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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for the Palestine refugees

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report, which deals with offers by Member States and United Nations agencies of grants and scholarships for higher education for Palestine refugees, is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of paragraph 8 of its resolution 37/120 D of 16 December 1982.
2. The report includes the substance of responses by Member States and United Nations agencies to the appeal contained in that resolution, together with references to further actions taken by Member States and specialized agencies in response to the appeal contained in General Assembly resolutions 32/90 F of 13 December 1977, 33/112 C of 18 December 1978, 34/52 C of 23 November 1979, 35/13 B of 3 November 1980 and 36/146 H of 12 February 1982. By those resolutions, the Assembly appealed to all States, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to make special allocations, scholarships and grants to Palestine refugees, and invited the relevant United Nations agencies to continue, within their respective spheres of competence, to expand assistance for higher education to Palestine refugee students. The Assembly requested the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to act as recipient and trustee for such special allocations and scholarships and to award them to qualified refugee candidates.

* A/38/150.

3. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany offered nine scholarships to Palestine refugee graduates of UNRWA vocational training centres in Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in November 1982. Three graduates from the West Bank and two from the Gaza Strip were due to begin their scholarships in July 1983 and a further two are due to begin in January 1984. These are in addition to nine Palestine refugee graduates who started their courses in 1981 following an earlier offer of 10 scholarships by the Federal Republic in 1981. These awards, while not specifically in response to the General Assembly resolutions, are in keeping with their spirit and represent the continuation of a series of such awards made annually by the Federal Republic of Germany to UNRWA over a period of several years.

4. Concerning awards for tertiary studies in Australia made by the Australian Government to Palestine refugees (see A/36/385, para. 3), negotiations for two such awards may be finalized in the current year.

5. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) followed up its award of three fellowships in 1980 (see A/35/438, para. 5), two in 1981 (see A/36/385, para. 7) and one in 1982 (see A/37/427, para. 7) with an invitation to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA to propose candidates for 1983. Accordingly, UNRWA has proposed 13 candidates for such training and by the date of this report one candidate had been selected by WIPO.

6. The Universal Postal Union (UPU), responding to resolution 37/120 D, has noted that two Palestine refugees are still undergoing extensive training (1979-1983) at the Arab Higher Postal Institute in Damascus on UPU scholarships awarded in 1979 in response to resolution 32/90 F (see A/34/480, para. 5). The UPU has again reiterated its willingness, within the limits of its resources, to consider any other application for scholarships from Palestine refugee students seeking training in the postal field.

7. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in response to the General Assembly resolutions, reported on two programmes of assistance to the Palestinian people in the area of training. One, in the area of specialized training in agricultural development, began in November 1981. It is a 23-month programme and consists of three fellowships for Palestinian university graduates to improve and upgrade their technical skills in the fields of plant protection, animal husbandry and soil science. The second project has a duration of two years and has as its objective an agricultural training centre which will assist Palestinian families in two refugee camps in Syria through the provision of facilities, knowledge, skills and technical leadership to upgrade production and improve the crops and livestock of refugees. It was due to commence in June 1982 but was held up for technical reasons; it is now expected to commence activities soon.

8. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as part of its long-standing agreement with UNRWA, granted three fellowships in 1981 and nine in 1982 to Palestine refugee education staff of UNRWA for special courses of training in overseas countries. So far in 1983 UNESCO has granted five such fellowships and more are expected later in the year. These awards, while not specifically in response to the resolutions of the General Assembly, are in keeping with their spirit.

9. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA has informed the Secretary-General that UNRWA will continue to make available to prospective candidates whatever information it receives about scholarships offered by Member States and specialized agencies for which Palestine refugee students might be eligible. It is also ready to act as the recipient and trustee of special allocations and scholarships whenever such funds and scholarships are made available to it for the benefit of Palestine refugees.
