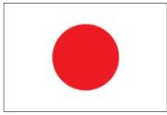


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من الشعب الياباني
From the People of Japan



Japanese Embassy holds Workshop for safe drinking water in the Public School of Al Sarafand

Al Sarafand- South Lebanon, 22 May 2014 – The Japanese Ambassador to Lebanon Seiichi Otsuka stressed that improving access to safe drinking water can result in tangible benefits to health in his speech at the workshop organized jointly by the Embassy of Japan and the union of the municipalities in Sahel al Zahrani on Thursday.

The workshop was held to mark the inauguration of the project providing water filtration systems to 14 public schools in Sahel al Zahrani funded by the Government of Japan. The project aims to provide safe drinking water to the children through the provision of the necessary water purification equipment. Moreover, the new taps outside each school's premise allow nearby residents to access safe drinking water.

"The area has been facing severe water contamination problem. According to the survey conducted by the union of the municipalities, around 40 % of the students in public schools in the area have suffered from waterborne diseases due to the lack of access to safe drinking water. Thanks to the generous contribution of the Government of Japan, the children can now drink clean water." said Mr. Ali Matar, the Mayor of the union of the municipalities in Sahel al Zahrani.

The Japanese Ambassador stated that "Lebanon is currently facing severe water scarcity due to insufficient rainfall since last year. Water is a vital element for children to stay healthy and it is time to think about water conservation. I hope this workshop can help the children understand the importance of water in our daily lives."

The workshop was held in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Lebanese Center for Water Management and Conservation (LCWM). WHO organized a puppet show in the themes of water and

hygiene with its partner organization, the World Theater (Al masrah al aalamy). UNICEF facilitated the discussion and quiz concerning water conservation. Groups of students also made water filter crafts in order to understand how filters work.

Dr. Hassan El Bushra, WHO representative said "The children health is very important. School children could be an effective catalyst to increase awareness for water conservation and hygiene in local communities by sharing what they have learned in classrooms with their families."

"Water is life, but it can also bring diseases and it is important that children learn about this in a fun and interactive way." said Annamaria Laurini, UNICEF's Representative in Lebanon. "As water resources in Lebanon are stretched to the limit amid the expected water scarcity this summer, UNICEF and its partners work with the water authorities to ensure that water will always be a vital resource for people's life."

The Japanese Government's project to provide water filtration systems to 14 public schools in Sahel al Zahrani is financed through the Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Program (GGP). It has so far financed more than 221 projects in Lebanon since 1996, and water is considered as one of the priority areas in Japan's assistance to Lebanon.

(end)

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