

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**
FORTY-FIRST SESSION

*Official Records**



MAY 19 1987

UN/JA COLLECTION

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Monday, 3 November 1986
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOUASSI (Togo)

CONTENTS

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

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF
AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/41/SR.18
7 November 1986
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/SPC/41/L.7 to L.18)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/41/13 and Add.1)
- (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/41/702)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/41/555)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/563, A/41/564, A/41/565, A/41/566, A/41/543, A/41/567, A/41/568, A/41/457)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to draft resolutions A/SPC/41/L.10 to L.17, and to document A/SPC/41/L.18, which had programme budget implications for draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.8.

2. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) stressed the great importance of the humanitarian work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which - in the same way as the work done by similar bodies - justified the very existence of the United Nations. The General Assembly must therefore provide the Agency with a stable financial basis. Its precarious financial situation jeopardized the continuation of certain activities and the implementation of new projects. Chile was particularly concerned about the consequences that the financial crisis of the Organization might have for the budget of the Agency, as a body providing essential services to thousands of people. Expenditure on education, for example, had been increasing steadily as a result of the growing numbers of schoolchildren and inflation. In recent years, school attendance had grown by 16,500. In Lebanon, every effort was being made to maintain educational, health and social welfare services. Although the situation was still disturbing, as reflected in the Commissioner-General's report (A/41/13), the Agency's staff was continuing to provide services to the Palestine refugees. It could only be hoped that all the parties to the conflict in Lebanon would exercise more restraint and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country whose people wanted more than ever to live in peace.

3. The fate of thousands of Palestine refugees and the stability of the region were closely linked to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine which was the core of the Middle East problem. As had already been stressed repeatedly by Chile, Israel must withdraw from all the territories occupied since 1967, respect the right of all the States in the region to live in peace within safe and recognized boundaries, and allow the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate right to self-determination. The human problems involved were assuming such proportions that all dilatory manoeuvres must be avoided. The urgency of the situation called for the adoption of practical measures. UNRWA must be provided with means of carrying out its task in the best

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

possible way. Chile would continue to provide financial support to the Agency because of the profoundly humanitarian nature of its activities. It urged the international community to make generous contributions to the Agency so that thousands of refugees could continue to receive assistance and the United Nations could continue to discharge its duties in that area.

4. Mr. VALDERRAMA (Philippines) commended the Commissioner-General for his excellent report and for the indispensable and untiring work done by UNRWA, in spite of all the dangers and difficulties confronting it, to make the life of the Palestine refugees slightly more bearable.

5. It was therefore disheartening to note that the Agency's work was being jeopardized not only by financial difficulties but also by the fighting in the region, and that members of its staff were still being arrested and abducted. His delegation sincerely deplored the fact that six of them had lost their lives in 1986 while performing their duties on behalf of the United Nations.

6. There could be no peace in the region until the question of Palestine was settled. The Philippines supported the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State in Palestine under the leadership of the PLO, its sole legitimate representative, as well as the right of all the States in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within safe and recognized boundaries. It believed that a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict could be worked out on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

7. Additional contributions were required if UNRWA was to maintain its activities at a satisfactory level. The Philippines, which provided it with modest but unswerving support, fervently hoped that UNRWA's financial situation would be improved through the adoption of multi-year planning and through regular and generous contributions and was pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolutions on that subject.

8. In the International Year of Peace, the Governments concerned should show goodwill and, in good faith, seek a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the problem of Palestine, because if that problem was settled there would clearly be no further reason for UNRWA to exist.

9. Mr. AL-SHANFARI (Oman) said that his country recognized the true worth of the services rendered by UNRWA to more than 2 million Palestine refugees. The efforts made were particularly commendable because the Agency was in a very uncertain financial situation, the number of refugees was growing steadily and the cost of living in the regions where they lived was constantly increasing.

10. To the precarious living conditions of the refugees was added the insecurity that was continuously maintained by the Israeli forces, whether in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or in Lebanon. Not content with having forced the Palestinians into exile and having relegated them to makeshift camps at the outskirts of towns, Israel wanted to eliminate even that limited presence in order to erase any trace of the crime it had committed.

(Mr. Al-Shanfari, Oman)

11. He wished to pay tribute to those Arab countries that hosted Palestine refugees and spared no effort to facilitate the task of the Agency and to thank all the countries that made regular contributions to UNRWA. He hoped that the meeting held in the summer of 1986 by the donor countries and the host countries would make it possible to give UNRWA a more solid financial base.

12. The international community, which had a moral, humanitarian and political responsibility for the Palestine refugees, must do everything in its power to enable UNRWA to continue to discharge its mission, which would not end until the Palestine people could exercise its right to return to its homeland and to live in peace and security like all other peoples of the world.

13. Mr. SUMAIDA (Iraq) said that, every year, the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA drew the attention of the members of the Committee and world public opinion to one of the most terrible tragedies of the twentieth century, that of a people driven from its land and reduced to wandering to make room for a heterogeneous population of emigrants with nothing in common except a racist doctrine that bore the name of zionism.

14. In order to carry out its designs, the Zionist Movement had deliberately created a climate of hatred between the Arabs and Jews in a region of the world which, over the centuries, had generously welcomed a considerable number of Jews fleeing persecution and oppression, had offered them security and had allowed them to practise their religion freely and to participate in economic, political and social life.

15. Relations between the two communities had become embittered only when Jewish immigration to Palestine had taken on a massive, organized character, damaging the equilibrium of the region. Contrary to the allegations of certain elements of the Zionist entity, the Jewish emigrants had not settled in a land without people. That could easily be seen by referring to the results of the census of the Palestinian population conducted in 1922. At that time, Palestine had had 750,000 inhabitants, of whom 84,000 had been Jews. In 1946, Palestine had had 1,850,000 inhabitants. The Jewish community had comprised 620,000 persons, of whom 444,000 had immigrated between 1922 and 1946.

16. The representative of the Zionist entity had spread another falsehood when he had claimed that the Arab States had created the refugee problem and deliberately aggravated it. In reality, the Israeli authorities had cold-bloodedly created and carried out a veritable strategy whose objective had been to expel the Palestinians from their homes and to replace them by Zionist emigrants. Those were now established facts. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist Movement, had referred to that strategy in his journal, which had been published in New York in 1969. Confirmation could also be found in two articles published in 1986 by Benny Morris, correspondent for The Jerusalem Post, in the reviews Middle Eastern Studies and Mid-East Journal.

(Mr. Sumaida, Iraq)

17. Those writings and numerous others clearly showed that the Zionists had never hesitated to resort to terror and psychological warfare to achieve their goals, as the horrible massacre perpetrated at Deir Yassin had proved beyond all doubt.

18. The second phase of the diabolical scheme conceived by the strategists of the Zionist entity had consisted in pursuing the Palestinians even into the camps where they had found refuge so as to eliminate all material evidence of their infamy.

19. The Commissioner-General had described in detail the inhuman conditions in which the refugees in the Gaza Strip lived. The Secretary-General too had reported on the criminal machinations of the Zionist authorities, which persisted in carrying out savage oppression in that area in order to spread despair among Palestinians and force them into exile.

20. The situation of the refugees settled in Lebanon was no better. Their lives were in constant danger. The massacres of Sabra and Shatila and the constant bombings by the Israeli air force clearly showed what kind of solution Israel was seeking to apply to the Palestine question.

21. His delegation wished to pay tribute to the UNRWA staff members who, under extremely dangerous circumstances, had carried out their work with exemplary devotion and courage and, in particular, those who had lost their lives in the pursuit of their noble mission.

22. It was unacceptable that, for want of financial resources, the Agency should be forced to restrict its assistance to part of the Palestine refugees. If the quality and size of the Agency's activities were not to be compromised because of the irregularity of contributions, the Agency must be given a stable financial base. Then it would be able to discharge its mission properly, which consisted in aiding the Palestine refugees and alleviating their condition until they could return to their homes.

23. Mr. SAFRONCHUK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the tragic destiny of the Arab people of Palestine, of which the refugee problem was only one aspect, was the very crux of the Near East conflict. After some 40 years of persecution and repression, half the Palestinian people was reduced to the condition of refugees and the other half was under the yoke of Israeli occupation.

24. In that context, his delegation wished to stress that the essential principle for a settlement of the Palestine refugee problem set out in General Assembly resolution 194 (III), i.e. the right to return or to compensation, had never been implemented. The Tel Aviv authorities, which flagrantly violated the rights of peoples and practised terror and violence, were entirely responsible for that omission. The States that supported the Israeli policy of aggression and expansion also bore some of the responsibility, most particularly the United States, which, with Israel, was attempting to impose upon the Arabs separate capitulation settlements in order to reinforce the Israeli occupation and to deprive the Palestinians of their right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State.

(Mr. Safronchuk, USSR)

25. Events had shown that Israeli policy was no more than a succession of flagrant violations of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, of the fundamental norms of international law and relations and of United Nations resolutions. Judging from their statements, the Israeli authorities had unfortunately no intention of renouncing that policy. It even seemed that they were preparing to harden the occupying régime still further and to increase repressive measures in the West Bank of the Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Their goal could not be more obvious: to force the Palestinians to resign themselves to Israeli occupation and to abandon their lands.

26. The Soviet delegation was firmly convinced that the problem of the Palestine refugees could not be dissociated from a wider problem, that of the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine. It was on that foundation that a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East must be based and an international conference with the participation of all concerned parties, including the PLO, the Soviet Union and the United States, would contribute to that end. The establishment of a preparatory committee composed of the five permanent members of the Security Council would represent a concrete step in that direction.

27. Finally, the Soviet Union had always believed that UNRWA should be financed by those who had caused the problems which the Agency was called upon to solve, namely Israel and the States which supported its policies.

28. Mr. AL-KHALIFA (Qatar) said that the consideration of agenda item 75 illustrated once again the unprecedented tragedy of the Palestinian people. The conditions in which they were living were below the most elementary human standards and were not the result of classical colonialist occupation and exploitation nor of neo-colonial economic domination. They were the result of a careful plan the purpose of which was no other than to expel the Palestinian people from its homeland in order to allow a foreign population to establish itself there.

29. He was surprised to note that the representative of a great Power, which had supported the aggressor, had strained his ingenuity to submit to the Committee a draft resolution in which the General Assembly would note with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) had not been effected (A/SPC/41/L.7). The sponsor of that draft had forgotten that it was not by renewing the mandate of the Agency each year that the problem of the Palestine refugees would be solved but by enabling them to return to their homes and to exercise their right of self-determination.

30. From one year to the next, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East had worked untiringly but its efforts had constantly been blocked by the destructive policy of Israel. The Palestine refugees, whose living conditions had deteriorated because of the financial difficulties of UNRWA, had, moreover, been exposed to the murderous raids which Israel had relentlessly levelled against the camps where they lived. Those attacks were clearly part of a long-term strategy designed to eliminate totally the

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Qatar)

embarrassing presence of the Palestine refugees by obliging them to settle permanently in the Arab or other countries.

31. If the international community wished to find a solution for that problem, it must show sufficient political will to make Israel see reason and persuade it to comply with United Nations resolutions and to respect the rules of international law.

32. Mr. BITAR (Lebanon) thanked the Commissioner-General for his report, which was, for once, really objective, and wished to assure him of the continued support of his Government. The Government of Lebanon deplored the loss of life of several UNRWA staff members and wished to pay special tribute to the Agency staff who were accomplishing their humanitarian mission in dangerous and very difficult conditions. It was sparing no effort, within the limits of its resources, to secure the release of all the hostages and to obtain information on the fate of Mr. Alec Collett.

33. The "seemingly endless cycle of violence", already in its eleventh year, had affected almost everyone. The Lebanese who had paid, not by choice, a very high price, were determined not to permit a recurrence of the conditions which had prevailed prior to 1982 and which had led to the Israeli invasion. It was a fact that the tension which ruled in the camps would diminish substantially if the Palestinian organizations respected that determination. In that connection, his delegation could only voice its dismay that one delegation had equated one Lebanese group, which was responsible for driving Israel out of most of South Lebanon, with the Israeli aggressor.

34. The operational difficulties of the Agency, real as they were, were only part of the overall difficulties which the Government and people were facing every day in Lebanon. The Lebanese Government was totally committed to the Palestinian cause; the Lebanese had assisted and welcomed their Palestinian brothers since 1948 and had always given them firm support, regardless of cost.

35. It might be useful to reiterate the positions of principle of his Government on the issue.

- (i) The ideal solution for the Palestinian people was clearly to be found in its return to its homeland within the framework of a just and peaceful solution to the Middle East question.
- (ii) Until then, the protection of the Palestinians and all those residing in Lebanon rested with the Government of that country as was also the case in the other Arab host countries.
- (iii) The best way to secure their protection was to help the Lebanese Government to restore its authority over the entire territory of Lebanon and in that regard it was absolutely necessary to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions on Lebanon.

(Mr. Bitar, Lebanon)

- (iv) Respect by the refugees for the laws of the host countries would be an added guarantee for their protection.
- (v) Lebanon remained opposed to attempts aimed at eliminating the political identity of the Palestinians through plans to settle them permanently in host countries.

36. In connection with UNRWA's financial situation, his delegation would like to state, in the first place, that, if concern for budgetary balance was made an end in itself, the Agency would not be in a position to accomplish its essential humanitarian mission and the burden on the host countries would be further increased. Second, an equitable burden-sharing system of contributions must be agreed so that the Agency would be able to fulfil its mandate and to implement its programmes fully. Finally, the Lebanese Government wished to express its appreciation to those Governments which had shown willingness to agree to a supplementary financial effort and which had never ceased to support UNRWA.

37. The situation of the refugees in Lebanon should not obscure the equally difficult situation of the refugees in other regions, particularly in the Gaza Strip, which also deserved the urgent attention of the international community.

38. Mr. ZAMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/41/13) showed vividly the relentless efforts being made by UNRWA officers and the difficult situation which they faced in carrying out their task.

39. His delegation would limit itself to making a few comments on the main points of the report concerning, in particular, the historical setting and the mandate entrusted to the Agency by the General Assembly (paras. 18 to 23), the measures taken thus far, and the obstacles impeding activities. Activities in the area of education and health services (paras. 52 and 66) had continued without any major problems. On the other hand, no progress had been made in implementing General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 providing for the return of the Palestinians to their homes. As was evident from paragraphs 41 and 99, the Zionist occupation forces were preventing the implementation of that resolution.

40. As paragraphs 1, 5 and 10 demonstrated, the difficulties impeding the Agency's activities were a result of the financial crisis. It was only logical that those responsible for the Palestinian tragedy should assume greater financial responsibility. As paragraphs 18, 26 and 27 showed, the problems created by the Zionist occupation forces, particularly in 1948 following the partition of Palestine, had been exacerbated by Zionism's expansionist policies.

41. The experience of the past four decades and the statements made at the current session by the representatives of the occupiers of Palestine showed vividly that mere goodwill and superficial measures would not solve the problem of the Palestine refugees. His country, however, supported the work of UNRWA on humanitarian grounds, although that did not, in his delegation's view, provide a permanent remedy. The problem required a lasting solution, particularly now that the

(Mr. Zamani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

situation in Lebanon had proved that only the power of the people could effectively oppose force and oppression. If international organizations did not try to provide the necessary conditions for the administration of justice, the Muslims, Christians and true Jews of Palestine would remedy the situation themselves. The occupation forces must return to the lands from which they had come before the will of the people imposed justice.

42. Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh) said that his country valued greatly the work being done by UNRWA for the Palestine refugees but at the same time desired fervently that that task could be terminated as soon as possible by bringing about a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem. Such a solution could be achieved only by recognizing the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to establish a homeland of their own under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

43. The situation in Lebanon was a matter of grave concern. The increase in the number of violent incidents posed a threat to UNRWA's humanitarian activities. Refugees and Agency staff were permanently at risk and some had been killed or kidnapped. The situation in the Gaza Strip was also very serious. According to the report of the Commissioner-General (A/41/13, para. 13), more than half a million residents - two-thirds of them refugees - were living in an area of only 370 square kilometres. Difficult living conditions exacerbated feelings of despair and hopelessness among the refugees, who had no other alternative but to depend on the Agency's services. The mandate of UNRWA, which expired on 30 June 1987, must therefore be extended and the international community must contribute generously to financing its operations until a permanent solution was found to the Palestinian problem. His delegation welcomed the introduction of a three-year medium-term plan for 1987-1989. It was encouraging that the financial crisis had been overcome and that the income and expenditures for 1986 were expected to be more closely balanced than in 1985. The international community bore particular responsibility for providing adequate funding to maintain the Agency's humanitarian activities for Palestine refugees, for its failure to ensure a just solution was the cause of their suffering.

44. As the number of refugees had increased, the Agency had had to expand its activities in the areas of relief, education and health services. The number of children educated over the years exceeded 350,000 and would continue to increase. Despite its limited resources, Bangladesh had provided scholarships to Palestinian students to continue their studies in its educational institutions. Although five years earlier the General Assembly had adopted a resolution on the establishment of the University of Jerusalem, "Al-Quds", no progress had been made in that regard because of the negative attitude of Israel. Israel appeared to be embarked on a systematic and deliberate campaign to deny Palestinian refugee children the right to an education, through the closure of schools, the suspension of classes and the banning of books. Israel claimed that it was giving Palestinian students the opportunity to pursue higher education, but failed to understand that the Palestinians did not want an education that was imposed by an occupying force. Israel should allow the experts appointed by the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to establish the proposed university in Jerusalem.

/...

(Mr. Rahman, Bangladesh)

45. The implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions would make the Palestine refugees citizens of a Palestinian State. The Palestine problem must be solved as soon as possible in order to ensure lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

46. Mrs. DIAMATARIS (Cyprus) recalled that UNRWA had been established more than 36 years earlier to provide humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees expelled from their homeland and forced to seek refuge in other countries. The Agency had thus been given a temporary mission, pending a political solution to the problem. Since then, decades had passed and the Palestinian people were still being denied their inalienable rights and the international community was still unable to put an end to their plight.

47. Throughout the years, the Agency had provided extremely valuable services (emergency relief, education, health services, etc.). It now faced serious financial and other difficulties. Six UNRWA employees had been killed in Lebanon in the past year, one of them only recently. Despite the serious situation in Lebanon and the Agency's financial difficulties, however, UNRWA strove to maintain a level of assistance which met the needs of the refugees fully. It was the duty of all States, therefore, to continue their financial, material and moral support to the Agency until a just and lasting solution was found to the Palestinian question. They should also respond to the appeal of the Commissioner-General by making contributions which would enable the Agency's humanitarian activities to go on. Cyprus made a modest contribution to the Agency but one that was in keeping with its means in its own present difficulties.

48. As the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, had reiterated in his address to the General Assembly on 25 September 1986, there could be no comprehensive, viable and just solution to the question of Palestine unless account was taken of the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish their own independent, sovereign State.

49. Mr. GOKTURK (Turkey) said that the role played by UNRWA over the years and the social and humanitarian services it had rendered could not be dissociated from the political framework within which it had had to function for the past 36 years. The fact that the question of Palestine constituted the heart of the matter must be recognized. So long as Palestine remained occupied, so long as all the Arab territories occupied since 1967 were not returned to their rightful owners, there would be no viable and genuine peace in the Middle East and the problem of the Palestine refugees would not go away.

50. The United Nations had a collective responsibility towards the refugees and, for all its imperfections and predicaments, the Agency remained the basic instrument at the Organization's disposal to alleviate their plight. Every conceivable effort must be made to assist the refugees, and the international community's inability thus far to eliminate the root causes of the problems should not serve as a pretext for any lack of efforts on their behalf. While UNRWA's

(Mr. Gokturk, Turkey)

humanitarian action could not, of course, be considered a substitute for a comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the fact should not be overlooked that, without it, the ordeal of the Palestine refugees and the political instability in the region might reach explosive proportions.

51. In conclusion, he commended the dynamic efforts made by the Commissioner-General and drew attention to the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA (A/41/732) in which Governments were urged to contribute generously with a view to enabling the Agency to perform its tasks. As in the past, the Agency could count on the Turkish Government's contribution.

52. Mr. DOWEK (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that in the course of the debate his delegation had been described repeatedly as the delegation of the Zionist entity and that zionism had been equated with racism. He had refrained from intervening because, in fact, he had no objection to being described as the representative of the Zionist entity. That term did not have for him the negative connotations that it had for some delegations. Judaism was not a racist religion. It was the oldest monotheistic religion in the world and the Islamic and Christian religions stemmed from it. If certain delegations wanted to equate Judaism and zionism with racism, one could only urge them to examine their own attitudes. The Arab delegations' position on the Palestinian problem reminded him of the story of the lawyer who, having to absent himself from his office, asked his son to stand in for him. On his return, the son told him that he had settled the case with which the office had been dealing for the past 40 years. The lawyer was dismayed: the benefits reaped from the case had suddenly come to an end. The Arab delegations' attitude was the same: they had no desire to see the Palestinian problem settled.

53. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was impossible to take pride in being described as the representative of the Zionist entity and, at the same time, to protest against the use of the term. Moreover, zionism could not be put on a par with Judaism; as he had already pointed out, those were two clearly separate things. Furthermore, an attempt was being made yet again to delude the Committee into believing that the Arab States did not want the problem of the Palestine refugees solved. Rather than reply to that mendacious allegation, he would refer its author to his own statement at an earlier meeting.

54. Mr. SUMAIDA (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Zionist entity pretended to forget that a resolution adopted by the majority of States Members of the United Nations had equated zionism with racism.

55. In a speech made in New York in 1968, the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber had noted that the big question facing Jews on their return to Palestine was whether they were returning as allies, friends and brothers and as members of the future society of the Near East, or as representatives of imperialism and zionism. The majority of Jews had preferred to take lessons from

(Mr. Sumaida, Iraq)

Hitler, who had believed that history was forged not by the spirit, but by force, and that a people which was strong enough could kill with impunity. That was an idea that must be combated.

56. The representative of the Zionist entity would do well to take good note of that speech, which had been inspired by all that was most genuine in the Jewish heritage.

57. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) thanked delegations for their suggestions and encouragement. It was comforting to note that the efforts made to mobilize the resources needed to maintain the Agency's programme were appreciated and that, in view of the success of the informal meeting held at Vienna in May 1986 for representatives of the principal donors, the UNRWA Advisory Commission and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, the convening of a similar meeting in 1987 was envisaged.

58. While the Agency had survived the financial crisis thanks to the generous special contributions made by several Governments, the funding problem remained crucial. As delegations had emphasized, there should be no slackening of efforts. Although it seemed certain that the international community would continue its support and that the bulk of activities would be financed, the Agency would have great difficulty in carrying out a small, but vital part of its activities owing to the tightness of its budget. For example, construction work to replace facilities which had become inadequate would have to be deferred yet again, as would a review of staff remuneration.

59. After thanking the Governments which had helped the Agency to overcome the financial crisis, as well as the Syrian Government which, by offering a more favourable exchange rate, had encouraged the payment of special contributions for the execution of essential construction projects, he said that the Agency would need additional financial support in 1987. He urged Governments which supported the Agency's humanitarian action morally and politically but had yet to make any contributions to begin doing so, and Governments which were late in paying their contributions to remedy that situation as soon as possible. The role played by the Agency was a factor of stability which facilitated the task of those who were seeking to bring about a just and lasting peace in the region.

60. Lastly, an incident which had occurred some days previously served as a reminder, if one was needed, of the difficulties facing UNRWA staff in Lebanon. A consignment of 140 tonnes of flour on its way from the port of Beirut to UNRWA's central warehouse in West Beirut had been seized at a militia checkpoint. UNRWA had learned that the flour would be returned to it only when the militia had itself recovered some vehicles stolen from it by other armed elements. He had, of course, drawn the attention of the persons responsible to the seriousness of such an act, committed against a humanitarian body, and was doing his best to obtain satisfaction.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.