

3 February 2021 —The Government of Japan has announced its decision to provide US\$ 122.2 million to support humanitarian and development programmes in Afghanistan. Through this new disbursement, sourced from Japan’s fiscal year 2020 supplementary budget, an array of humanitarian and development assistance projects will be conducted. This is a vigorous step forward in realizing Japan’s pledge delivered at the Geneva Conference in November 2020, where Foreign Minister Mr Motegi Toshimitsu affirmed Japan’s long-lasting friendship with and support for the people of Afghanistan, and pledged financial assistance up to US\$ 180 million per year between 2021 and 2024, a figure comparable to the past 4 years.

This US\$ 122.2 million contribution forms a part of Japan’s assistance to Afghanistan to be disbursed in 2021. It will enable implementation of 17 humanitarian and development assistance projects orchestrated by various organizations throughout the country, aiming for the betterment of livelihoods through multiple approaches.

Japan’s Ambassador to Afghanistan Mr Okada Takashi highlights: “Enhanced security sector plays an essential role in the Afghan-led nationbuilding as we gaze at peace on the horizon. Our continuous contribution to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) exemplifies Japan’s commitment for a peaceful Afghanistan, as LOTFA is a significant multidonor programme that plays a vital role in strengthening the country’s security sector.

In light of the global pandemic, we also believe that assistance for vulnerable segment of the population who are most severely affected is essential. We truly hope that this new support will contribute to bringing about as many joyous smiles of Afghan people as possible.”

As part of Japan’s long-standing commitment to improving health in Afghanistan, WHO will receive approximately US \$660 000 from the total package of assistance to address urgent gaps in the provision of health care. This will play a crucial role in plugging the shortage of life-saving essential health services, which has been further exacerbated due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan’s support will also strengthen the country’s capacity to respond to public health emergencies due to major outbreaks.

Under the new project, WHO will provide technical support, training for staff and 10 trauma emergency surgical kits to 2 hospitals in high-risk conflict-affected provinces of Urozgan and Kandahar to improve the provision of life-saving emergency trauma care. One primary health care centre will be deployed ensure emergency primary care for internally displaced persons and hard-to-reach communities affected by conflict, health emergencies and natural disasters. To ensure adequate support to this centre, 100 Interagency Emergency Health Kits (IEHKs) and 6 supplementary health kits will be provided together with training medical staff on managing cases linked to gender-based violence and rape, especially during health emergencies. Lastly, an infectious diseases ward will be established in Laghman province to support early detection and response to cases of epidemic-prone diseases and high threat pathogens.

Japan has been assisting Afghanistan's nation-building efforts in various fields including security, agriculture, rural development, human capacity development, education, health, infrastructure, culture and humanitarian assistance. With the upcoming disbursement of US\$ 122.2 million, the cumulative Japanese assistance to Afghanistan since 2001 will amount to US\$ 6.9 billion.

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