelter needs of the vulnerable displaced persons in Iraqi during the crisis, but this support helped significantly to accelerate the return and recovery of the liberated areas, and under the new project the agency will be able to upscale its interventions to foster sustainable reconstruction and building back better in Iraq.

For further information, please contact:
Alan Miran
Communication Associate, UN-Habitat Iraq
Email: alan.miran@un.org
Mobile: + 964 750 342 7036
Website: unhabitat.org/iraq
Facebook: facebook.com/unhabitatiraq
Twitter: twitter.com/UNHabitatIRAQ