With funding from the Government of Japan, WHO is supporting the rehabilitation of health facilities and revitalization of health services in eastern Aleppo city, Syria.

26 October 2017, Damascus, Syria – With generous support from the Government of Japan, WHO has contributed to the rehabilitation of the Saad Ibn Abi Waqas health centre in eastern Aleppo city, Syria.

This is the first health centre to be rehabilitated in eastern Aleppo since the city became accessible to humanitarian agencies in January 2017.

Prior to the area becoming accessible, all public hospitals and 18 out of 21 primary health care centres in eastern Aleppo were non-functional as a result of significant damage to infrastructure, shortages in health staff, and limited medical supplies.

The Saad Ibn Abi Waqas health centre, established in 2002, was partially damaged in 2013 as a result of escalation in fighting.
“The centre re-opened in September 2017 with 5 specialized clinics for internal medicine, reproductive health and child care, and orthopedic and dermatological care. Services are provided by 34 health workers, including 10 physicians and 12 nurses,” said Dr Hamdi Noufal, director of the Saad Ibn Abi Waqas health centre.

“Since its re-opening, the centre has treated more than 2400 patients,” Dr Noufal added.

“The opening of this centre is significant, not only because returnees to the city now have access to major health services, but also because job opportunities have been provided to medical staff who had lost their jobs as a result of the destruction the city witnessed,” said Mr Fadi Al-Msouti, Head of the Health Promotion Association nongovernmental organization that runs the centre.

“I am pleased to have found a position that allows me to practise my specialization and provide care to people in need with whom I share the same concerns. This opportunity has allowed my family to find some sense of stability since we fled from Ar-Raqqa to Aleppo almost 2 months ago,” said Dr Abdul-Rahman Hammoud, a dermatologist working at the centre.

“The rehabilitation of the centre has come as a major step towards reviving the availability of health care to people in eastern Aleppo city,” said Ms Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria, during a visit to the centre. “It can serve as a model to be emulated which eventually could trigger the enthusiasm of families and medical staff to return to their neighbourhoods and jobs, and begin to resume their normal lives.”

Support from the Government of Japan in 2017 has also allowed WHO to deliver 5 mobile clinics and 2 ambulances to Aleppo governorate to expand the provision of primary health care services, including medical consultations, diagnosis investigations, and referral of trauma cases.