

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



AD HOC POLITICAL COMMITTEE 46th

MEETING

Monday, 21 January 1952, at 10.30 a.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

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Chairman : Mr. Selim SARPEN (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.36) (*continued*)**

[Item 24]\*

1. Mr. SAVUT (Turkey) said that the revised text of the joint draft resolution submitted by the delegations of France, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/AC.53/L.36) was the result of consultations among the sponsors and the delegations of the States most directly concerned. It went far to meet a large number of the points raised in the debate and was a carefully considered and balanced text which he hoped the Committee would find acceptable.

2. The new joint draft resolution was the natural outcome of the special report submitted jointly by the Director and the Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/1905/Add.1). During the debate the special report had been generally agreed to contain proposals that were constructive, sound and practical. The object of the new draft resolution was to obtain the approval of the General Assembly so that those proposals could be put into effect. The programme recommended in the report was fundamentally humanitarian and economic. It should clearly not touch upon existing political issues and should not prejudice the refugees' interests with regard to repatriation and compensation. On that understanding the programme proposed to help the refugees to become self-supporting.

3. The ultimate goal was obviously the restoration of normal conditions in the Near East ; but in the present circumstances the attainment of that goal depended on more than purely humanitarian considerations and was closely connected with the political situation. The problem of the refugees was urgent and could not be deferred until circumstances permitted a political

settlement in the Middle East. Everything possible should be done to improve their lot. Two steps should be taken by the United Nations at once. First, it should continue to provide direct assistance, as long as necessary, although the understanding had always been that such international aid could only be a temporary measure. Secondly, ways and means must be found to provide the necessary economic setting in which the refugees would be able to support themselves. The special report proposed to achieve that end through projects of reintegration worked out in co-operation with the governments in the area.

4. The method of financing proposed in the new joint draft resolution was voluntary contribution. The generosity and goodwill of governments must be depended upon to raise the necessary funds. That method had become the usual practice of the United Nations. Mr. Savut noted with satisfaction that a number of delegations had affirmed during the general debate the willingness of their governments to contribute to the fund. Turkey had in the past shown sincere interest and concern in the plight of the Palestine refugees and had made what contributions it could, either directly or through the Turkish Red Crescent, but economic conditions in Turkey were at present unfavourable and its possibilities were limited. The country had a serious refugee problem of its own. It had received nearly 155,000 refugees since 1950, about 2,500 of whom had come through arrangements with the International Refugee Organization. Turkey had itself been compelled to seek international assistance, so that its sponsorship of the joint draft resolution did not imply any commitment with regard to contributions. Nevertheless the Turkish Government would in due course consider the question in the light of its continued interest in the Palestine refugees and the great sympathy it felt for them.

5. The Turkish representative expressed his Government's appreciation of the work being done for the Palestine refugees and paid a tribute to the Relief and

\* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

Works Agency and its Director. Valuable contributions had also been made by the specialized agencies, UNICEF and a number of charitable, religious and humanitarian organizations. He reserved the right to speak again if necessary later in the debate.

6. Mr. JESSUP (United States of America) said that the programme outlined in the report of the Director of the Relief and Works Agency had been developed over a considerable time in a spirit of cordial co-operation. Full discussion with the governments of the area had laid a sound and enduring foundation for the Agency's recommendations, which were in turn the basis for the new joint draft resolution.

7. The purpose of the draft resolution was to suggest the form which the General Assembly's action might take in order to help most effectively to carry out the programme. The proposal took into account the various points of view expressed to the sponsors during individual consultations and also the opinions stated in the Committee during the debate.

8. The basic elements of the plan submitted by the Director and the Advisory Commission were set forth in paragraphs 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the operative part. The scope and duration of the programme called for longer-range planning and financing than had previously been possible. Paragraph 7, increasing the allocation for relief, was essential because since 2 November 1950 the rise in world prices had augmented the Agency's expenditure for food by more than 25 per cent. There had been no increase in the number of recipients or in the level of relief. Paragraph 8 was necessary to enable the Agency to launch the programme and to make allotments on the scale envisaged by the three-year plan as a whole. Paragraph 9 would enable the Agency to go forward with confidence in making detailed plans, negotiating agreements and starting projects.

9. Mr. Jessup drew the Committee's attention to various changes which distinguished the new draft resolution from that submitted on 16 January (A/AC.53/L.34) and which clarified the basic objectives of its sponsors. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 13 of the original text had referred to assistance or aid to the countries of the area. To some members of the Committee those words had suggested a purpose not in the minds of the sponsors, and changes had been made to meet their objections. In each of the three corresponding paragraphs (1, 2 and 13) of the new text, the central purpose was now clear, namely, assistance to the Palestine refugees.

10. In paragraph 1 of the new text, the earlier reference to "the countries in the area concerned" had been deleted. The following phrase had been added in paragraph 2: "without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, or to the provisions of paragraph 4 of resolution 393 (V) of 2 December 1950 relative to reintegration either by repatriation or resettlement". Previous statements by the sponsors had made it clear that the thought now expressed in those words had been in their minds in drafting the earlier text. The phrase "over and above such contributions as may be made by local governments" was also slightly different from

the wording of the first draft resolution. Paragraph 3 of the earlier draft resolution had contained a phrase referring to the countries "immediately concerned with the welfare of the refugees". Those words had been deleted in order to prevent any misunderstanding of the scope of the problem. All Members of the United Nations were concerned in the matter. The words in the revised text "with due regard to their constitutional processes" were new, although the idea was familiar and the principle a sound one which no one would wish to infringe. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the original draft resolution had dealt with the administration of the programme and the participation in it of various governments. The problems of administration varied from country to country and should be dealt with by negotiation between the Agency and the governments in the light of experience. The general nature of the problem would presumably lead to negotiations, and the various arrangements concluded would not necessarily be uniform but would be adapted to the circumstances of each particular case. That assumption had perhaps not been made sufficiently clear in the original draft resolution.

11. Mr. Jessup drew particular attention to the words "desirability and practicability" in paragraph 5 of the new draft resolution. Those engaged in the explorations envisaged in that paragraph would doubtless wish to keep those two criteria in mind. In the original draft resolution paragraph 5 had fixed 1 July 1952 as the latest date for the transfer of administrative responsibility. No date had been mentioned in the new draft, because the arrangements were to be negotiated and the date might not be the same in all cases. Paragraph 6 of the original text had set a target date for the cessation of relief expenditures. As that matter was adequately dealt with in paragraph 2 of the new draft, the time limit had been deleted from paragraph 6. In paragraph 13 the original words referring to assistance to governments no longer appeared. Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 remained unchanged.

12. The United States representative hoped that it would now be possible to go forward without delay in order that the Agency might proceed as soon as possible with its programme. He felt sure that all the members of the Committee would wish to feel that their participation in the consideration of that great humanitarian problem had been inspired by the wish to help those hapless men, women and children. Help should be given speedily, and that was the sole motive of the sponsors of the original draft resolution in presenting the new text to the Committee.

13. Mr. COULSON (United Kingdom) associated his delegation fully with the United States representative's explanation of the intentions and principles of the new joint draft resolution. The revised text, the product of sincere efforts by the sponsors to remove the objections raised to the earlier joint draft resolution, was fair and reasonable. He commended it for adoption.

14. Mr. ORDONNEAU (France) was gratified by the cordial and conciliatory atmosphere which had surrounded the consultations between the sponsors of the new draft resolution and the representatives of the

other Governments concerned. His delegation was confident that the same spirit would ensure close co-operation between the Governments of the Near East and the Relief and Works Agency in carrying out the programme.

15. MOSTAFA Bey (Egypt) said that the new draft resolution was a substantial improvement on the earlier text. It took full account of the views expressed by Egypt and other Arab States, and his delegation was therefore prepared to vote for it.

16. Mr. AL-GHOSSAIN (Yemen) paid tribute to UNRWA for its humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Palestine refugees and to the various charitable and religious organizations which had helped to alleviate their distress. The Government of Yemen had contributed to relief expenditure and was prepared to continue that financial assistance. It persevered in the view that the only final solution of the refugee problem lay in the strict observance of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) on repatriation and compensation, but as an interim measure, Yemen would support the new joint draft resolution.

17. As the report of the Relief and Works Agency indicated, it was imperative for the refugees in the camps to have better housing, more food and clothing and protection against disease. Yet they were more fortunate than those who had settled in towns and villages. Moreover, special attention should be given to thousands of other persons who were not, strictly speaking, refugees but had been deprived of all means of livelihood by the hostilities between Israel and the Arab States. They lived near the armistice demarcation lines and had thus been isolated from the surrounding country. Some practical method, perhaps the expansion of relief rolls, should be found to help them to survive.

18. Commenting upon the report of the Director and the Advisory Commission of the Relief and Works Agency, the representative of Yemen doubted whether ration cards should be withdrawn from families, regardless of size, when any one member had become self-supporting. Rations could not satisfy all the needs of the refugees; they would undoubtedly welcome cash contributions, and he urged the Agency to consider that suggestion.

19. Mr. LEITAO DA CUNHA (Brazil) paid tribute to the Relief and Works Agency and to the report of the Director of the Agency, as well as to the sponsors of the new draft resolution and other delegations which had helped them in reaching a wider area of agreement on such an important matter. The new draft deserved the full support of the delegation of Brazil. In spite of internal economic difficulties, Brazil recognized a moral obligation to contribute, even if only with a modest sum, to the implementation of the programme outlined in the draft resolution. The Brazilian Government would initiate proper legislative action to that effect.

20. Mr. GUELL (Cuba) supported the new draft resolution in principle, and hoped that the spirit which had prevailed in the consultations with the sponsors would guide the States concerned in settling all the

differences outstanding between them. By ensuring strict observance of human rights the United Nations might in future prevent problems such as that of the Arab refugees from arising.

21. Mr. CASTRO (El Salvador) strongly favoured the new draft resolution. It took into account an amendment which he had moved to the original text specifying that measures of assistance could not replace the obligation to respect earlier General Assembly resolutions on the part of the country from which the refugees had fled.

22. Mr. HELOU (Lebanon) approved the new text in principle, but said that it must be appraised in the light of the resolution (A/AC.53/L.33) previously adopted by the Committee (41st meeting) on the report of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine. That resolution contained political guarantees indispensable to a proper approach to the humanitarian aspects of the refugee problem, and recognized that the only just and equitable solution was repatriation and compensation under the terms of previous General Assembly resolutions on Palestine. The question of financial assistance to the refugees was indissolubly linked with that imperative consideration. Relief measures, however effective, were only a palliative; the permanent remedy was repatriation.

23. Mr. CHOUKAYRI (Syria) commended the sponsors of the new draft resolution upon their genuine desire to assist the cause of the Arab refugees. His delegation was inclined to support the principles underlying the new text, but entertained reservations based on fears which he believed to be justified by the past and possibly also by the present. He read to the Committee excerpts from a recent Press dispatch from Tel Aviv revealing that the Government of Israel, anticipating that the General Assembly, at plenary session, would support the resolution (A/AC.53/L.33) previously adopted by the *Ad Hoc* Political Committee on the report of the Conciliation Commission, had prepared an alternative proposal similar to the original text which had been amended in Committee. The alternative proposal had been drafted after a conference between Israel's Foreign Minister and the United States Ambassador to Israel.

24. The two aspects of the Palestine problem—conciliation with a view to a political settlement and financial assistance to the Arab refugees—could not be separated. If the General Assembly should reject the resolution previously adopted by the Committee, it would practically be rejecting the principles embodied in the new joint draft resolution on assistance to the refugees. The Syrian delegation was therefore prepared, at the present stage, to say only that it was inclined to accept the principles of the new four-Power draft resolution. Mr. Choukayri did not wish to be accused later on of having broken a promise. He was not imposing a condition; he was not entitled to do so. He was merely stating his delegation's position in the matter.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.