

PRESS BULLETIN

THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN, FAST RETAILING AND UNHCR WORK TOGETHER TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION CRISIS AND THE VENEZUELA MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The Embassy of Japan in Colombia is carrying out three projects under the Japanese cooperation scheme “Kusanone”, to support and strengthen the institutions receiving Venezuelan refugees and migrants, Colombian returnees and host communities, in the Departments of La Guajira and Norte de Santander.

The signing ceremony of these projects took place on the past 26th of July in the city of Riohacha, at the Héctor Salah Zuleta Virtual Library, with the collaboration of the UN Refugee Agency – UNHCR Colombia.

In addition, the Japanese retail company, Fast Retailing (owner of UNIQLO and GU brands), UNHCR’s global partner, has been donating clothing to refugees and displaced persons around the world since 2006, under its “All-Product Recycling Initiative”.

Until now, more than 25 million clothing items have been distributed to refugees and displaced persons in 46 countries and regions where UNHCR operates. Due to the severe situation caused by the influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, Fast Retailing has been making clothing donations to those in need in Colombia since 2017.

On October 30th 2018, the Embassy of Japan in Colombia, Fast Retailing and UNHCR re-inaugurated the Maicao Refugees and Migrants Centre, following infrastructure improvements and furniture donation. The Nuestra Señora Hospital de los Remedios at Riohacha also received equipment, and a clothing donation was organized by Fast Retailing.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Jorge Torres, Coordinator of Bilateral Cooperation and Official Development Assistance and Mrs. Jenny Londoño, Advisor of Development and Borders Integration Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jozef Merckx, the UNHCR Representative in Colombia, Ms. Yukiko Iriyama, the UNHCR Deputy Representative in Colombia, Mr. Keiichiro Morishita, the Ambassador of Japan to Colombia, and Mr. Yukihiro Nitta, Group Senior Vice President and head of Sustainability at Fast Retailing, among others.



Official hand over at the Maicao Refugees and Migrants Centre of the Pastoral Social



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU)

The support given by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, the Embassy of Japan and Fast Retailing to the Maicao Refugees and Migrants Centre of the Pastoral Social, consisted of:

- UNHCR Infrastructure expansion
- Embassy of Japan Furniture, fans, and electric appliances
- Fast Retailing Clothing Donation



Official hand over at the Maicao Refugees and Migrants Centre of the Pastoral Social



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU)

Mr. Torres mentioned about the donations that “they will definitely improve comprehensive care in psychosocial matters, food security and humanitarian assistance. Japanese projects Kusanone are evidence of what can be achieved when working in an articulated manner between the international community, national government and civil society”. The Ambassador of Japan, Keiichiro Morishita expressed his appreciation to UNHCR’s great cooperation and highlighted that “We have accomplished these projects with the purpose of improving the support given to the Venezuelan immigrants and refugees and also to the Colombians affected by the migration crisis from Venezuela, taking advantage of the strengths of our on time and quick cooperation scheme, Kusanone. I am happy to be able to contribute to the attention of this crisis”.

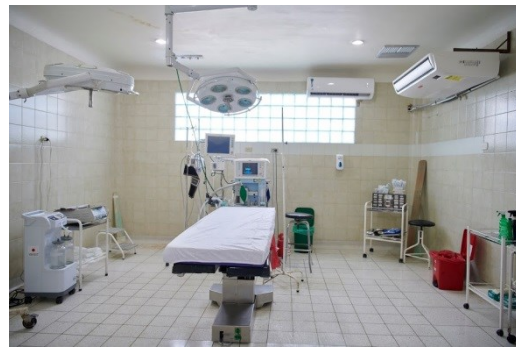
In addition, employees of Fast Retailing handed clothing donations directly to refugees and migrants in the center. Mr. Nitta said "As a global company, we would like to use the power of clothing to make a positive impact on every community we reach. We believe every person has the right to have a safe, happy and healthy life. We hope our products will support the refugees to feel good in their life".



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU)

The donations to the Nuestra Señora de los Remedios Hospital in Riohacha by the UN Refugee Agency-UNHCR, the Embassy of Japan and Fast Retailing were as follows:

- UNHCR Pediatric cradles, night stands, infusion bomb, multi parameter monitor, etc
- Embassy of Japan Furnishing of two operation rooms (anesthesia machines, electro cautery, continuous suction machines, surgical tables, stretchers, electro cardiographer)
- Fast Retailing Clothing Donation



Official hand over at the Nuestra Señora de los Remedios Hospital in Riohacha

Mr. Merkx said "I want to congratulate the generosity of the Colombian government and people to receive Venezuelans as well as the relationship between Japan and Colombia. What we have seen in the operation room shows commitment between Japan and Colombia". Likewise, Mrs. Jenny Londoño from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia said that "International cooperation has been supporting different areas in the country. These contributions from the international community need to keep supporting initiatives from the national government towards the humanitarian crisis coming from Venezuela".

Fast Retailing also supported this hospital, by giving clothes directly to the beneficiaries, both Venezuelans and Colombians.

A mother of a little baby of Venezuelan origin said, "I have been in Colombia for the last two years but have never been treated like today. I was sick so visited the hospital. Now, I received nice clothing for my baby and me, which I really appreciate so much".



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU)
at the Nuestra Señora de los Remedios Hospital in Riohacha

Fast Retailing gave its support to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute – ICBF and to the Casa del Abuelo in the city of Riohacha, which are receiving Venezuelan refugees and migrants.



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU) at the ICBF in Riohacha



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU) at the Casa del Abuelo in Riohacha

On November 1st 2018, at Cúcuta city, in Norte de Santander Department, Fast Retailing did hand over clothing to the Cúcuta's Migration Centre, of the Scalabrini Corporation. The Embassy of Japan supported a project at the same center with the donation of equipment such as bedroom items, kitchen, health room, among others and the infrastructure adaptation and installation of a ceiling in all communal areas. On November 7th took place the inauguration ceremony of the project with the attendance of Mr. Naoki Yokobayashi, Counsellor of the Embassy of Japan in Colombia and Mrs. Tiana Anaya, Community official of the UNHCR Cúcuta office.



Official hand over at the Cúcuta's Migration Centre of the Scalabrini Corporation



Clothing donation by Fast Retailing (UNIQLO and GU) at the Cúcuta 's Migration Centre

In total, Fast Retailing will donate about 90,000 pieces of UNIQLO and GU clothing in 2018 to help people affected by this crisis. Mr. Nitta said, "We believe we can continue and expand this programme in Colombia for the coming years. We also hope for the peace and happiness of the people here".



More information:

The signing ceremony on July 26th

http://www.colombia.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_es/Guajira.htm

UNHCR and Fast Retailing global partnership

<http://www.unhcr.org/uniqlo.html>

Bogotá D.C., November 7th, 2018

EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN COLOMBIA- Culture and Press Section

http://www.colombia.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_es/index.html

