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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MATHIAS (Portugal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 53: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/SPC/35/L.3)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/35/13)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/35/526)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/35/474)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/35/438 and Corr.1, 472, 473 and 474)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a draft resolution (A/SPC/35/L.3) submitted by the United States of America.

2. Mr. RAJGA (India) expressed on behalf of the people of India sincere condolences to the kith and kin of the victims of the earthquake in Algeria.

3. He commended the way in which the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had handled its Herculean task over 30 years, despite tremendous financial odds. The fact that a whole new generation of Palestinians had been born and brought up in refugee camps was a measure of their suffering. India had always maintained that the services provided by UNRWA could be no substitute for the Palestinian Arabs' right to live in freedom and dignity in their national homeland, but at best temporary palliatives.

4. In the light of the projected budgetary deficit of \$70.4 million for 1981, although the budget did not contain even provision for the purchase of flour, there was no alternative to severe reductions in the services provided to the refugees. The ideal solution would be the establishment by the United Nations of a continuing, assured and predictable source of funds subscribed to by Member States. Curtailment of vital services such as health, education and the distribution of basic rations would bring untold suffering to the refugees, and exacerbate the prevailing political situation in the region. States Members of the United Nations should take note of UNRWA's alarming financial situation and contribute generously to its funds. Despite its heavy commitments, India had consistently contributed to those funds from the beginning in the form of supplies needed by the Palestinian refugees, as well as in the form of regular scholarships and training facilities for displaced persons from Palestine, which it had provided even before the request made in General Assembly resolution 32/90 F.

5. The ultimate solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees could only be political, involving Israel's withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to a State of their own, and that of all States in the region to coexist in security. Pending such a solution, UNRWA must be enabled to continue its humanitarian activities as smoothly and effectively as possible.

(Mr. Ranga, India)

6. Mr. JAMAL (Qatar) said that the displacement of the refugees from their homeland was primarily the responsibility of the Zionist aggressor and the imperialist countries which had perfidiously contributed to that human tragedy. The racist, expansionist Zionist movement, supported by the colonial forces of the world, had by terrorist activities expelled the unarmed Palestinians from their land in 1948 to create a Zionist entity and had further expanded its territory by military aggression in and since 1967. Over 30 years, the United Nations had adopted resolutions calling for the return of the Palestinians to their homeland and since 1974 those resolutions had also called for a political solution to the Palestinian question based on their right to return and to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty. The implementation of those resolutions was the only way to solve the Palestinian problem and thus put an end to the human tragedy which had brought UNRWA into being. Since that tragedy had been caused by the creation of the State of Israel on Arab lands pursuant to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) the United Nations had a historic responsibility to ensure the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and the recovery of their fundamental rights, pending a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem.

7. It was also the duty of the international community to support UNRWA materially and morally. Qatar's support for the Agency had been proved by the steady increase in its yearly contribution, especially over the past two years. His country urgently appealed to all Member States and to the specialized agencies in the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, to co-operate fully with the Agency to enable it to overcome its current difficulties and maintain its services at least at a minimum level.

8. The fundamental problem faced by UNRWA was Israel's intransigent refusal to implement the United Nations resolutions affirming the inalienable right of all the refugees to return to their homes and recover their rights and property in accordance with article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

9. The Commissioner-General's report (A/35/13) described how the Zionist occupying forces, with their perpetual aggression and their hostility to the Palestinian people within and outside their borders, were seriously hampering the Agency's work in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and South Lebanon. The detrimental effect of those activities on education, health, and housing services were described in particular in paragraph 71, 76, 78, 79, 96 and 145 of the report. The report on Palestine refugees in the Gaza strip (A/35/473, para. 6) also referred to the demolition by the Israeli occupying authorities of 7,729 shelter rooms for refugees in camps in the Gaza strip in July and August 1971. Those and many other instances showed that instead of discharging their total responsibility to the Palestine refugees, the Israeli occupying authorities were threatening their very existence. His delegation strongly condemned those activities and called upon the Israeli occupying authorities to withdraw immediately from all the occupied territories and accept the right of all Palestine refugees to return to their homes.

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(Mr. Jamal, Qatar)

10. An article in The New York Times of 3 October 1980 reported the obstacles raised by the occupying authorities to the work of United States charitable organizations which sought to improve the economic conditions of the Palestinians. Those authorities seemed to consider that "anything good for the Palestinians was bad for the Israelis". That report illustrated the expansionist policy of the Israeli authorities aimed at evacuating the indigenous population from the occupied territories and settling their own people in its place. That policy was the most serious danger facing the Palestine refugees and the United Nations, and it constituted a threat to world peace and security.

11. His delegation also wished to emphasize the importance of reconsolidating UNRWA headquarters within the area of its operations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/112 A.

12. The Qatar delegation wished to pay a tribute to the Commissioner-General and his staff for the work they were doing in the face of increasing difficulties, especially with regard to the education and employment of women and the improvement of the training programme established with the help of the States members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). He expressed the hope that the Agency would be able to continue the humanitarian work for which it had been established.

13. Mr. ELGARIAHI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that he had some comments to make on the Commissioner-General's report. In the main the Middle East problem was not humanitarian but political, and the report should have contained a review of the origin of the problem. There was no reference to the many resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly dealing with the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland. There should also have been some paragraphs on the attitudes of the Zionist entity, in line with the content of the various United Nations resolutions. Much emphasis was laid on the financial deficit of UNRWA, which appeared to be a permanent feature, but a comparison should be made of the financial support given to the Zionist entity and that given to the homeless Palestinian people. The Zionists were receiving millions of dollars from donor countries, which were thus encouraging further aggression on the part of the Zionists and one result had been the occupation of territories in Lebanon. Aggressive actions by the Zionists were reported in paragraphs 129, 131, 180, 181 and 182 of the report.

14. The report made no mention of the property of the Palestine refugees that was now illegally held by the Zionists, and from which the Zionists had been making profits since the occupation amounting to millions of dollars.

15. The report referred to the necessity of reducing the Agency's services, but instead of reducing the services, additional sources of financing should be found, since the services provided were already below the minimum required to meet human needs. It was the duty of the international community to provide for those needs, and the burden should be borne above all by those countries that had helped to cause the problem through aid to the Zionists, which provided weapons to be used against the Palestine refugees. The international community must realize

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(Mr. Elgariani, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

that the services in the field of education, medical care and food provided for the Palestinians could not be reduced while they were still subject to aggression, which had now spread also to Lebanon. He strongly supported the proposal that UNRWA's headquarters should be reconsolidated within the area of its operations, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/52 A, paragraph 4. Lastly, his delegation objected to the fact that the Commissioner-General's report had been shown to the Zionists.

16. He wished to emphasize that his comments on the report were not intended to discredit it, or to minimize the efforts made by the Commissioner-General, who was working under very difficult conditions. He believed that those comments were necessary, since the United Nations was called on to meet its responsibilities to the Palestinian people, made homeless against their will by a conspiracy aided and abetted by the imperialists. The fact that the item had been on the agenda of the Organization for 30 years, that UNRWA's mandate had been continually renewed, that a number of different committees on the subject had been established, and that innumerable resolutions on the question had been adopted, all showed that a radical solution was needed, and that the basic cause of the problem, namely armed aggression, could not be ignored.

17. No one imagined that UNRWA's services could replace a solution that restored their rights to the Palestinian people. The Agency had been established as a provisional answer until a real solution could be arrived at. No such solution had been achieved, and thus UNRWA had become very important. He agreed with the Commissioner-General about the gravity of the financial situation, which was acute, and was still deteriorating. As indicated in paragraph 6 of the report, the Agency would go into 1981 with a budgetary deficit of \$70.4 million. The aim should be to improve the services to the Palestine refugees, which were already at a low level, by obtaining additional resources. The responsibility lay with the international community, and especially with those countries that had conspired with the Zionists and helped to cause the tragedy of the Palestinian people. He endorsed the appeal to Member States in paragraph 9 of the report to meet their responsibilities by providing the Agency with adequate funds. His country had always contributed to UNRWA, and had provided an additional contribution to consolidate primary education; it was also contributing substantially to the fight of the Palestinian people to recover their homes. The rights of the Palestinian refugees were affirmed in the United Nations Charter, in a number of United Nations resolutions, and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The issue was one of national liberation and of the struggle against racist and colonialist tendencies. No matter at what risk, the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) would continue their struggle. They constituted the key to the Middle East problem, and there could be no peace or justice in the region until they were restored to their homeland. Any other solution would merely be a palliative and could not change the situation.

18. In conclusion, he said he wished to extend his country's sincere condolences to Algeria for the tragedy caused by the recent earthquake that had claimed thousands of lives.

19. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of his right of reply, said that the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had tried to rewrite the

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(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

Commissioner-General's report by inserting passages on zionism, capitalism and colonialism, but that was no concern of the delegation of Israel. There had also been an attempt to rewrite the history of the Middle East conflict. The statement by the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reflected the attitude and goals of the régime in that country, which could be illustrated by the declaration of the Libyan ambassador to Brazil in September 1979, reported in the newspaper Jornal de Brasilia on 1 September 1979, that Libya was one of the Arab countries that did not accept the word of Israel, would not recognize Israel, and would fight Israel by all possible means.

20. According to the Libyan news agency, on October 8 1977 Colonel Qaddafi himself had asserted his opposition to any cease-fire with the Zionist enemy and had said that Libya would not agree to end the war or to negotiate with Israel. He had stated that the Libyans were a people who went to war as easily as if they were going to a party. That was sufficient to describe the attitude, policies and motivations behind the Libyan delegation's statement.

21. Mr. ELGARIANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the statements just made about Libya could safely be ignored. That sort of language was familiar enough both in the United Nations and elsewhere, and had been heard by all who defended the Palestinian people. The Zionist entity wished to speak of the rights of the Palestinian people without recognizing that people, and made all sorts of allegations against anyone who spoke for the Palestinian people and their rights. The Zionist entity followed the line that those who could find no arguments should use insults.

22. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said there was little point in advancing arguments to those who would not consider them. It was not only towards the Jews that the Libyan régime maintained an intransigent attitude. The Libyan leader had been quite frank according to an Associated Press report of 15 August 1980 in the newspaper Al-Safir he had said in an interview, referring to Lebanon, that all Christians in Arab lands in the Middle East must convert to Islam.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that the list of speakers on agenda item 53 would be closed at the end of the following meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.