



The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent donates US\$ 6 million to UNRWA to improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon

Abu Dhabi, 16 March : Dr. Ali Abdullah Al-Kabi, Chairman of the Board of the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent (UAERC) and Mr. Peter Ford, Representative of UNRWA's Commissioner-General, signed today two agreements for the rehabilitation of shelters and relief activities in Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

UAERC has pledged US\$ 5 million to rehabilitate shelters in Bourj El Shemali camp in South Lebanon. The project will improve the physical condition of 343 shelters identified as the most structurally unsound, hazardous and unhygienic among the many dilapidated shelters in Burj el-Shemali camp. The project comes under the Camp Improvement Initiative, an initiative launched by the Lebanese Government and UNRWA in 2006, to improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon's 12 refugee camps.

The UAERC is also contributing US\$ 1 million towards UNRWA's relief activities for refugees affected by the Nahr El Bared conflict. The funds will allow UNRWA to construct 149 temporary housing units for Palestinian families who were displaced from the camp during summer 2007, and who are still hosted by relatives or friends or in unsuitable places.

Welcoming the two agreements, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen Koning AbuZayd, said: "Quite rightly, much of the world's focus recently has been on the situation of Palestine refugees in Gaza. However, we must not forget refugees elsewhere in the region who may be living in deplorable conditions. I am delighted that the donation of \$6 million by our generous partners, the UAERC, will allow us to improve refugee housing in the Tyre area, and to provide more temporary housing for the displaced refugees of Nahr El Bared."

The UAERC is a long standing supporter of UNRWA and the Palestine refugees. The UAERC has funded major construction projects including Khan Younis in Gaza, Jenin in the West Bank, and more recently Neirab in Aleppo, Syria.

Some 4.6 million Palestine refugees in UNRWA's five fields of operations – Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem – are eligible for Agency services, including education, healthcare, social services, shelter, micro-credit loans and emergency aid. UNRWA employs nearly 30,000 staff, the vast majority of whom are Palestine refugees. UNRWA's operations are financed almost entirely by voluntary contributions from donors. The Agency's regular budget for 2008-2009 is \$1.1 billion, which covers the recurrent costs of the Agency's education, health and relief and social services activities.