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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 16th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DIALLO (Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/13)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/39/575)
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- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/39/372, 375, 411, 457, 464 and Add.1, 528 and 538)

1. Mr. DUARTE COSTA (Portugal) said that his country had supported all efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. It was the duty of the international community to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestine refugees until that could be achieved. In that regard, UNRWA played an indispensable role. It was encouraging to note that the Commissioner-General hoped to be able to maintain operations until the end of 1984 without resorting to reductions in essential services. His delegation shared the concern at the decline in contributions by Governments, which jeopardized the continuation of the Agency's basic activities. In that connection, his Government supported the appeal to the international community by the Commissioner-General and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to ensure that the Agency was supplied with the necessary resources.

2. Mr. SYED AHMAD SHAHABUDDIN (Malaysia) said that, since its inception in 1950, UNRWA had played the central role of administering relief assistance to Palestine refugees. The report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/39/13) clearly showed the magnitude of the task facing the Agency. His Government had noted the grave financial situation confronting UNRWA and would continue to provide assistance. It was particularly gratifying to note the priority which the Agency continued to give to education in spite of the great difficulties encountered following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. It should be noted that the Agency's claim against Israel for compensation for the loss and damage caused to its property resulting from that invasion amounted to almost \$4.5 million. Israel, however, continued to ignore that claim and other claims which predated the invasion.

3. Judging from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/39/538, it appeared that it was the deliberate policy of Israel to disrupt the education of Palestinians through the closure of schools in the occupied territories. Israel had also refused to co-operate with the Secretary-General in his efforts to bring about the establishment of the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/83 K.

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(Mr. Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin, Malaysia)

4. His delegation noted with concern that Palestine refugees were forcibly relocated and their dwellings demolished by Israeli troops. Acts of violence were often perpetrated against refugees in spite of protests by UNRWA. He stressed that the Agency's services were essential until a final solution could be brought about on the basis of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return and to establish an independent State.

5. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) reiterated his delegation's position that a solution to the question of Palestine could be achieved only through the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative. Israel's expansionist policies and total disregard for all norms of international law constituted the main obstacle to such a solution. Until that solution was found, the work of UNRWA would continue to be essential.

6. The Agency played a central role in the lives of the Palestine refugees and merited the full support of all Member States. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the statement by the Commissioner-General that the Agency had taken a fresh look at its programme in order to better meet the needs of the refugees. It was gratifying to learn that UNRWA had embarked on a programme of self-support and income-generating projects to enable the refugees to earn an income.

7. The safety of Palestinians in south Lebanon continued to be of special concern. His delegation strongly supported the Agency's activities in providing assistance to those refugees. The threats to the personal security of the refugees continued to be a cause for alarm. As the occupying Power, Israel was responsible for their security. The United Nations should give urgent attention to the problem of protecting the refugees.

8. He expressed profound concern at the continuing harassment of UNRWA personnel by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. The repeated arrests of UNRWA personnel by Israel authorities were outrageous.

9. The destruction of refugee shelters and the relocation by force of refugees in the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities raised serious questions. He expressed satisfaction at the efforts of the Agency to resist the attempts of the Israeli authorities to drive refugees out of the camps. It was gratifying to learn that such displaced refugees would continue to benefit from the Agency's services as refugees, even if they were no longer in the camps.

10. The Agency's work in the field of education and training was commendable. His Government had provided a large number of scholarships to Palestine refugees over the years. It was hoped that the financial constraints facing UNRWA would not lead to a reduction of services in that field. In that connection, his delegation noted with deep concern the continued occupation of school premises by Israeli authorities, preventing the reopening of some of the schools and training centres. Bangladesh supported the early establishment of the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees.

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(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

11. He commended the work of UNRWA in the field of health, particularly in view of the restrictions placed on the activities of the Agency's personnel. The medical and nutrition programmes and the environmental health services should continue to be given priority.

12. His delegation expressed concern at the Agency's budget deficit due to a decline in contributions by Governments. It was hoped that Governments would recognize the serious need to increase their contributions to UNRWA in order to ensure its continued viability. His delegation strongly supported the recommendation of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA concerning future resource mobilization. Bangladesh had contributed \$5,000 to UNRWA for 1983, in spite of its own economic difficulties. It should be noted that the Government of Israel had failed to pay more than \$4 million in compensation for the loss and damage to the Agency's property and facilities resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

13. His Government reaffirmed its support for the work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and called for the implementation of paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 38/83 H.

14. Mr. SIBAJENE (Zambia) said that the report of the Commissioner-General (A/39/13) once again showed the obstacles which continued to impede the efforts of UNRWA to carry out its mandate. The overall financial situation and the lack of adequate security for the refugees in the occupied Arab territories were cause for serious concern. The brutal Israeli invasion of Lebanon had confirmed his delegation's belief that the Israeli Government intended not only to perpetuate the diaspora of the Palestinian people, but also to frustrate the legitimate efforts of the international community to provide assistance to them. His Government renewed its appeal to the international community, particularly the economically advanced countries, to increase their contributions to UNRWA until a political solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees could be found. The collapse of UNRWA would cause untold human suffering and would have grave consequences for the political situation in the Middle East and international peace and security.

15. The persistent denial by Israel of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people was at the core of the Middle East conflict. The solution to the problem, therefore, lay in Israel's recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, particularly its right to return to its homeland and to establish an independent State. Zambia reiterated its appeal to the international community to increase its efforts to solve the underlying political problems which had necessitated the establishment of UNRWA. Only such a political solution could enable the Palestine refugees to return to their homeland.

16. Mr. AMAMOU (Tunisia) recalled that the partition of Palestine in 1947, intended to remedy the injustice suffered by the Jews of Europe, had inflicted on the Palestinian people another injustice, whose consequences would have been the same wherever Israel had been implanted; the nature of Israel and its policies had inevitably led to the despoliation, disinheritance and expropriation of the Palestinian people, which nevertheless remained determined to recover its right to self-determination and the creation of its own State on the basis of justice and international law.

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(Mr. Amamou, Tunisia)

17. UNRWA, which as its Commissioner-General had stated in the foreword to his report (A/39/13), had started as a temporary agency providing relief to Palestinians made destitute by the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, was now, 34 years later, servicing 2 million refugees; it was also the symbol of international commitment to their welfare and to a just resolution of their plight.

18. The fundamental cause of the continually worsening situation which threatened peace and security in the entire region was the policies of a Member State which owed its very existence to a General Assembly resolution which it constantly flouted and repudiated, policies based on the theory of a chosen people and intent on pursuing rampant expansionism and colonial settlement by force of arms. Enough has been learned about Israel's arrogant and intransigent policies respecting the Palestinian refugees, the Middle East and the agencies of the United Nations for it to be clear that no progress could be made until they were abandoned.

19. The non-implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and of programmes such as those laid down in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) or paragraph 2 of resolution 513 (VI), was a cause of grave concern to the international community, concern intensified by Israel's scheme to alter the demographic structure of the occupied Palestinian lands by continuing the settlement of those territories and displacing the refugees after destroying their dwellings, a practice similar to that followed by the apartheid régime in South Africa. Israel planned to resettle the refugees and destroy their camps in the hope of obliterating their cause and gradually absorbing the occupied territories. This was amply demonstrated by the inhuman treatment to which the refugees were subjected by the Israeli occupying forces.

20. In south Lebanon, Israeli occupation forces, imposed a reign of terror. The Palestine refugees lived in daily fear of abduction, disappearance, expulsion, torture and death, from which even UNRWA personnel were not immune. As pointed out by the Commissioner-General in his report, Israel owed UNRWA more than \$4.5 million in compensation for loss and damage caused to the Agency's property and facilities resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

21. The Tunisian delegation was pleased to associate itself with the recommendations in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/39/575) and hoped that the General Assembly would renew the Group's mandate. It was sure that the international community would continue to make generous contributions to the financing of UNRWA as a token of solidarity with a people reduced through no fault of its own to vagrancy.

22. At this moment of greatest trial for the Palestine refugees, he hoped that UNRWA would continue, as in the past, to strengthen and develop its social, education and health services, without any cuts. His delegation considered that, should UNRWA, owing to lack of funds, no longer be in a position to provide the necessary services, its budget should be integrated with that of the United Nations.

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(Mr. Amamou, Tunisia)

23. It was to be hoped that by a concerted effort the international community would eventually overcome the intransigence of Israel and that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine would be able to fulfil its mandate and open the way to the solution of the Palestinian problem on the basis of the realization of the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; only thus could the agonies of exile and the sufferings of the Palestinian people be brought to an end.

24. Mr. MITRA (India) said that India had always maintained that the services provided by UNRWA were, at best, a temporary palliative for the injustices forced on the unfortunate Palestinian people and were no substitute for its right to live in freedom and dignity in their own national homeland.

25. The Palestinian problem was basically political and not merely humanitarian; a whole population had been forcibly uprooted from its homeland and deprived of its right to return. Only when that root cause had been tackled, through the implementation of the numerous General Assembly resolutions on the subject, notably resolution 194 (III), and the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied by it since 1967, including Jerusalem, and by the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State in its own territory, could lasting peace be achieved.

26. His delegation's deep concern for the humanitarian aspect of the Palestine refugee problem was compounded by the grave financial difficulties touched on in the Commissioner-General's report. His delegation considered that it would be tragic if the Agency were compelled to curtail or terminate part or all of its vital health, education, training and relief services and shelter and welfare assistance. Such action would exacerbate not only the suffering of those unfortunate people but also the prevailing political situation in that region, where UNRWA was a stabilizing influence. The international community had a moral obligation to assist UNRWA, but the major burden of its financing continued to be borne by only a small number of countries. There was an urgent need to broaden the participation of the international community and increase the financial contribution to UNRWA. His delegation joined the Commissioner-General in calling upon Governments which had not yet contributed to UNRWA to start contributing, on those which had made only small contributions to be more generous, and on those able to do so to increase their contributions. His Government had from the inception of UNRWA contributed regularly and increasingly to its funds, both in kind and by providing scholarships and training facilities for displaced Palestinians.

27. The Palestinian people was deprived of its most basic rights - even of its right to exist, and it continued to suffer from Israel's persistent violation of United Nations decisions. The Commissioner-General had expressed his deep concern at reports of various coercive efforts by the Israeli authorities to transfer refugees from camps into housing projects, but the sufferings of that kind endured by the Palestinians for more than 30 years had only strengthened their determination to return to their homeland. The international community, as well as having a moral obligation to rescue UNRWA from its financial difficulties, also had a political responsibility to ensure the recovery by the Palestinian people of its homeland, until which event peace and security in the region would remain

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(Mr. Mitra, India)

elusive, as had been reaffirmed by the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983, had reaffirmed in paragraph 83 of its Political Declaration (A/38/132-S/15675). Ministers and heads of delegation of non-aligned countries, meeting in New York during the current General Assembly session, had stressed anew the necessity for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Until these conditions were met, there could be no alternative but to enable UNRWA to continue its humanitarian activity as smoothly and effectively as possible.

28. Mr. KA (Senegal) said that the Commissioner-General's report (A/39/13), through its graphic portrayal of life in the refugee camps and the shocking events in south Lebanon and other occupied areas, clearly showed the difficulties facing UNRWA in carrying out its mission. The civilian population lived in permanent fear, made worse by the continued illegal presence since 1982 of the forces of occupation in Lebanon, where they had sporadic confrontations with the refugees, subjected them to intimidation, launched punitive raids on innocent families and made arbitrary arrests. With an arrogance matched only by their impunity, the occupying Power persisted in the destruction of refugee dwellings and of the makeshift displaced persons' camps, forcing the inhabitants to live in crowded tents, often without adequate medical facilities, constantly exposed to the rigours of a harsh climate and harassed by terrorizing and destructive commando raids. The situation was made even more intolerable by the occupiers' constant infringement, with regard to civilian populations in Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and in Lebanon of the legal and moral rules governing the behaviour of occupying Powers. Even UNRWA had not been immune from such infringements.

29. Despite the magnitude of the problems and of the needs of the refugees in the occupied areas, however, the Agency had shown remarkable persistence in continuing to build on its past efforts especially by maintaining the high standard of its teaching programme, despite obstructions and curfews. His delegation considered that plans for the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds", under the auspices of the United Nations, should be finalized so that that institution could make its contribution to enriching the historic and cultural heritage of the Arab world.

30. In 1985 the Agency would require \$60 million in additional funding to cope with the pressing problems in the occupied areas; it was vital that the international community should make a determined effort to allow the Agency to carry out its mission to the best of its ability. His delegation renewed its appeal to Member States for substantial additional contributions to preserve the essential programmes of first aid, health, education and the reconstruction of destroyed housing. His own country would continue to support the activities of the Agency as far as its own means allowed and would announce the amount of its own contribution in due time.

31. The displacement of populations, punitive raids on defenceless refugee camps, the desecration of holy sites and expropriation without compensation had always disturbed the international community; but although these regrettable acts had gone unpunished, it was certain that they would not triumph over the will of the Arab people of Palestine to recover their basic rights and realize the national objectives of their struggle.

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(Mr. Ka, Senegal)

32. The international community should apply itself vigorously to the problem of returning refugees to their own country in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It was certain that all those refugees who had been forced into exile had been expelled from their native land, Palestine, by force; they wished and had the right to return, to live on their own land with dignity and with their national identity respected.

33. Conditions for a political solution to the whole Middle East problem should be created, in order to redress the political and moral injustice which the Palestinian people had suffered for several decades. He was sure that if all the conditions for the overall settlement of that crisis were fulfilled, all the Semitic peoples of that region could realize a new vision; that of peaceful coexistence. Until that day, his delegation would continue to consider that UNRWA, an organization in which reposed the hope of thousands of refugees, should be helped to accomplish its essential humanitarian task of peace.

34. Mr. SHEHATA (Egypt), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, drew attention to the statement made by the representative of Israel at the Committee's 15th meeting and indicated that, in his delegation's opinion, the report of the Commissioner-General (A/39/13) was objective and impartial. His delegation strongly rejected any attempt to cast doubt on the Commissioner-General's objectivity or on the accuracy of the details the report contained.

35. The representative of Israel's comments concerning the projects for the relocation or reintegration of Palestine refugees without confirmation of their inalienable right of return, were at a variance with the legal, political and historical context of the Palestinian problem and deliberately omitted any mention of its real causes. Israel was violating the basic principles contained in the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the norms of international law, as well as the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Convention entailed the obligation, for Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure the security and safety of the Palestine refugees, an obligation which it failed to fulfil.

36. His delegation could not accept the erroneous logic behind the representative of Israel's claim that the root cause of the Palestine refugee disaster lay in the historical phenomenon of demographic migration. The assertion confused voluntary migration, the ongoing presence of people in Palestine and compulsory migration resulting from acts of war. Referring to the frequent comments about Israel's peaceful intentions and its desire for good-neighbourly relations, he stressed that nothing could be achieved in the absence of just and lawful action.

37. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement made by the representative of Israel at the Committee's 15th meeting insulted the intelligence of members of the Committee. Israel's record would dispel any doubt about its real intentions in all the occupied territories. Moreover, the representative of Israel's main argument to the effect that the cause of the Palestine refugee problem lay in population movements was an untenable invention. Indeed, he asked where the some 4 million Zionist settlers had come from and why a whole group of people had been displaced by another group of people,

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(Mr. Burayzat, Jordan)

something which had never occurred in the region before Israel had displaced the Palestinian people. Formerly, there had been free movements of individuals and, in that context, Jews had originally been welcomed in Palestine.

38. Moreover, the representative of Israel's attempt to blame the Arab Governments for the Palestine refugee problem conflicted with his population movements theory, as well as with the facts of history. Ever since 1948, Israel had been deliberately attempting to force the Palestinian people out of Palestine and, as recently as August 1984, an Israeli soldier had been told that the Palestinians must be expelled in the interests of the Jewish State. Therein lay the cause of the refugee problem.

39. The flawed arguments put forward by the Israeli representative did not serve the cause of peace or stability. The real problem lay in recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland.

40. Mr. BARROMI (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that Jordan's interest in the question under consideration was explained by the fact that it was a Palestinian State and, in that connection, he drew attention to the grim record of its 19 years of occupation of Judea and Samaria during which the Palestine people had been subjected to oppression, discrimination and hardship, to say the least.

41. Obviously, the representative of Jordan had not listened carefully to the statement he had made at the Committee's 15th meeting in which he had indicated that there had always been migration in the region, some voluntary and some non-voluntary. The Jews had migrated out of necessity, and the population of Palestine in 1947 had actually included many immigrants from countries such as Afghanistan.

42. In response to the hackneyed assertion that the Jews had lived pleasantly in the Arab countries, he drew attention to the tragic persecution to which they had been subjected and which was well known. A Jordanian law enacted in 1954, which prohibited Jews from residing in Jordan, reflected that country's attitude towards Jews. It was the only such law in the world and was reminiscent of the laws of Nazi Germany.

43. Generally speaking, Jordan should seek a constructive solution with Israel and should not succumb to terrorist blackmail and to ultimate disaster.

44. Mr. HAMADNEH (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the representative of Israel's continued claims that there was a Palestinian State in Jordan were based on the theory that the repetition of a lie could make it the truth. However, the Committee was not deceived. Jordan, an independent State like any other, had been created prior to the establishment of Israel. The Palestine refugees who lived in Jordan had come there after being expelled from Palestine by the Israeli authorities, implementing the Zionist idea of a Jewish State, free of Arabs. The Palestine refugees resided in Jordan temporarily, until such time as they could return to their homeland in Palestine.

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(Mr. Hamadneh, Jordan)

45. The assertion that Israel desired peace was both false and misleading. If the Israeli Government really wanted peace, it should implement and observe all the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and on the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

46. Mr. CHAMMAS (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, although the representative of Israel had correctly quoted from the statement his delegation had made in the Committee in 1983 and had correctly named the speaker (see A/SPC/38/SR.34), there was no contradiction between that statement and the statement his delegation had made at the current session. Unfortunately, the representative of Israel had quoted selectively from the 1983 statement and, accordingly, he drew attention to the reference to Lebanon's determination to liberate its national soil from all unauthorized non-Lebanese forces (A/SPC/38/SR.34, para. 9). In other words, it was Lebanon which decided which non-Lebanese forces it wanted on its soil and which it did not want.

47. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the last speaker at the Committee's 15th meeting had described his country, and others, as terrorist countries, an accusation frequently levelled against any Arab country which supported the Palestinian resistance and the right of the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and to establish an independent State, indeed against any State which supported law and justice.

48. Moreover, that speaker had been unable to provide any official justification for the downing of a civilian jetliner, whose black box had not proved that it had been on a mission justifying its downing and whose civilian passengers had all been killed on Arab soil in Sinai. The real terrorists were those who perpetrated such lawless acts.

49. Mr. BARROMI (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that one characteristic of the Qaddafi régime was that it did not conceal its goal of destroying Israel and spreading terrorism. That policy was evident in a statement made by Qaddafi himself in September 1984 to the effect that he intended to teach France and the United States even more impressive lessons than those they had learned in Viet Nam. Libyan citizens were also the victims of that Government's terrorism, as was indicated in the latest report of Amnesty International, which quoted Qaddafi as stating that every loyal Libyan living abroad was responsible for the elimination of that country's enemies.

50. In that connection, he drew attention to the statement which he had made the previous day concerning the various ways in which the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya damaged the Arab countries' standing in the world and undermined the search for a solution to world problems, including the Palestine refugee problem.

51. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that the Zionist representative's keen interest in the reputation of the Arab countries, like its anxiety about the fate of the Palestine refugees, was part of the Zionist entity's well-known tactic of diverting attention from the

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(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

important issues. For example, the Zionist representative had not answered the question put by the representative of Lebanon concerning the withdrawal of Zionist forces from south Lebanon or the question about the refugees' right of return and their right to compensation, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

AGENDA ITEM 31: POLICIES OF APARTHEID OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA
(continued) (A/SPC/39/L.3 and Add.1-14)

52. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that, at its next meeting, the Committee would consider the requests for hearings in connection with agenda item 31, which had been circulated in documents A/SPC/39/L.3 and Addenda 1-14. An additional request, dated 28 October 1984, had been received from the Revolution in Africa Action Committee. Although that request did not meet the deadline of 26 October, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to have that request circulated and considered with the others.

53. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.