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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. CROSTHWAITE (United Kingdom) pointed out that his Government's continued concern with the political aspects of the Palestine problem, upon which the debate had largely turned, had recently been demonstrated by an important statement by Sir Anthony Eden, in which the Prime Minister had suggested a possible approach to a settlement between Israel and the Arab States and had offered his personal services to that end. However, the political problems were relevant to the Committee's discussion only in so far as they provided the background against which the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had to operate; the Committee's direct concern must be with the operations of the Agency itself. Mr. Labouisse, the Director of UNRWA, deserved the Committee's full gratitude, for he had shown himself to be highly competent to cope with the very difficult tasks the Assembly had entrusted to him.

2. In connexion with its relief operations, the Agency was to be congratulated upon the excellent use it had made in the past year of its very limited resources, although the standards of relief provided for the refugees were still far from satisfactory. While the general state of nutrition of the refugee population appeared acceptable, there was a strong case for the scientific study of nutritional needs and deficiencies by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization suggested by the Director of the Agency in his report (A/2978). Without prejudging the adjustment of food scales that might result from that study, the United Kingdom delegation considered that any extra feeding which might be recommended should be distributed as supplementary rations to those most in need. He welcomed the Agency's decision to double its health education staff and to establish a school health service, and had noted, with relief, that the reports of a tuberculosis epidemic in Jordan were unfounded. It was also gratifying to observe the progress made in improving the standards of shelter of the refugees and the role played by the Agency's welfare services in alleviating the stultifying effects of years of idleness.

3. The United Kingdom shared the opinion of the Advisory Commission that the extent to which the improvements in the scale of relief suggested by the Director could be implemented would depend on the amount of funds contributed in addition to the \$26.8 million required for the budget. It further agreed with the Advisory Commission that new sources of funds should be sought among the countries which had shown interest in the refugee problem, but had thus far made no significant contribution. Accordingly, it appealed to Member and non-Member States to provide support for the Agency either in money or in supplies.

4. The question of finance would also directly affect the possibilities of assisting the additional categories of claimants mentioned in the Director's special report (A/2978/Add.1). Of those groups, the refugee children in Jordan born since February 1951 came within the present definition of refugees, but had been deprived of rations as a result of the registration problem. It was hoped that the Jordan authorities would agree to the procedures suggested by the Agency for an efficient system of registration, so that the refugee children could shortly be supplied with rations.

5. The frontier villagers in Jordan constituted another group of special claimants. It would be unwise to extend the definition of a refugee currently used by the Agency to include that group, for, if the Agency were to take over responsibility for it, it would be very difficult to draw a line at any other point. The frontier villagers were, like all the inhabitants of Jordan, suffering from a dislocation in the whole economic order of things. The United Kingdom still believed that the dislocation could be minimized by minor adjustments of the armistice demarcation line or by a general settlement. In the meantime, however, Jordan could not deal with the problem unaided. Although the Jordan Development Board's loan scheme had had a measure of success, it did not represent a quick solution. Nevertheless, the granting of loans under the scheme should be extended, and early consultations should take place between the Agency and the Jordan Government with a view to arranging an Agency contribution to the Development Board's project and the training of staff under the present loans directorate. The United Kingdom, for its part, intended to continue lending funds for the loans scheme on approximately the present scale.

6. The only practicable interim solution to the problem of the frontier villagers was to make further use of the voluntary agencies. The United Kingdom joined the Director of the Agency in commending the agencies for their unselfish work, and felt confident, that, given the necessary support, in co-operation with the Agency and the Jordan Government, they were better qualified than anyone else to deal with the borderline case of the frontier villagers. Their activities should also include the non-refugee population in the Gaza strip; in no case should the Agency definition of a refugee be extended

to include that group of special claimants. Finally, in order to meet the needs of the 11,000 bedouin asking for assistance, and whose claims to refugee status were often debatable owing to their nomadic existence, it might perhaps be possible for a fund to be set up under the sponsorship of some Moslem body or personality to provide them with new flocks and tents as necessary, and for the Arab Governments to grant them freedom to graze their flocks over the Saudi Arabian-Iraqi borders.

7. Since the United Kingdom believed that the extra \$1,745,000 estimated by the Advisory Commission as necessary to improve relief standards could be obtained only by over-subscribing the regular 1955-1956 relief budget of \$28.6 million, it hoped that Governments in the refugee area, some of which had far larger revenues than ever before, would initiate or increase contributions. The United Kingdom was contributing \$4.5 million to the relief budget for 1955-1956, and it would provide \$9.8 million for rehabilitation. It was hoped that the Egyptian Government would facilitate agreement with the Agency on the practical details of the Sinai rehabilitation scheme, and that the negotiations between Mr. Eric Johnston and the interested countries in the area would lead to the early adoption of the Jordan Valley scheme. It was a matter of concern to the United Kingdom that those rehabilitation schemes, which promised such great benefits both to the refugees and to the countries concerned, had made so little progress.

8. It had been argued that, since the completed Sinai and Jordan Valley rehabilitation schemes could not be expected to absorb more than about one quarter of the refugees, the whole rehabilitation policy was futile. The United Kingdom took issue with that view. Indeed, it was their faith in the rehabilitation policy that had moved contributing Governments to continue to find money for the relief of the existing refugees. Moreover, from a human point of view, it would surely be an immense gain if one quarter of the refugees could be removed from relief rolls and made self-supporting, at the same time applying their energies to the expansion of the economies of the host countries. It followed that the objective to be sought was the multiplication of rehabilitation schemes for the further development of an area which was known to have supported many times the present population one thousand years before. Moreover, since the Agency could participate in general development projects which were not exclusively for the benefit of the refugees provided that its contribution was proportionate to the numbers of refugees resettled by the projects, the host countries would do well to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered them to accelerate their general economic development. Finally, in an area seriously hampered by the lack of trained personnel, the Agency's education and technical training programme was a great asset; by giving the young refugees vocational and technical training, the Agency was helping to ensure the future economic sufficiency of the refugee family. The progress in that field should be accelerated.

9. The United Kingdom delegation reserved the right to speak again in connexion with the draft resolution which it intended to sponsor together with the delegation of Turkey and the United States.

10. Mr. RAHIM (Yemen) hoped that in its discussion of the item before it, the Committee would bear in mind that it was dealing with human beings, human misery, and the legitimate aspirations of the refugees to live in freedom and security. The General Assembly should firmly demand that the United Nations injunc-

tion to the effect that the refugees should be repatriated as early as practicable be given effect. Although that injunction had been made on 11 December 1948 in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and reaffirmed every year since then, a million refugees were still living in exile, in idleness and in the most deplorable state of wretchedness. A recent dispatch from the correspondent of the *Washington Star* confirmed those facts.

11. In the Yemeni delegation's view, steps should be taken immediately to alleviate the suffering of the villagers along the armistice demarcation lines. On the ground that they did not come within the definition of refugees, the Agency claimed that they were not entitled to relief and rations. That was an unduly strict interpretation of the term "refugee". The frontier villagers had not been removed from their homes, but they had been cut off from their means of livelihood. Indeed, many of them had to cross the demarcation lines to obtain food from the land they had possessed, and such crossings had often been the occasion for Israel military attacks. The Agency should permit them to enter the relief rolls.

12. It was equally urgent for the United Nations to take steps to protect the property of Arab refugees. Under Israel's Absentee Property Law, the custodian could exploit or lease Arab refugee property or sell it to the Israeli "development authority". The United Nations should undertake a survey of the present status of Arab refugee property and the income it yielded. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine should submit the results of such a survey to the General Assembly, together with a detailed account of Israel legislation on the subject, and the Assembly should take appropriate action to protect the property rights of the refugees.

13. Improvement of relief standards was the third immediate concern of the Yemeni delegation. The Assembly should take favourable action on the suggestions made by the Director of UNWRA for more rations and more adequate shelter and clothing for the refugees. The Director deserved the highest praise for the manner in which he was executing a humanitarian mission in which all wished him well.

14. He wished to reply to certain arguments advanced by the Israel representative (17th meeting), in particular those which would place responsibility for the refugees' plight on the Arabs and those which would emphasize the desirability of rehabilitation and reintegration in preference to repatriation.

15. The events of the spring of 1948, before the actual outbreak of hostilities between Israel and the Arab States, proved beyond any doubt that Israel had deliberately forced the people of the Arab villages to abandon their homes and flee the country. The massacre of Deir Yasin had been only the first of a series of Zionist atrocities perpetrated against innocent Arab populations. The object of all of them had been to spread terror and precipitate a wholesale exodus. They had been strategically planned against defenceless areas for the purpose of creating panic and a stampede to safety. Israel's responsibility had been recognized by the Zionist paper *Mervak*, by Menachem Begin, leader of the Irgun, in his book, *The Revolt: Story of the Irgun*, and by other important persons, most eminent among them being the late Count Bernadotte, who himself had fallen victim to Zionist terrorism. The United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had officially reported

(A/838) that, according to the testimony of the representatives of the refugees themselves, the propaganda of the Arab States and the Arab Higher Committee had had no influence on their decision to flee their homes.

16. The Israel representative had wilfully stressed rehabilitation and resettlement in the Arab lands as the solution of the refugee problem. The facts were that there were only two rehabilitation schemes envisaged, they were still in the study stage; at best, they could absorb no more than 200,000 refugees, a small fraction in view of the rate of natural increase of the refugee population; and they could be useful only to refugees who refused repatriation. Nevertheless, in recognition of the usefulness of the two rehabilitation projects as temporary palliatives, the Arab States were supporting them. They could not in any event constitute a permanent solution.

17. As for resettlement of the refugees in the Arab States, the prospects were reduced from the outset by the fact that an overwhelming number of them, unlike the German and Korean refugees, were still clamouring to return to the homes from which they had been dispossessed. The Director of the Agency had confirmed that seven years of exile had not weakened the desire of the Arab refugees for repatriation. Time would not alter their determination and the Arab States had no power to sway them. While it was understandable that the Zionist usurpers should invoke arguments designed to keep the property and lands of the Arab population of Palestine in their control, it was shameful to hear them advocate the law of the jungle in the United Nations.

18. It was fallacious to argue that the Arabs would be unhappy if they were repatriated. The refugees were well aware that the Arabs left in Israel suffered discrimination and they had no illusions regarding the fate awaiting them in a changed environment. Despite that prospect, however, they were prepared to start life again in their homeland. There would be space to receive them. The attraction of Jewish immigration was dying out. Statistics showed that the number of emigrants from Israel in 1952 and 1953 had exceeded the number of immigrants; only 33,000 immigrants had arrived in Israel while 43,000 had left during those two years. Only 40 per cent of the arable land in Israel was under cultivation and Jewish immigrants had great difficulties in adapting themselves to agriculture. Consequently, the Arabs could return to cultivate the land, thus alleviating the food shortage in Israel. The only obstacles to their repatriation were lack of good faith and of willingness on the part of Israel to abide by United Nations resolutions.

19. Israel had consistently obstructed efforts to give effect to repatriation. The General Assembly resolution of 11 December 1948 was still not implemented. The Agency was prevented from carrying out the terms of that resolution concerning reintegration of the refugee into the economic life of the Near East, unless and until, as the Agency's Director had said, some opportunity was given to the refugees to make the choice provided for them in the resolution.

20. The Israel representative had advanced an unsound legal interpretation of the territorial question when he had asserted that no commission was to violate the existing territorial position, which rested firmly upon contracts and agreements reached at the behest of the United Nations and witnessed by United Nations repre-

sentatives. It was a well-known fact, however, that the United Nations had fixed the boundaries of Israel in its partition resolution (181 (II)) and that Israel had formally pledged itself to abide by the terms of that resolution. It was only after that pledge had been given that Israel had been admitted to membership in the United Nations. Israel could not now repudiate its pledge. The cease-fire and the Armistice Agreements had halted hostilities and fixed demarcation lines but it was the Assembly's partition resolution which had fixed territorial boundaries. The Armistice Agreements specifically stated that the demarcation lines were not to be construed as boundaries, that they were without prejudice to the rights of all parties pending a settlement of the Palestine question. By the Lausanne Protocol of 1949, both sides had accepted the maps of the partition plan and the objectives of the Assembly's resolution of 11 December 1948. That was the agreement entered into at the behest of the United Nations, under the auspices of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine.

21. Experience had shown that each new attempt at a solution of the problems outstanding between Israel and the Arab States merely provided another pretext for new Zionist claims in pursuit of an expansionist policy. Israel had no qualms about disregarding United Nations authority, if it could fall back on force of arms to do so. It had continuously violated the Armistice Agreements and the Assembly's resolutions. If it really wanted peace, the door to peaceful negotiation was still open through the good offices of the Conciliation Commission, and through acceptance of United Nations resolutions. Peace could not be attained by mere words, by premeditated border incidents and military aggression, by rejection of the internationalization of Jerusalem and the boundaries fixed by the United Nations, or by outright refusal to consider the repatriation of the Arab refugees. The Arabs had accepted those resolutions and were effectively contributing to peace.

22. Mr. DE KADT (The Netherlands) said that, although the political situation in the Near East had not changed for the better during the year, it still dominated the Palestine refugee problem. That was why the Director of the Agency had been unable to report any significant progress towards solving the problem.

23. The Netherlands people had sympathy both for the new Arab States created after the First World War and for the new State of Israel, and intended to try to remain friendly with all of them. It had to be recognized, however, that the United Nations had been largely responsible for the creation of Israel. It was responsible, too, for the armistice reached at the end of the war waged against Israel by the Arab States, the war out of which the refugee problem had arisen, and for the existing situation of near-war, in which the refugees had become a weapon.

24. Although the Netherlands delegation fully understood the desire of the refugees to return to their homeland, it firmly believed that even their problems should be subordinate to certain matters of vital importance to the United Nations, namely, genuine peace in the Near East and the existence of Israel. It was the duty of Israel and the Arab States to create the conditions for peace; the solution of the refugee problem would certainly emerge from such conditions.

25. That being so, it was impossible to accept the Syrian representative's proposed solution (14th meeting), whereby the resettlement of the refugees would

be a condition precedent to peace and the refugees would be used in an effort to annihilate the State of Israel from within. The Iranian representative's proposal (14th meeting) of gradual resettlement compatible with Israel's security, although perhaps not feasible now, represented a very different approach.

26. It should be remembered that 180,000 Arabs were still living in Israel and that many more had succeeded in living at peace with their Zionist neighbours before the war. If Israel's position was that there would never be a place for Arabs in its territory, the Netherlands delegation believed that resettlement was the best way of solving the problem; otherwise, it would be glad to learn of Israel's ideas about the scope and method of resettling the refugees in Israel in peace and security. The Netherlands could not agree to discrimination against Arabs who were prepared to become good citizens of Israel. It would, however, be preposterous, as the Israel representative had said, to ask Israel to admit thousands of refugees who had been indoctrinated against everything that Israel stood for. It was true also that the sovereign State of Israel was entitled to decide whether an influx of refugees was compatible with its security. It was illogical, however, for Israel to demand that Jews and Arabs should be rigidly separated and at the same time that it should be accepted into the Near Eastern community.

27. The fact that the United Nations had been unable to solve the political problem meant that it should do its utmost to relieve the distress of the hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Netherlands Government's contribution to the Agency was small, though increased by 40 per cent in 1955, but the Netherlands had full sympathy with human beings in the circumstances of the Palestine refugees; it therefore supported any draft resolution calling upon all charitable institutions to do their part.

28. Much more was needed, however. The case against Israel put forward by the Arab States would have been much more impressive if their statements had contained not only political polemics and descriptions of distress, but also some indication of efforts to relieve the refugees from their hopeless position. In the case of Israel, an offer of compensation would have carried more weight than an attitude of political righteousness.

29. The United States proposal concerning an international loan to enable Israel to compensate the refugees was an important contribution to peace, and the Israel Government's response had proved that it was prepared to co-operate in the matter of compensation.

30. The entire region should be explored to find work for the refugees. The Jordan and Sinai plans should be implemented without delay, however inadequate they might be as a solution to the problem as a whole. It was pleasing to note that the Israel Government was prepared to co-operate in those plans; Governments who worked against them were not the true friends of the refugees.

31. The Agency had done everything possible within the narrow sphere set for it — though it was surprising that its Director had never visited Israel — but a wider approach was now required, with the accent not on economic returns but on rehabilitation. In that way it would be possible to find the money to see the refugees through until they could once again enjoy a normal peaceful existence. Those who wished to continue in the path of sterile hatred and war should remember that

the refugee problem had arisen in that way, and that they might create worse problems both for the refugees and themselves.

32. Mr. SUDJARWO (Indonesia) said that almost a whole nation had been exiled virtually overnight and had been living in despair and frustration for seven years.

33. The political and military background of the problem made it particularly delicate and the Indonesian delegation associated itself with the tributes already paid to the Agency for the way in which it had handled its task.

34. Despite all the discussion and action of seven years, the basic problem of repatriation of refugees who desired to return and compensation for those who did not had never been solved. Meanwhile, the refugees' condition had become even more appalling, and it was essential for the sake of humanity and of the maintenance of peace that a speedy solution should be found and put into effect. Resolution 194 (III) remained as valid as ever and its implementation was even more urgent, for the Director of the Agency, with his intimate knowledge of the situation, had stated that the refugees' desire to return to their homes was as strong as ever. The Asian-African Conference held at Bandung in April 1955 had also urged that the United Nations resolutions on Palestine should be implemented in the interests of peace.

35. It was regrettable that not even an attempt had been made to ascertain the wishes of the refugees as between repatriation and compensation, yet the Director had made it clear in paragraph 65 of his report that it would not be feasible to carry out the resolutions concerning the reintegration of the refugees into the economic life of the Near East until that had been done.

36. The Indonesian delegation therefore supported the Iranian representative's suggestion that Israel should accept a certain number of refugees annually and give the refugees a free choice between repatriation and compensation. The Syrian representative's suggestion of a special commission for the purpose also deserved serious consideration by the Committee and by the parties concerned.

37. The report of the Agency showed how great was the need for its humanitarian work. With steadily increasing numbers, inadequate food and sub-standard accommodation, the conditions of the refugees indeed presented a gloomy picture. The Indonesian delegation hoped that the Committee would seriously consider the Director's request for \$1.7 million for the necessary minimum improvements, as well as the special report on other claimants for relief.

38. The sincerity and earnestness with which the staff of the Agency had performed its task were indeed praiseworthy, and it would be fitting to increase the means available to it so that its work could be done according to appropriate standards of human dignity.

39. The Indonesian delegation was happy to pledge its Government's continued contribution, however small it might be, to that great humanitarian task, and deeply appreciated the generous support of other Governments and of non-governmental organizations. It also appreciated the ready and patient co-operation of the host Governments in the work of the Agency, in addition to their own direct assistance to the refugees they had been compelled to accommodate.

40. Yet it had to be admitted that the herculean achievements of the Agency would not solve the fundamental problem, which depended on the granting to the refugees of the opportunity to make the choice between repatriation and compensation provided for in paragraph 11 of resolution 194 (III). That opportunity should be granted as soon as possible, so that further steps could be taken towards the final solution of the problem, and hence towards the elimination of dangerous tensions in the region. As the Secretary-General had said in the introduction to his annual report to the General Assembly (A/2911), even a partial solution of the problems of the refugees might well be the beginning of a general stabilization of conditions in the area. That partial solution must be found.

41. Mr. PALAMAS (Greece) regretted that there appeared to be no new elements which gave prospects of an early solution of the Palestine refugee problem. He was pleased to note that, despite its limited means, the Agency had been able to achieve positive results. Thus, nutritional standards, though far from satisfactory, had been kept high enough to avoid the appearance of any obvious signs of malnutrition among the refugees. Accommodation was poor, but improving; the refugees' health was satisfactory, despite shortages of drinking water and adequate clothing, and no contagious or epidemic diseases had broken out.

42. Nevertheless, the problem remained unsolved; assurance of the refugees' survival was no answer. They must ultimately cease, in one way or another, to be refugees.

43. One solution was to repatriate them; if that were done, the conditions which the refugee found on his return must be comparable with those prevailing when he had left, so that he would not feel himself again a refugee in his country of origin. Repatriation was the human solution and a moral necessity; the General Assembly had advocated it originally in its resolution 194 (III) and had repeated every year since then, its desire to see the refugees repatriated.

44. Unfortunately, the political climate was not at present favourable for repatriation. He hoped that the Israel Government would be able to find a solution for a problem which coloured its relations with the Arab world.

45. The alternative was integration. That was not merely an economic operation dependent on the material resources at the disposal of the host countries; it was a process requiring patience and understanding if it was to succeed. He did not believe that the host Governments were raising unnecessary obstacles to integration. As the Director had said in his report, the main obstacle was the attitude of the refugees themselves, and experience in the Greek-Turkish population exchanges after the First World War confirmed the view that the assimilation of refugees was a lengthy process.

46. Fortunately, certain factors were likely to help the process of integration. Large-scale development projects would add to the resources of the host countries and he noted with satisfaction the Agency's efforts to initiate such projects. The payment of compensation to the refugees would enable them to be more independent and more readily assimilated into the host countries; some United Nations assistance in that direction might be possible.

47. In any case, the refugees must be paid the compensation to which they were entitled, or be repatriated.

Pending such a solution, the Agency must continue its humanitarian work.

48. Mr. CORNER (New Zealand) said that money was not an adequate expression of sympathy, but was the only material means open to his country of helping the Palestine refugees. New Zealand's cash contribution to the Agency was the fifth largest, and the third largest *per capita*, whilst its contribution in the lives of its soldiers who had defended the Middle East against aggression was immeasurable. His delegation therefore had ample grounds for intervening, with complete impartiality, in the debate.

49. Nearly one million refugees had been kept idle for five years at the expense of one third of the Members of the United Nations. The chief burden had been shouldered by the host Governments and by the United States and the United Kingdom, assisted by France, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

50. Thanks to wise spending by the Agency the refugees' standard of living though low, was perhaps higher than the average prevailing in the Middle East, but their spiritual condition was bad, and was deteriorating. After five years they were more numerous than they had been at the outset, and half of them were now children under fifteen years of age, whilst pressure was being brought to bear on the United Nations to classify still more persons as refugees. Only a few hundred of those in the camps had become self-supporting in Arab host countries, and the Governments of those countries had given but lukewarm support to development projects, which in any case could assist only the natural increase in the refugee population, leaving the core of the problem untouched.

51. A solution which consisted in keeping the refugees in perpetual idleness would not find favour with his Government. New Zealand's contribution to the Agency had been an expression of sympathy for the refugees, but the refugees now seemed to think that they had a right to be kept in idleness by the international community, while the Arab Middle Eastern Governments refused for political reasons to co-operate in development schemes which would provide work for the refugees. It was disturbing to note that Israel refused transit rights to the Agency aircraft carrying Arab members of the Agency's staff, that the Arab Governments levied duties on relief supplies and that many persons were being given relief unnecessarily because the Agency had been unable to deal with the problem of fraudulent registration. Further government support for the Agency's work would depend on the extent to which the countries immediately concerned worked together on measures preparatory to the day when international relief was no longer available.

52. Repatriation was not the complete answer to the problem, although Israel should certainly take back a significant number of refugees; such a gesture might well be the first step in bringing about a permanent solution. There was substance, however, in Israel's claim that its security would be jeopardized by the admission of a large number of refugees, and even if Israel made the gesture, hundreds of thousands of refugees would still have to make a new life elsewhere.

53. The Director had pointed out that most of the refugees would be unwilling to co-operate with resettlement projects until there had been a political settlement or until they had been given a choice between repatriation and compensation, and that the basis for a

proper choice did not yet exist. Resettlement would be hardly worth choosing until large-scale development projects had made much greater progress, whilst repatriation, for most of the refugees who had been kept out of touch with reality, meant a return to pre-1947 conditions in Palestine. The refugees should be offered a choice as soon as a practical basis for such choice existed. Israel could help by ensuring adequate compensation and he welcomed Israel's favourable reaction to the United States proposal to facilitate the payment of compensation. As soon as the right conditions could be established it would be in Israel's own interest to place before the refugees the alternatives mentioned in paragraph 36 of the Director's report, but that obligation in no way lessened the Arab Governments' responsibility to co-operate in development projects.

54. He noted a deplorably unrealistic attitude among the refugees and among the representatives of Arab States in the Committee. It was unrealistic to encourage the refugees to believe that repatriation could ever be a practicable solution to their problem; it was unrealistic to pretend that Israel, a Member of the United Nations, did not exist. States which had resorted to force to thwart implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) were being unrealistic now in claiming that selected parts of that and other General Assembly resolutions were binding, and in making talks with Israel conditional upon prior acceptance of the points which must be the subject matter of those very talks. It was unreal to propose that Israel be cut in half and that the refugees be crammed into the resulting fragment. Persistence in such a refusal to face facts was highly dangerous. Peaceful coexistence between Israel and neighbouring countries was the only possible goal.

55. It was encouraging to note from the Director's report that some of the refugees were beginning to understand that improved accommodation was not necessarily prejudicial to their political rights, and that host Governments were realizing that help for a refugee

helped the national economy. He agreed with the United States representative that host Governments should regard the refugee as a potential asset and not as a liability. There was no purpose in looking back on past evils; the problem could only be solved by co-operation in the future. The countries concerned must face their responsibilities resolutely; as long as the problem remained unsolved it afforded undesirable scope for sinister interventions.

56. Mr. MAURTUA (Peru) said that continual failure to solve the refugee problem jeopardized the prestige and authority of the United Nations and the maintenance of peace throughout the world.

57. Repatriation or compensation were the natural solutions; if the obstacles to the former were insurmountable, the Israel Government could no doubt obtain international assistance in the payment of compensation. Repatriation depended on the possibility of coexistence and the United Nations should do its utmost to make such coexistence possible.

58. The Agency must continue its humanitarian task, but there should be some other approach which would ultimately make it possible to determinate the Agency's existence. The question of termination of responsibility should not be allowed to bedevil efforts to solve the refugee problem, and relations between Israel and the Arab States must be guided by a policy of persuasion and pacification. It might be possible at the appropriate time to appoint a commission for the definition of the frontier areas between Israel and the Arab States or to refer the whole problem to a mixed commission on which all the parties concerned would be represented under the chairmanship of a neutral Power. Compensation claims might be decided by that commission, or by the International Court of Justice. The geographical proximity of Israel and the Arab States made it imperative that they should find some means of peaceful coexistence.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.