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**AD HOC POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 15th
MEETING**

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Chairman: Prince WAN WAITHAYAKON (Thailand).

AGENDA ITEM 22

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/2978 and Add.1, A/3017) (*continued*)

1. Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America) thanked Mr. Labouisse, Director of the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, for the objective report (A/2978) he had presented to the General Assembly. The United States delegation wanted to help him and to enlist the support of other countries, because Mr. Labouisse and the Agency could not do the job alone.

2. He agreed with Mr. Labouisse that if the Agency was to be enabled to carry out its tasks completely the first necessity was the speedy settlement of certain political aspects of the over-all Palestine question — for example, the question whether the Arab refugees were to be repatriated or compensated — and of certain other outstanding differences between Israel and the Arab States.

3. However, the inability to settle those problems must not prevent the United Nations from dealing with the matter of assistance to the Arab refugees and from trying to improve their lot. A start should be made in carrying out programmes to make the Arab refugees self-supporting. Admittedly, those programmes would not provide a solution of the refugee problem; but they should nevertheless have been started long ago. The Arab States should realize that in the end what would benefit the refugees would benefit the Arab countries themselves. For example, the plan for the development of the Jordan Valley, which had been the subject of intensive and fruitful negotiation between United States Ambassador Eric Johnston and the interested countries in the area, would bring 125,000 acres of new land into cultivation in Jordan alone and would increase substantially the hydro-electric power available to Syria and Jordan. Carrying out that project would not only create new jobs for the refugees but would give impetus to new industries and create new sources of income in

all the Arab countries. That project and the Sinai project would not solve the refugee problem but would be a very substantial beginning toward a new and better Arab world. However, the United States and other contributors could not bring about that beginning unless the Arab leaders would allow such help. The Arab countries could, to their own benefit, consider the refugees as an important asset, not as an unwanted liability. The leaders of the Arab countries should choose between progress and clinging to a *status quo* which benefited no one.

4. Turning to the problem of continued relief for the refugees, he said his delegation believed that support of the Agency programme should be continued. The United States had already informed the Negotiating Committee for Extra-Budgetary Funds that it would contribute \$16 million or its equivalent in goods for relief. It hoped that contributions would be forthcoming from many other countries as well.

5. With regard to the Director's special report concerning other claimants for relief (A/2978/Add.1) the United States delegation had noted with concern the plight of the Jordanian villagers and the other Arabs in the Gaza area, and of the bedouins who were not considered as Palestine refugees. It believed that the solution to their problem was to appeal to charitable organizations which, with the material assistance of the Agency, might cope with that problem. The United States was considering how it might further assist in solving it.

6. He was gratified to see that steps were being taken to see that children were properly fed. The sooner those undeserving of relief were struck from the refugee rolls the sooner more children could be taken care of by the Agency.

7. The United States recognized the necessity of settling the political problems connected with the Palestine question. It was the continuing duty of all, especially of Israel and the Arab States involved, to work toward that goal. The United States was still hard at work on these problems, as could be seen from the statement made on 26 August 1955 by Mr. John Foster Dulles, United States Secretary of State. However, those problems must not, in the present debate, stand in the way of improving the lot of the refugees.

8. For all those reasons, the United States delegation had joined with the delegations of the United Kingdom and Turkey in preparing a draft resolution on the question, which would be submitted shortly. He reserved the right to speak again after the draft resolution had been circulated.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.