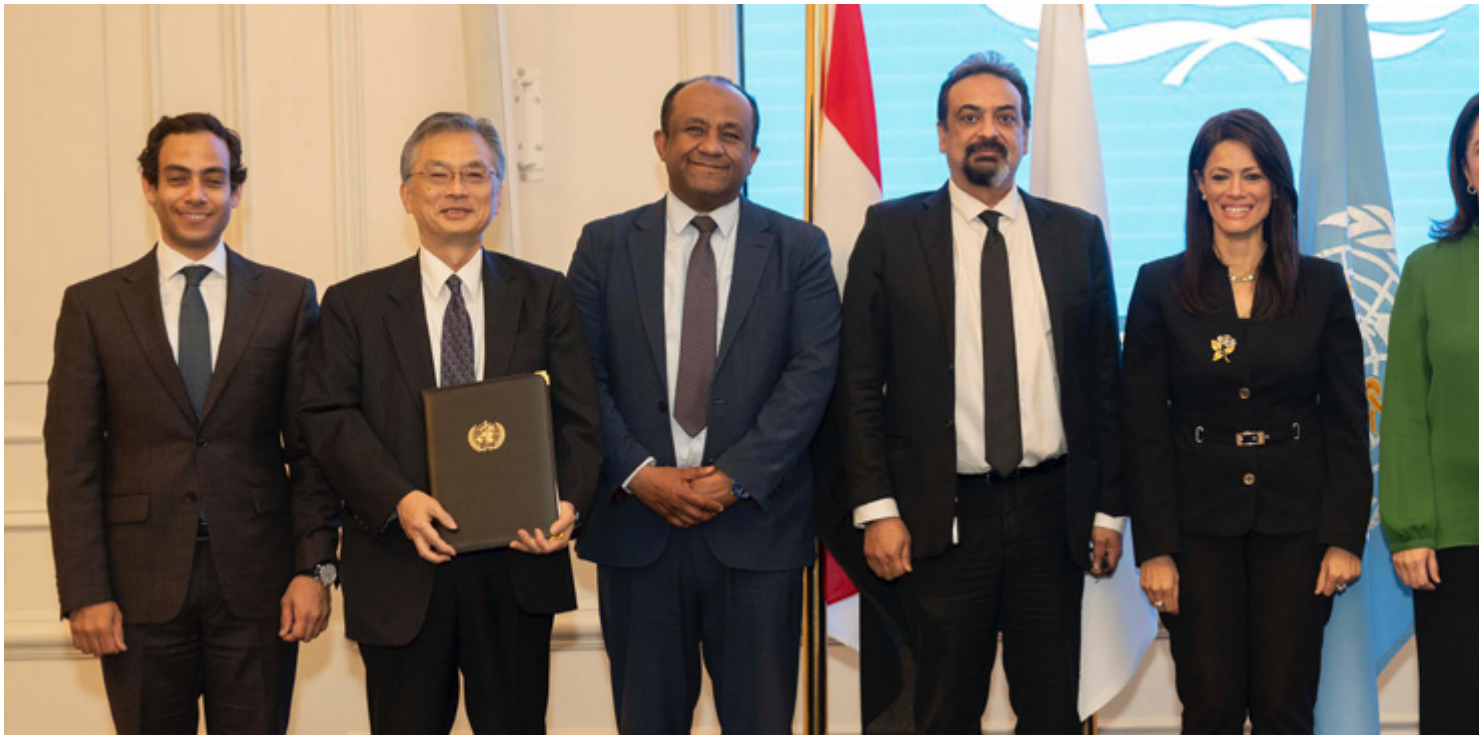

11 March 2024, Cairo, Egypt – A US$ 8 million grant agreement signed yesterday by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Japan will provide essential support for critically ill patients evacuated from the Gaza Strip to Egypt for medical treatment. The agreement was signed by His Excellency Mr OKA Hiroshi, Ambassador of Japan to Egypt, and Dr Nima Abid, WHO Representative in Egypt. It was witnessed by Her Excellency Dr Rania Al-Mashat, Minister of International Cooperation, Egypt; Dr Hossam Abdelghaffar, Assistant to the Minister of Health and Population for Institutional Reform, Egypt; and Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Under this agreement, WHO will work with the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population to enhance the Egyptian health system's readiness to accommodate medical evacuees. This includes ensuring that referral hospitals are adequately equipped with the necessary medicines, medical supplies and equipment, and will involve capacity-building for health staff to provide life-saving emergency care.

"WHO is extremely grateful for the support provided by Egypt in accommodating critically ill patients from the Gaza Strip for treatment. Now, with this generous funding from the Government of Japan – a long-standing donor to WHO – we will be better able to support Egypt

in ensuring continued, quality health care to critically ill and injured patients from the Gaza Strip," said Dr Balkhy.

The project will focus on locations designated by the Government of Egypt as referral pathways and receiving facilities for the evacuated patients. The first tier of referral comprises health facilities in North Sinai Governorate; the second tier includes health facilities in the governorates of Ismailia, Port Said and Suez; and the third tier encompasses health facilities in the Damietta, Greater Cairo and Sharqia governorates.

Dr Abdel Ghaffar said, "The signed agreement will work to support the Ministry of Health and Population, through the provision of medical supplies, various surgical tools and artificial joints, and by increasing the number of beds and radiology devices, in addition to implementing training programmes to share experiences between medical staff, with the aim of contributing to Egypt's efforts towards supporting sick and injured Palestinians."

Egypt has been receiving severely ill and injured patients from the Gaza Strip for treatment within Egypt or for referral to other countries since November 2023, providing free-of-charge medical treatments as necessary.