24 October, 2018 – A generous donation from the Government of Japan has allowed WHO to launch a one-year project to rehabilitate selected health care facilities in Syria. Currently, more than half the country’s hospitals and health care centres are closed or only partially functioning. This latest contribution from Japan will help improve access to health care services for Syrians in critical geographic locations, especially those with high numbers of internally displaced people.

In addition to supporting the restoration of health care facilities, WHO will use the funds to deliver medicines and supplies, train health care workers and support key health partners such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

Mr Khaled Hboubati, SARC President, said, “We profoundly thank the Japanese Government and the World Health Organization for this donation. It will contribute to enhancing SARC health care services throughout Syria.” Mr Hboubati went on to say that the funds would cover several critical health areas. “We will dedicate this donation to enhancing our network of fixed and mobile health facilities, developing our prosthetics capacities and physiotherapy services, and training health care workers.”

WHO will use part of the contribution to support other nongovernmental organization health partners, including one that is providing life-saving treatment for children suffering from cancer. WHO will also provide NGO partners with medical equipment and supplies and support the strengthening of referral systems for ill and wounded patients.

The agreement between WHO and the Government of Japan also includes a capacity-building component for Syrian physicians and medical engineers, who will travel to Tokyo to be trained on the latest medical techniques and technologies. On their return to Syria, they will go on to train others, ensuring that the knowledge gained is disseminated and used to benefit people throughout the country.

“WHO is indebted to the Government of Japan for its great generosity,” said Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria. “The funds will go a long way towards helping WHO achieve its humanitarian objective of alleviating suffering and saving lives in Syria. WHO will continue to advocate for critical humanitarian funding from donors worldwide to help restore the health system in Syria and ensure that Syrians once again have access to the health care services
that many other countries take for granted."