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Chairman : Mr. Selim SÄRPER (Turkey).

Palestine : (b) Assistance to Palestine refugees : report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (A/1905, A/1905/Add.1, A/AC.53/L.34) (*continued*)

[Item 24]*

1. The CHAIRMAN said that he had been informed that consultations were proceeding between France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, sponsors of the joint draft resolution (A/AC.53/L.34) and the delegations of the Arab States. Pending the conclusion of the consultations, the Arab delegations had withdrawn their point of order and the sponsors their joint draft resolution, both sides reserving their positions in the meantime.

2. Mr. JESSUP (United States of America) said that the Committee must now decide what directives the General Assembly should give the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East concerning its future work. The fate of the Palestine refugees was of vital concern to the United Nations, which was seeking to improve their lot and give them hope and encouragement.

3. The Committee was dealing with a humanitarian problem. The history of the United Nations effort to alleviate the suffering of the Palestine refugees showed that all the peoples of the world had responded to the appeal made to them. Their contributions had taken many forms, such as money, services, clothing, food, transport, shelter and blankets. He wished to pay a tribute to all those who had participated in that humanitarian enterprise, in particular to the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, to the members of his staff, the numerous charitable societies, the specialized agencies and UNICEF, whose combined efforts had contributed immeasurably to the improvement of the lot of the refugees.

4. The Committee had before it two reports on assistance to Palestine refugees : one prepared by the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (A/1905), and the other by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Agency (A/1905/Add.1).

5. The United States delegation had been impressed by the graphic manner in which the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency had presented the refugee problem and by the clarity and insight of his report. Paragraph 15 of his report summarized vividly the situation of the Palestine refugees. The plan envisaged in the report by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Agency was not so much a new plan as the logical development of the Agency's previous efforts in the light of its experience.

6. The underlying consideration in the creation of UNRWA had been that the participation of refugees in constructive projects would arrest the demoralizing effects of the continuation of their present situation upon themselves and the development of a professional refugee mentality. It had further been hoped to restrict the granting of relief to those unable to work instead of to all refugees, as had been the case so far, thereby reducing the cost of relief to a point where host governments could continue to grant it without international assistance.

7. With that aim in view a programme of public works, such as road-building and afforestation, had been undertaken. Uncertainty as to the availability of funds hampered the development of those projects considerably. However, a new trend was in that way given to work on the refugee problem. The experience thus gained had made it clear that all refugees could not be resettled in the areas in which they were currently located and that some of them would have to be moved to areas of greater economic opportunities.

8. Resolution 393 (V) adopted by the General Assembly at its fifth session had outlined the work to be carried out by the Relief and Works Agency and expressed

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

the belief that the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East, either by repatriation or resettlement, was essential in preparation for the time when international assistance was no longer available. Emphasis was thus placed upon works leading to reintegration rather than temporary employment on public works.

9. Paragraph 112 of the report clarified the meaning to be given to the word "reintegration", and the three-year plan contained in document A/1905/Add.1 made it possible to ensure the reintegration of the refugees on a lasting and rational basis. The refugees resettled in accordance with that plan would retain their freedom of action and the work given them would in no way prejudice or affect their right to repatriation or compensation. Moreover, they would in that way have an opportunity of acquiring occupational skills which they would be able to use later on.

10. Needless to say, the plan could not succeed without the co-operation of the refugees themselves and of the governments of the host countries. Those governments would, for example, have to demonstrate their willingness to reach agreement with the Relief and Works Agency on specific projects, on the transport of the necessary materials and equipment to carry out those projects, as well as on arrangements for the movement of the refugees.

11. The report of the Director and the Advisory Commission made it clear that a special effort had to be made to agree upon a formula which would promise the refugee an end to camp life and ration queues; which would promise governments an end to social and economic dislocation and which would promise the contributing countries that large-scale relief expenditures would cease after a certain time. The report also indicated that the study of reintegration opportunities had shown that the governments of the host countries were prepared to co-operate in solving the problem.

12. The sum of \$ 250 million proposed for the carrying out of the three-year plan of assistance to the countries of the Near East was a large one and had to be raised by voluntary contributions from Member States. The United States contribution had been generous, but the plan could not succeed unless other governments also made substantial contributions.

13. The United States representative appealed to all delegations to explain to their governments the urgent need for such contributions and the constructive use to which they would be put. It must not be forgotten that 900,000 human beings were involved.

14. The programme must be launched with confidence and the United Nations must demonstrate its firm intention to see it through. To that end, all available facilities of the United Nations must be made available to the Relief and Works Agency and, in particular, the Secretary-General must, as the Director of the Agency had suggested at the 42nd meeting, be authorized to draw from the Working Capital Fund the advances necessary to initiate the programme pending payment of the contributions requested. It would

be appropriate for the Chairman of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee to ask the Fifth Committee, through its Chairman, to take the necessary steps for the issue of such authorization.

15. The plan under consideration provided a broader basis for an enduring investment in the kind of reintegration contemplated by General Assembly resolution 393 (V). The United States delegation wholeheartedly supported the three-year plan drawn up by the Relief and Works Agency, which was designed to provide homes and jobs for the refugees and was therefore calculated to improve their lot. The plan also pointed the way to the reintegration of the refugees and the termination of relief at the end of the proposed three-year period. It was undoubtedly one of the most constructive enterprises ever sponsored by the United Nations.

16. The problem of assistance to the Palestine refugees was not a question of politics or of prestige; it was a question of common humanity. The United States delegation therefore strongly deplored any delay in implementing the plan drawn up by the Relief and Works Agency, which opened the doors of hope to the refugees.

17. Mr. ORDONNEAU (France) felt that the question of assistance to Palestine refugees was a separate aspect of the Palestine problem and should be dealt with in a humanitarian spirit and in concrete terms without regard to political considerations.

18. United Nations assistance to Palestine refugees took two forms. The first was direct relief to enable the refugees to live from day to day. The second had a less immediate objective and was designed to enable the refugees to become self-supporting and to free them from the state of total dependence in which they found themselves.

19. With regard to the first form, direct relief, General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) setting up the responsible agency had provided that it would cease to function on 31 December 1950. At that date it had been obvious that relief would have to be continued, and at its fifth session the Assembly had been obliged once again to allocate funds for relief.

20. Assistance of that kind could not of itself even begin to solve the problem. It was in fact relief to enable refugees to live until they could become self-supporting. That was the objective which the United Nations had in view when it had recommended, as early as 1949, a works programme the execution of which was intended to make the refugees independent of direct relief. In view of the inadequate results of the implementation of the works programme, the General Assembly had decided at its fifth session to initiate a reintegration programme, namely, a programme of physical resettlement under which the refugees would receive housing, employment opportunities and even a status. A reintegration fund was to be set up for the purpose.

21. The object of both the works programme and the reintegration programme was to free refugees from

their existing status and to restore them to a normal way of life. They were designed to enable refugees to do without external assistance in anticipation of the time when international financial aid would no longer be available. The development envisaged by the General Assembly could not be overlooked. It was for that reason that an increased effort must be made to put an end to the conditions which kept refugees in their present state.

22. The programme proposed by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency met that requirement. The French delegation was glad to take the opportunity of expressing to the Director and members of the Advisory Commission its appreciation of the constructive spirit in which their programme was conceived.

23. The programme, which extended over three years, proposed that relief should be continued and gradually reduced as refugees were resettled. The French delegation considered that the funds made available to the Relief and Works Agency should be divided between the relief fund and the reintegration fund in the proportions indicated in resolution 393 (V) of 2 December 1950.

24. The programme drawn up by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency was of undeniable value, since it went to the root of the problem and tended to replace the concept of relief by that of the restoration of the individual to a situation in which he could live his own life and enjoy full freedom. Its conception was such that it might be carried out in a relatively short period. It was of course based on the assumption that substantial funds would be made available to the competent organ, but, because the funds allotted were so large, there was reason to hope that it would be put into effect and brought to a successful conclusion quite rapidly.

25. The implementation of such a programme obviously required that all the Members of the United Nations should make a substantial contribution to the effort required. The French delegation was aware of the difficulties and the sacrifices such an effort meant for certain States, but it would be hard to find a better occasion in which to demonstrate the solidarity of the United Nations. The problem was essentially humanitarian and must be considered sympathetically by all States anxious to alleviate and end a tragic situation.

26. The contributions of individual States might take various forms, but no State should refuse to participate in the programme. The French delegation was confident that the governments of the host countries would play a large part in the enterprise, which they must regard with special interest. They would certainly realize that it was in their own interest not to allow the present situation to continue, and to try to end as soon as possible the idleness and despondency of the refugees, since the presence of a desperate refugee population might endanger the stability of the areas in which they lived. It was most desirable that the governments of the host countries should give the Relief and Works Agency full facilities to accomplish its work, in particular by

granting its staff the immunities generally accorded to members of international organizations. The co-operation of the host countries might be most usefully expressed in the preparation and implementation of assistance programmes, but it was essential in the actual distribution and allocation of relief.

27. The programme prepared by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency met, in its spirit and in its concrete proposals, the needs of the present situation. It assumed that a great effort would be made, but it set a limit to that effort. Those were two considerations which should guide United Nations action and ensure the success of a programme which appealed to the highest principles of international co-operation and solidarity.

28. Mr. COULSON (United Kingdom) profoundly regretted that the discussions had not revealed any solution of the political differences which divided the Arab States and Israel. While recognizing that the problem could not be solved immediately and that permanent peace in the Near East would be impossible before those problems were settled, the United Kingdom delegation continued to believe that non-political action could and should be taken immediately to lessen the hardship of the refugees. Although the situation of the 870,000 refugees cared for by the Relief and Works Agency was not intolerable, it was impossible not to deplore their fate from the point of view of human dignity. Whatever might be thought of the effect of three years' waiting in idleness on the older people, it was impossible to view without horror a generation of young people growing up with no prospects, no adequate training in skills to earn their livelihood, and no hope of anything better. Forty-five per cent of the refugees were fifteen years old or younger. Whatever the views of representatives might be regarding the causes of the Palestine conflict or the responsibility of various authorities for its results or its remedies, the United Nations should not delay in giving what help it could.

29. The United Kingdom adhered to the statement made by its representative at the 61st meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee on 29 November 1950, that the right of the refugees to return to their homes if they wished to do so was unquestionable. Repatriation, however, had already been discussed and it was idle at the moment to consider how many refugees desired or were able to return to Palestine. What now claimed the Committee's attention was the proposal to restore to nearly a million persons, overtaken by a world tragedy, the means of earning their living and of recovering their self-respect. The report of the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency proposed that a concentrated effort should be made during the next three years to provide the Arab refugees from Palestine with homes and jobs, not necessarily as a final solution of the refugee problem but as an operation dictated by humanity as a help to the unfortunate.

30. The report proposed that the United Nations, working through the Relief and Works Agency and with the co-operation of the States of the Middle East, should

give the refugees a chance to regain their self-respect by earning their own living, and an opportunity to face the future by providing them with skills which they could use profitably wherever that future might lie. The execution of the scheme required the co-operation of three parties: first, the Members of the United Nations must be prepared to provide funds which, according to the report, would amount to approximately \$250 million for the three years; secondly, the States of the Middle East must be prepared to co-operate by providing so far as possible the necessary facilities, encouraging the refugees to take up the scheme, suggesting and putting into effect, with the help of the Agency and at its expense, the various projects which might be required, and working vigorously to preserve the refugees' hope and spirit. The refugees, even if they did not become permanent residents of a State, could certainly be most valuable economic assets to it if they were given a chance to earn their living. Thirdly, the programme required the co-operation of the refugees themselves. No one would question the validity of the refugees' grievances or forget their passionate desire to return to their homes. No one should be ignorant of the mental and spiritual deterioration which was now affecting them. The United Nations and the States of the Middle East therefore needed the co-operation of the refugees' leaders and of those associations which could influence them, in ample support of a programme which was entirely humanitarian and designed to rescue them from their present stagnation.

31. Whether a refugee eventually returned to Palestine or decided to settle in another country, he could be in no way worse off by taking advantage of a scheme which would enable him to earn his living and regain his self-respect, or would train him for better living conditions. Paragraph 4 of Chapter I of the report specifically stated that refugee interests in repatriation and compensation must not be prejudiced by the new programme. The three-year plan therefore predicated that the parties concerned would trust each other, that the Member States would contribute the necessary funds and that the States of the Middle East would provide the necessary co-operation to put the plan into effect.

32. As far as the financing of the plan was concerned, the United Kingdom delegation hoped that all Members of the United Nations would pledge contributions as liberal as possible. The United Kingdom Government recognized the urgency of helping the refugees and welcomed the proposals of the Relief and Works Agency. It also welcomed the generosity of the United States Government in indicating its willingness to contribute up to \$50 million and hoped that the other Members of the United Nations would increase their contributions. The United Kingdom proposed to increase from \$8 million to \$12,400,000 its contribution to the Agency's 1951-1952 programme. The additional amount would be devoted to the provision of homes and jobs for the refugees. The United Kingdom Government was also making available to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, whose finances were severely strained by the influx of nearly half a million refugees and by the

failure of last year's harvest, an interest-free loan of \$4,200,000. The United Kingdom offer of assistance to refugees during 1951-1952 would therefore amount to \$16,600,000.

33. In conclusion, Mr. Coulson begged the Committee to divorce its consideration of the three-year plan from the passions of politics, from recollections of the past and from hopes and fears of the future, and to view it solely as an urgent temporary rescue operation. Excessive optimism might be misplaced but unless some practical alternative appeared the scheme must be tried and given the best possible opportunities to succeed. The United Kingdom delegation trusted that the first step—the voting of a satisfactory resolution putting the scheme into effect—would be taken without delay.

34. Mr. TABIBI (Afghanistan) said that the refugee question was one of the principal aspects in the highly-complicated problem of Palestine. It would be difficult to reach any agreement on the problem as a whole as long as the repatriation plan laid down in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 was not put into effect.

35. The Afghan delegation was deeply concerned at the miserable fate of the refugees and had on numerous occasions urged that concrete and urgent steps should be taken, not only because of its sympathy with all human suffering but also because the fate of the Arab refugees resulted from a decision by the United Nations. Since the adoption of the partition plan those unhappy people had waited for the United Nations to ensure execution of the decision it had taken with regard to the refugees' right to return to their homes. The United Nations relief programme was of course a worthy project, but the refugees should not depend forever on assistance and the duty of the United Nations was to ensure execution of the resolution of 11 December 1948 providing for the repatriation of the refugees, which was the only just solution to the problem. The refugees had not taken part in any military operation; they had fled in the face of terror. The United Nations, in virtue of its own solemn decision, was bound to repatriate them and should do so without delay. Four years had elapsed already, and every day the growing wretchedness of the refugees and the new complications of the Palestine problem made the United Nations task more difficult.

36. The Arab States were not the only ones to show sympathy for the refugees. Throughout the world their misery had aroused the compassion of humanitarian, social and religious institutions. Their tragic situation, and the discontent that was rife among those people who had been robbed of their all, threatened peace and stability in the Middle East.

37. The refusal of Israel to repatriate the refugees, the second proposal of the Conciliation Commission, the plan prepared by American teachers and religious and trade union leaders and reproduced in *The Nation*, and any plan to resettle the refugees in the Arab countries, were equally far from providing an effective solution of the problem. Those proposals were contrary

to resolution 194 (III), which placed no limit on the right of the refugees to return to their homes; moreover, they ignored the human element, the attachment of the refugees to their homeland and their national pride. If, in violation of the decisions it had taken, the Assembly decided to put into effect a plan to resettle the refugees in the Arab countries, it would be infringing the Charter and the universal Declaration of Human Rights and committing a grave injustice. Moreover, the refugee problem should be settled in a way which would create an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. If, because of the insistence of Israel, the refugees were not repatriated, they would be filled with mistrust and rancour towards Israel, which would prevent the restoration of peace and stability in the area. The only solution of the problem, therefore, was to repatriate the refugees and pay compensation to those who preferred not to return to Palestine. That solution would conform to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which set forth the right of everyone to return to his country and said that a human being might not be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

38. If the United Nations did not speedily take the necessary steps, the refugees would withdraw their confidence and their disappointment would create such tension in the Middle East that peace might be endangered. The Organization had the trust of the small countries; if its solemn decisions were ignored, its moral dignity and that of its Members would be affected. Moreover, the United Nations had to endeavour to reduce international tension and could not ignore the serious crisis in the Middle East. Uncertainty as to their position had a deplorable effect on the moral, spiritual and social development of the refugees. The resources of the Arab States were too limited to allow them to continue the efforts they had made so far on behalf of the refugees. Lastly, as was noted in paragraph 37 of the report of the Director of UNRWA the desire of the refugees to return to their homes was as strong as ever. For all those reasons, justice required that the refugees should be repatriated. Repatriation would be to the advantage of Israel, which would find its position strengthened and would no longer be surrounded by enemy States which it had wounded and offended. In conclusion, Mr. Tabibi reserved the right to comment in detail, in due course, on the plan proposed by the Relief and Works Agency. /

39. Mr. HAYDER (Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) drew the Committee's attention to an aspect of the Palestine problem which, in spite of its vital importance, had never before been studied by a United Nations committee.

40. The demarcation line established under the armistice agreements had separated the inhabitants of villages situated in the forward area from their land and often from the wells which constituted their only water supply, thus depriving them of all means of subsistence. Overnight those unfortunate people had found themselves on the other side of the demarcation line, deprived of all but their dwellings, without supplies and without hope of being able to procure any to meet their own needs and those of their children.

They could not dispose of their few remaining effects without jeopardizing their health and that of their children. Their land and their orange or olive plantations were on the other side of the demarcation line, and, although they could see them every day, they could not approach them.

41. That tragedy, which had been so sudden, had filled them with despair. Only the belief that such a cruel division, dictated solely by military considerations, must logically be temporary and soon replaced by more equitable arrangements had induced them to have patience; they had hoped that a solution would soon be reached which would enable them to return to their land, work it and earn their living. Unfortunately the years were passing and the hoped-for solution was still awaited; the situation of those unfortunate people grew worse day by day. The fact that the inhabitants of those villages had remained in their homes and had not been obliged to leave them as had other refugees, was the only difference between their situation and that of refugees proper.

42. The serious problem constituted by those 90,000 people had from the outset received the closest attention from the Jordanian Government, which had done everything it could to help them. The relief programmes which had been put into effect had had the object of providing them with food and work. Nevertheless, because the Jordanian Government had already to bear the burden resulting from the presence in its territory of hundreds of thousands of refugees, it would not be able to continue those relief measures, the execution of which had been rendered even more difficult by the limited resources of the country and by the poor quality of recent harvests.

43. The Jordanian Government had therefore been obliged to request assistance from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in order to aid those potential victims of famine and disease, who had no means of obtaining the food and medical supplies which they needed. Although the Relief and Works Agency had realized the distress of those unfortunate people, it had been unable to comply with the Jordanian Government's request since, in its opinion, they could not be regarded as refugees because they had not lost their homes as had other refugees. It had explained that it could do nothing and that its members were obliged to follow the United Nations instructions.

44. The Jordanian representative asked whether it was just and humane, for purely technical reasons, to abandon those poor people to their misery without giving them any assistance. He trusted that the Committee, which now knew all the details of the situation, would decide to give the necessary orders for relief to be brought with the utmost speed to those unfortunate people, among whom were tens of thousands of children, women and old and sick persons.

45. The Jordanian Government was unfortunately unable to give them any more assistance. He therefore hoped that the necessary measures would be taken to restore their lands to them, which would enable them to work and earn their living. The Jordanian Government

also requested, pending that just solution, that immediate measures should be taken to bring relief to the victims, whose situation was becoming desperate. Although the inhabitants of the villages had almost lost hope they still had faith in the United Nations.

46. Mr. Hayder reserved the right to speak again, in order to comment in detail on the report of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

47. Mr. PHARAON (Saudi Arabia) proposed to confine his remarks to the problem of assistance to Palestine refugees and, more specifically, to the special report of the Director and the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. He pointed out, however, that the refugee situation could not be examined without taking into account certain political, economic, sentimental and humanitarian factors.

48. The refugee problem did not result from a natural catastrophe; it was the culmination of a disastrous policy adopted by the United Nations and fostered by the attitude of certain great Powers which had played a baneful part in the Palestine question. It was a mistake to believe that the problem of the Arab refugees of Palestine could be solved by resettling the refugees in the neighbouring countries. That was not a practicable solution because it failed to take account of the needs and feelings of the refugees or of the desires of their Arab and Moslem kinsmen; it did not take into account the deep desire and fierce resolve of the refugees to return to their country whence they had been unjustly expelled by the Jews. It was not a realistic solution, because it failed to recognize the inherent qualities of before the Arabs who, armed by the justice of their cause, had never bowed their aggressors. For those reasons the delegations of the Arab States, aware of the needs and feelings of the refugees, had persistently advocated a just and equitable solution which should not exclude territorial and political considerations.

49. Having thus stated the problem, the representative of Saudi Arabia analysed the findings of the report of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. They called for a compromise solution. They recommended termination of relief, and emphasized that the refugees' interests in repatriation and compensation must not be prejudiced. In addition, the governments of those countries where refugees were temporarily settled were asked to grant them rights of citizenship and work, on the ground that the sole objective of the new programme was to give them the self-respect resulting from material and moral freedom, independently of the solution of the political problems. The other recommendations of the Agency dealt with the details of the programme of assistance to refugees without seeking a direct solution of the problem. In fact, the report failed to recognize the fundamental interests of the refugees, or Arab and Moslem feeling in the matter.

50. Mr. Pharaon could not accept a compromise solution unless it conformed to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and to the terms of the Palestine partition plan. Accordingly, the refugees should return to the part of Palestine assigned to the Arabs and

which was at present occupied by the Jews; those not wishing to return to their homes should receive fair and equitable compensation. Any other solution would merely exacerbate the situation and complicate the task of the United Nations.

51. More than one United Nations body, and in particular the Economic Survey Mission, had recognized that the vast majority of the refugees wished to return to their homes. Even if their houses had been destroyed, the land was still there, and the refugees, for the most part peasants and land-owners, retained the inalienable right to return to that land.

52. Mr. Pharaon reviewed the events which had led the Arab refugees of Palestine to leave their ancestral homes. He recalled that Jewish gangs had systematically carried out a policy of extermination prepared by the Jewish authorities, whose complicity had been admitted. In support of his argument he quoted a statement by Mr. Edwin Samuel, a Zionist leader, affirming that the exodus of Arab refugees had reached catastrophic proportions only after the murder by Jewish terrorists of the Arabs in Deir Yassin. Those murders had spread panic among the Arabs and caused them to evacuate all the areas where the Jews were in a considerable majority. The representative of Saudi Arabia stressed the relationship which had existed between the Jewish authorities, represented at that time by the Jewish Agency headed by Mr. Ben Gurion, and the terrorists. He quoted documents showing that the Jewish organization Haganah had been acting under the political supervision of the Jewish Agency and had undertaken to carry out a plan of sabotage on the instructions of that Agency. The Jewish Agency had likewise financed and armed terrorist organizations such as the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern group. It was therefore well established that the Jewish Agency, whose members were now leaders of the Israel Government, bore responsibility for the flight of the refugees.

53. Mr. Pharaon was surprised to find the United Nations tolerating the fact that one of its Members had adopted terrorist methods and a policy based on the *fait accompli*, which must be ended. The Organization's duty was to impose its will on Israel, namely, to compel it to respect the rights of the Arab refugees. Otherwise the refugees might well resort to the methods which had been used against them.

54. The General Assembly had envisaged a solution of the refugee problem by its resolution 194 (III). Similarly, in 1948, Count Bernadotte had emphasized the need to recognize that the refugees, the innocent victims of the war, were entitled to return to their homes as soon as possible. That view was still valid and there was absolutely no justification for the refusal of the Israel Government to carry out United Nations decisions regarding the repatriation of the refugees on the pretext that their houses and lands were at present occupied by recent Jewish immigrants.

55. On 5 July 1948, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel had stated in a note that General Assembly resolution 181 (II) was the only international instrument legalizing the future government of Palestine. That

statement should have implied that Israel recognized the obligations incumbent upon it, and in particular that of agreeing to repatriate 500,000 Arab refugees to the lands from which they had been driven out. The United Nations, which was responsible for the existence of the State of Israel, should ensure that that State carried out its obligations, and should defend the principles of international law which it had undertaken to safeguard. Mr. Pharaon supported the citation by the Afghan representative of the principles contained in articles 15 and 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They were merely the proclamation and confirmation of the natural rights of all human beings.

56. The representative of Saudi Arabia protested the tendency in the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee to relegate to a secondary position the assignment of responsibility for the refugees' plight. For example, the Government of Israel was trying to prove that the refugee problem could only be solved as part of a final settlement of the Palestine question as a whole. Nothing could justify that attitude, and a solution to the refugee problem must be sought at once and separately from the Palestine problem as a whole. The Syrian representative had shown (40th meeting) that the Government of Israel was merely seeking to retain the territorial and political

advantages which certain great Powers had allowed it to gain. The Israel Government had admittedly agreed to repatriate from 50,000 to 100,000 Arab refugees, but only under strict conditions and if Israel's economic situation permitted. That agreement had not been given out of any desire for conciliation on the part of the Israel State, but out of the need to offset the drop which had taken place in its agricultural output since the exodus of the Arab refugees. The Government of Israel was trying to obtain the necessary manpower cheaply and to restore a balance disturbed by the immigration of European Jews who preferred to agricultural labour the less trying trades of merchants, brokers or craftsmen.

57. The United Nations should bring to bear all its prestige and moral influence to compel the Government of Israel to respect its moral and humanitarian obligations and to contribute to a solution of the refugee problem. The Saudi Arabian delegation would vote for any proposal to settle the problem or to improve the conditions of the refugees that did not prejudice their right to repatriation and compensation in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.