



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-KAWART (Qatar)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 79: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 79: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/SPC/42/L.6 to L.13, L.15 and L.16)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/13 and Add.1)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued) (A/42/633)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (continued) (A/42/515)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued) (A/42/309, 445, 446, 480-482, 505 and 507)

1. Mr. BILAL (Qatar) said that the report of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East each year reminded Member States of the urgent need for a just solution of the question of Palestine, which would enable the Palestinian people finally to exercise its right to self-determination and the refugees to return to their homes. Over the past 40 years the Palestinians had shown that nothing could deflect them from those objectives and that they would never accept integration into other societies and renunciation of their identity.

2. His delegation agreed with the Commissioner-General's statement that a three-year extension of the Agency's mandate would not turn UNRWA into a permanent body. Its task, which had been defined by the General Assembly at its fourth session, would end only when the refugee problem was solved.

3. The international community had pronounced on the question many times, affirming in numerous resolutions the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to return to its homeland and stressing that the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East was the best way in which to bring about a settlement of the conflict. It was because of certain parties' obstinate refusal to subscribe to that approach that the Palestinian people continued to suffer and that the Agency had become a quasi-permanent body.

4. His country was pleased to note that the Agency's financial situation had improved during the past two years. Nevertheless, it drew attention to an important fact: only 5 per cent of the Palestine refugees received direct aid from the Agency while the vast majority fended for themselves, thereby giving the lie to the image of them as idlers living off international charity.

5. In 1987 while believing that it was appropriate to repeat, in broad terms, all the provisions of the resolution adopted the previous year on the item under consideration, his delegation reaffirmed that the way to solve the refugee problem was through a just and comprehensive political settlement in accordance with the respective United Nations resolutions. The international community must strive

(Mr. Bilal, Qatar)

without respite to attain that objective and bring every means of pressure to bear on the aggressor.

6. Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) recalled that 71 years ago to the day, a foreign Government had, by means of the disastrous Balfour Declaration, promised the Zionist Organization that the Jews would be given a land taken from the Arab people in which to establish their own national State. The Palestine refugee problem was the direct consequence of that promise. The Zionist usurpation of Palestine had led, 38 years before, to the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which had been intended only as a temporary body. However, the Zionist occupation persisted and Israel was continuing, through its crimes against humanity, to prevent the Palestinian people from returning to its country. The Zionists did not hesitate to use the weapon of terror to thwart any international initiative designed to redress some of Israel's crimes in Arab territories. It was, indeed, impossible to avoid using the word "terrorism" in the face of the punitive actions of the Israeli authorities against civilians and defenceless children, their demolition of the shelters built by the Agency, their encouragement of foreigners to settle in Palestine, thereby ousting the owners from their ancestral land, and their incitement of those foreigners to participate in crimes committed in the name of zionism. That was a real tragedy, not only for the Palestinian people but also for the United Nations. A people's land had been usurped and its resources continued to be plundered, while the United Nations dealt only with the symptoms and refused to treat the disease with the required determination.

7. As it had done in each of the past 38 years, his country expressed its deep appreciation to the Commissioner-General of the Agency and to his staff in the field. Although the target of attacks by the Zionist entity, the Agency provided access to schooling, training and work centres for a large number of young refugees who otherwise would have no option other than to join the legitimate resistance against Israel's illegitimate violations of international law. If the Agency had to terminate its operations, the Israeli authorities would then be confronted by a new generation of Palestinians who would have no alternative but to fight against the Zionists who had usurped their country and deprived them of their rights. Israel would then understand that none of the conspiracies hatched in the corridors of various capitals would be able to prevent the Palestinian people's return to Palestine. In that respect, those countries supporting the Zionists should acknowledge their own responsibility for events in Palestine.

8. The international community had failed to stem the excesses of zionism. The number of Palestine refugees, which had been less than 1 million in 1950, was currently in excess of 2,200,000. That was a good indication of the scope of the problem. The United Nations, in its decision to establish the Agency in 1949, had linked its mandate to the right of return and to the payment of compensation for those Palestinians who did not wish to return to their homes. The refugees were still waiting for the United Nations to fulfil its commitments, while the Israeli authorities were striving to close all the doors.

(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

9. A sign of encouragement could, however, be seen in the Agency's success, thanks to the contribution of the international community, in overcoming its financial crisis of recent years. His delegation also welcomed the measures taken by the European Economic Community to open its markets to the products of the occupied Arab territories and hoped that the Commissioner-General would provide detailed reports on the relevant facilitation measures taken in Europe, and on the position of the Zionist authorities, whose objectives were all too evident. His country was also gratified that some specialized agencies of the United Nations had co-operated with UNRWA in providing relief to the various groups suffering from the effects of Zionist oppression and Israeli aggression in southern Lebanon.

10. The international community had thought that it had found a solution to the Jewish problem and to Nazi terror at the expense of the Arab people, but no one could feel secure in Palestine so long as the real owners of the land were deprived of their right to security. The march of history was continuing. A nation of 200 million Arabs, supported by 1,000 million Muslims and by every sane and truth-loving person in the world, would never be defeated by the Zionist conspiracy. Right would triumph and sanity would prevail.

11. Monsignor FRANCO (Observer for the Holy See), reiterated his delegation's support for the Agency's activities, and paid a tribute to its staff who were carrying out their duties in dangerous situations at the risk of their lives. His delegation urged the international community to respond generously to the Commissioner-General's appeal. It also supported UNRWA's activities because it shared the Agency's concerns and aims - namely, assistance to Palestine refugees in the Middle East - and its annual financial contribution, however modest, was a tangible sign of that support.

12. The Holy See also provided direct assistance to Palestine refugees through the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, established in 1949 for the care of Palestinians in need, regardless of their creed. The Pontifical Mission administered its own projects and institutions and also co-ordinated the assistance provided to the Palestine refugees by other Catholic agencies in Europe and North America. It also collaborated with UNRWA and other voluntary agencies. In 1986, the Pontifical Mission had distributed \$6 million for programmes and projects, the most important of which had given assistance to 7,856 children in Amman, Beirut and Jerusalem. It had also supported institutions for the disabled, universities, clinics, refugee camps and public libraries.

13. His delegation was deeply concerned at the situation in the Middle East, specifically the agony of Lebanon. It had expressed its solicitude for the Palestine refugees, victims of a tragic situation which had persisted far too long. It unequivocally condemned recourse to violence as a means of securing rights, but realized that such an aberration could be tempting in the face of persisting situations of injustice. For that reason, it was renewing its call for a solution that would strike at the roots of the problem of the Palestinian people, namely, the establishment of their own homeland. In that regard, Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of his recent meeting with Jewish leaders in

(Monsignor Franco)

Miami, had said that the Jewish people had a right to a homeland, according to international law, but that the same right also applied to the Palestinian people, and that all concerned - Muslims, Jews and Christians - must honestly reflect on the past and forge solutions which would lead to a just, complete and lasting peace in that area. Until that goal had been achieved, the Palestine refugees would need the help of the international community. The Pontifical Mission would remain in the Middle East for as long as there were refugees to be helped. UNWRA must also continue its relief and assistance activities. Both organizations were and would be in the forefront of international solidarity - meeting the multiple needs of the refugees and, in future, assisting the development of the Palestinian people.

14. Mr. TEWARI (India) commended the Commissioner-General on his lucid report which described the operational difficulties that the Agency was encountering in carrying out its humanitarian work. It must be realized, however, that the problem was basically political and not merely humanitarian. The only way to put an end to the sufferings of the Palestinian people was to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict, and that would be possible only by implementing the various General Assembly resolutions, and in particular, resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. Lasting peace could be guaranteed only by Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent, sovereign State in Palestine.

15. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in her address to the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, had recalled the unanimous support of those countries for the Palestinian people and had expressed indignation over Israel's unabashed transgressions of international law. For several decades, the Palestinian people's tenacious struggle for freedom had aroused the consciousness of the entire world. Future generations of Palestinians, sustained by the example of the thousands of martyrs who had given their lives for that cause, would fight until their aim had been fulfilled.

16. India was gratified to note the Agency's improved financial situation in 1986 and its encouraging projections for 1987. While the situation was much better than it had been in 1985, the Commissioner-General must continue his efforts to broaden the Agency's base of financial support. The informal meeting of donors, held in May 1986, had been effective, and more such meetings should be planned. In particular funds must be raised for the construction budget in order to build much needed schools and clinics.

17. India, which had contributed regularly to UNRWA, had decided to increase its contribution by 12 per cent in 1988-1989. It had further granted a number of scholarships and training positions to Palestinians, and currently there were more than 2,000 Palestinian students in his country. Furthermore, no restrictions had been placed on the number of Palestinian students who could seek admission.

18. His delegation paid a tribute to the Agency's staff and was saddened by the death of seven staff members during the past year. It was to be hoped that

(Mr. Tewari, India)

Lebanon's tragedy would not compel UNRWA to curtail part of the vital services it provided, because that might exacerbate the political situation in the region. Thanks to the Agency's stabilizing influence in the Middle East, maintenance of those programmes was essential for humanitarian and political reasons. The international community had a moral obligation to assist UNRWA in every way possible.

19. It was unfortunate that some Western Powers which proclaimed their support for the cause of human rights in other parts of the world had become unabashed collaborators in the suppression of the Palestinian people's rights. Generations of disinherited Palestinians embodied humanity's desire to fight for survival and basic human rights. Freedom and liberty, whether in Palestine or South Africa, deserved the unstinting support of the international community, which must expose the crimes of those who masqueraded as champions of freedom and democracy.

20. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq) said that the Palestine refugee problem was basically political, and that unless a radical political solution was found, it would remain the principal source of strife in the Middle East and would help to perpetuate a situation which constituted a threat to peace. Certainly it was essential to aid the refugees and provide services to them, but what was most important was the fate of the Palestinian nation. The Palestinians, irrespective of their country of refuge, refused to allow their identity to be erased and their existence and homeland to be forgotten. For that reason, the international community - and more specifically the United Nations, which was responsible for their plight - must consider the political and humanitarian aspects of the question in an objective and equitable manner, without yielding to pressure. The only solution desired by the Palestinian people and advocated in the General Assembly resolutions - was the return to their ancestral land and the establishment of their own independent State, a solution which would guarantee peace, security and stability in the region.

21. The claim that the Palestinians had left their country at the instance of the Arab Governments was false and misled international opinion. The refugee problem was a result of terrorism practised by Zionist groups such as the Haganah and the Irgun against the Palestinians with the aim of driving them out. Emboldened by their experience in resisting the British authorities, the Zionists had continued to resort to terrorism, convinced as they were of its effectiveness.

22. Following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) in 1947, which provided for the partition of Palestine into an Arab State and a Jewish State, the Zionists had hatched a plan to be carried out in several stages. The first consisted of perpetrating massacres which had obliged the Palestinians to take en masse to seek refuge in the neighbouring Arab countries. The second stage in the Zionist terrorist policy had been the establishment of the Law of Return, which authorized only Jews to live in Palestine, and excluded the Palestinians who were the legitimate inhabitants. To ensure swift application of that law, the Zionists had resorted to pressure and acts of terrorism. Such had been the case in Iraq, where the Jews who had been living there comfortably since before the Christian era had been compelled to emigrate to Palestine. The Jews had thus rapidly taken the

(Mr. Al-Haddawi, Iraq)

place of the Palestine refugees and seized all their property by virtue of another law relative to the property of absent owners, which authorized them to do so. It was easy for Zionist leaders now to say that the appropriation of those properties had been legal. That had been the third operation in the infamous Zionist plan, which proclaimed that Palestine was a land without people for a people without land. The injustice of that plan had been denounced by Count Bernadotte in his report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mahatma Gandhi, in his book on non-violence, had written that Palestine belonged to the Arabs just as England belonged to the English or France to the French, and that the situation in Palestine was contrary to all ethics. Such was not the opinion of Golda Meir, who had claimed, 30 years later, with singular arrogance, that the Palestinian people did not exist and that consequently it could not be said that the Jews had usurped their homeland.

23. The Zionist plan clearly explained the policy of constant aggression practised against the Palestinian people wherever they were, with the aim of annihilating them. Massacres, aerial bombings or military raids on the refugee camps were the means used to carry out the so-called "iron fist" policy.

24. In recent years, Zionist leaders had increased their threats and acts of intimidation to demoralize the Palestinians and deprive them of all hope. The Zionists, who officially called for secure and recognized borders, were in fact the last to want them, because they feared that such borders would stand in the way of their expansion and the realization of a Greater Israel. Moshe Dayan had declared, in that regard, that the Biblical lands belonged to the Biblical people, and when that principle was applied, the frontiers became elastic.

25. The Zionists had decided, as Ariel Sharon had declared, to strike at the Palestinians wherever they might be, but they were deceiving themselves if they thought that terrorism and repression would stamp out the Palestinian people, because they had held firm for 40 years and would continue to resist until they were able to return to their homeland and establish their own independent State.

26. His delegation recognized that the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were commendable and condemned the assassination and kidnapping of UNRWA staff. Iraq called on the parties concerned to put an end to such irresponsible practices and to free those who had been kidnapped. Positive steps should be taken to enable UNRWA to fulfil its mandate more effectively. In particular, the Zionist entity must accept the resolutions of the Special Political Committee concerning Palestinian refugees living on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and all resolutions adopted by the Committee under agenda item 79 should be implemented. The Israeli forces must also withdraw from southern Lebanon and all parties concerned must cease their acts of aggression against the refugees and recognize their right to live with dignity like all other peoples.

27. Mr. DERANI (Malaysia), recalling that his country had consistently supported UNRWA, welcomed the unanimous decision taken by the General Assembly at the

(Mr. Derani, Malaysia)

previous session to extend the Agency's mandate. That decision augured well for the future of the Palestinian refugees who had been evicted from their homeland.

28. The Malaysian Government had welcomed with satisfaction the report of the Commissioner-General and commended him for having been able to overcome the financial crisis and maintain a credit balance in the 1986 budget for UNRWA's programme of activities. The projections for 1987, in that regard, were extremely encouraging. Malaysia noted that the Agency's improved financial position was attributable to better management. It also welcomed the rolling programme in implementing the UNRWA medium-term plan. Much remained to be done, however, particularly in the area of construction of schools and clinics.

29. The plight of refugees in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip was of particular concern. UNRWA emergency operations had been hampered by the strong tensions prevailing in those areas. Those problems, coupled with the difficulty of maintaining a distinction between refugees, had greatly escalated the cost of emergency operations in Lebanon, and efforts by UNRWA personnel to facilitate access to refugee camps had not always been successful. His delegation, however, wished to express its appreciation for the assistance provided to UNRWA by other United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

30. As one of the sponsors of resolution 41/69 E, pertaining to Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, his delegation considered the attitude of the Israeli Government towards the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees, including the demolition of their houses by the occupation authorities, as despicable. Malaysia condemned the constant harassment of Palestinian civilians by the Israeli authorities and once again called upon Israel to heed world opinion. For all those reasons, Malaysia would once again co-sponsor the draft resolution on the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip.

31. His delegation reiterated its support for the various efforts by UNRWA in the fields of education, health and training. Such human resource development programmes represented an investment in the future of Palestine. It was with that objective in mind that Malaysian volunteers had gone to Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. In the same spirit, the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur had welcomed two Palestinian students during the period 1985-1987 and was prepared to admit any Palestinian who wished to pursue his education at that university. Malaysia also supported the creation of the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees. It was once again sponsoring the draft resolution on that subject and renewed its call to the Israeli authorities to facilitate the establishment of that institution. The work of UNRWA was noble, but could only be temporary. A permanent solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees could be achieved only through a political solution to the problem of Palestine. Such a solution could only be achieved through the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, with, as called for by Malaysia's Minister for Foreign Affairs. The participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Derani, Malaysia)

32. Israel must be made to respect the right of the Palestinians to their homeland. Israel must also fully co-operate with UNRWA and not hinder relief operations for the refugees in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and elsewhere. The Malaysian Government joined all other Governments which condemned all military and repressive actions by the Israeli authorities and their surrogates against innocent refugees and civilians.

33. Mr. LUMAUG (Philippines) commended the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his staff for their courage and dedication to the work of an institution that had done so much to build for the future of the Palestine refugees. Palestinians were living in the occupied territories and in areas where there seemed to be no end to the war. They were weary of bombings, security checks, arbitrary arrests and the closing of schools and public places. For them, just plain surviving was a struggle, and tribute must be paid to their courage and their indomitable spirit.

34. A free and independent Palestine would need an educated population and specialists in all areas. UNRWA schools, hospitals and professional training centres were laying the foundations for the future of the Palestinian people. His delegation was pleased that UNRWA was going beyond emergency relief to undertake tasks in such fields as education, medical services, advanced training, public health care and welfare so as to meet the needs of a growing population. It was a matter of satisfaction to his delegation that 350,000 Palestine refugee children attended UNRWA schools and had performed well in exams held by the local authorities. It had also taken note of UNRWA's successful primary health care programmes for children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

35. His delegation was heartened by the improvement in UNRWA's financial situation, the Agency having shown a small excess of income over expenditures in the past year. That was attributable to both the generosity of donors and measures taken to improve management. But such contributions fell short of the requirements of its essential construct on projects. Needs were also expected to increase steadily as a result of population growth. It was to be hoped that the special fund-raising efforts of the Agency could cover those increasing needs, and his delegation urged Member States to be generous in their contributions.

36. UNRWA's difficulties in delivering supplies to Palestinian refugees during fighting around the refugee camps in Lebanon were a matter of deep concern, and his delegation deplored the death of the seven UNRWA workers who had lost their lives over the past year in the line of duty. It was distressed to note that others had been arrested, detained and kidnapped. All that dramatically pointed to the fact that the question of the Palestine refugees was inextricably linked to the question of Palestine. There could be no peace in the Middle East until the question of Palestine was resolved through the establishment of a homeland for the Palestinians. His country reaffirmed its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and for the establishment of an independent State in Palestine under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. At the same time, the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live in

(Mr. Lumauig, Philippines)

peace within secure boundaries must be upheld. A just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict must be achieved if a major threat to international peace and security was to be eliminated. The convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, under the auspices of the United Nations would be a most appropriate means of bringing about a peaceful and just solution of the conflict.

37. Within its modest means, his country had continued to give financial support to UNRWA as a demonstration of its firm commitment to the Agency's noble mission. His delegation was sponsoring resolutions relating to the efforts of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA and assistance to the displaced persons affected by the fighting in the region. The Member States concerned must exercise political will so that the Palestinian people could at long last live in freedom. The people and Government of the Philippines reaffirmed their support for the Palestinian cause and looked forward to the day when Palestine would become a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

38. Mr. VIKIS (Cyprus) said that it was gratifying that as indicated in the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (document A/42/13), the Agency's financial situation had improved in 1986 and projections for 1987 were encouraging. In 1986, there had been an excess of income over expenditure, and the \$200 million budgeted expenditure for 1987 was expected to be covered through sufficient income. The Agency's measures to improve management and the increased flow of information between UNRWA and donors were thus having beneficial results. However, there were still serious problems to be overcome, including the funding of the construction budget. As the Commissioner-General emphasized, any funds made available for construction should not be at the expense of contributions to the general programme. But those encouraging developments concerning the financial situation of UNRWA were marred by the worsening conditions faced by the Agency in carrying out its operations and maintaining its services in Lebanon and in the occupied territories, conditions which brought suffering and death to both innocent civilians and Agency staff members.

39. His delegation appreciated the programmes undertaken by UNRWA in the fields of education, health and welfare services, but it was profoundly concerned at the fact that the conditions which had led to the creation of UNRWA 38 years earlier still existed. The number of refugees assisted by the Agency had greatly increased as a result of the political situation in the region, and the refugees' living conditions had worsened. An even more considerable financial commitment to UNRWA was needed, and efforts must be intensified to resolve the political problems that had plagued the region for decades. The position of the international community on the Middle East problem and the question of Palestine, as expressed in numerous resolutions of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, had been clear and consistent. The international community must redouble its efforts to find a just solution to the Middle East problem that would ensure the return of the Palestine refugees to their homeland and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish a State of their own.

40. Mr. MITAU (Kenya) said that judging by the report of UNRWA's Commissioner-General contained in document A/42/13, there was no doubt that the work of the Agency had been hampered by man-made obstacles, which could have been avoided had there been co-operation on the part of the occupying authorities and the various militias fighting in the areas of UNRWA operations. None the less, faced with those difficulties, which had even involved loss of life, Agency staff had continued to provide services to the refugees.

41. His delegation was encouraged by the improved financial situation of the Agency during 1986-1987. That had been partly the result of the austerity measures initiated by the Commissioner-General in 1985 and partly due to increased voluntary contributions from donor countries. It was, however, regrettable that UNRWA had become a permanent body, contrary to what had been envisaged at its creation. That was due in part to the unwillingness of some of the interested parties to participate in serious and direct peace negotiations to put an end to the suffering of refugees in the region. To that end, Kenya supported the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and called upon all interested parties to engage in negotiations without pre-conditions. In order for such progress to be achieved, Israel must agree to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories unconditionally and must allow the refugees to return and live peacefully in their ancestral homeland.

42. Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia) said that his Government, in order to demonstrate its support for the work of UNRWA on behalf of the Palestine refugees, intended at the appropriate time to make a voluntary contribution, the modalities and amount of which would be announced later. He hoped that the international community would soon be able to establish the bases for a just and durable peace in the region.

43. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its general debate on the agenda item under consideration.

44. Mr. RAMIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reminded the Committee that, when he had referred to the persecution of the Jews in Iraq and the confiscation of their assets, he had been met with silence on the part of the representative of Iraq, who had apparently considered that it was beneath him to reply. It seemed that five days had been necessary for the representative of Iraq to concoct out of whole cloth a reply consistent with one of Iraq's major export products - in addition to oil - namely lies and invention. None the less, the persecutions inflicted on the Jews in Iraq by the authorities of the country were well known. By way of example, one might cite the murders and torture inflicted on many Iraqi Jews in April 1941 following a pro-Nazi coup d'etat staged by the Palestinian Arabs against Great Britain. In 1969, nine Jews had been condemned to death and hanged in the main square of Baghdad; after the creation of Israel, many Iraqi Jews had had to flee the country by reason of the persecution and oppression to which they had been subjected and their assets had been confiscated. He would like to know if the Iraqi Government was prepared to appoint, at the international level, a custodian for the assets of which the Iraqi Jews had been deprived and the income which they should have obtained from them.

(Mr. Ramin, Israel)

45. One of the refugees registered with UNRWA was Abu Nidal, who engaged in terrorist activities on behalf of the Baath, not the Baath of the beginning of the movement, whose vision of a renaissance of the Arab nation had, however paradoxical it might seem, been similar to that of Zionism, but the present days Baath, divided into two factions which hated each other and tore each other apart. Was it not surprising that Abu Nidal should for many years past have engaged in terrorist activities on behalf of the Iraqi Baath against the Syrians, then of the Syrian Baath against Iraq, and was currently dividing his loyalties between Syria and Libya; moreover he had been condemned to death by a PLO tribunal in the context of the inter-Arab fratricidal struggle.

46. The representative of Iraq would doubtless argue that the Iraqi Jews had been executed because they had been spies and traitors. But would he justify in like fashion the massacres of Kurds in the north of the country and the Iraqi attack against Kuwait?

47. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he would have preferred not to lower himself by replying to the mendacious allegations of the representative of the Zionist entity; it was however his duty to provide certain clarifications. The entire content of the statement of Iraq was supported by citations from the writings of the greatest Zionist strategists such as Herzl, Weizmann, Stein and Dayanet Sharon, as well as those of other independent thinkers, in particular, Mahatma Gandhi. The causes of the Middle East problem were to be found in the basic policies of Zionism. One of the main characteristics of that ideology was individualism. Its followers were in fact encouraged to isolate themselves from the societies in which they lived and to cultivate their own particularism. Zionism was a political movement based on the concept that the Jewish people was a chosen race, the corollary was that other peoples were second-class.

48. In order to impose those ideas, Zionism had not hesitated to have recourse to aggression, terrorism, racism and expansionism. The representative of the Zionist entity had once again spoken of the execution of two or three Iraqi Jews without saying that they had been spies and saboteurs who had pledged allegiance to the Zionist State, thus betraying their own country, Iraq, where their ancestors had lived in complete safety since ancient times. Such behaviour was not rare. That was demonstrated by the frequent scandals resulting from espionage activities carried out on behalf of Israel by Zionists in countries which had generously welcomed them: thefts of secret documents and military plans, misappropriation of radioactive materials, to cite only a few examples. There was a clear and direct link between such acts and the theories of Theodor Herzl.

49. With the utmost assurance, the Zionist representative had strained ingenuity by asking why the Jews who had emigrated from Iraq had not been indemnified. Better than anyone, however, he knew that, by leaving the country of their ancestors, following acts of terrorist provocation perpetrated by the Israeli secret services in support of the enemies of Iraq and the Arab nation, and by participating in all the wars waged by Israel against the Arab countries, those

(Mr. Al-Haddawi, Iraq)

Iraqis had lost their right to indemnification. Iraq had, moreover, in 1976 adopted a law offering them the possibility of returning to their country if they so wished.

50. Mr. RAMIN (Israel) said that the representative of Iraq had knowingly distorted his comments and given the expected explanation regarding the massacre of Iraqi Jews.

51. Concerning Saudi Arabia, he had noted that that country had announced a contribution of \$1.2 million to the Agency for 1988. What did that sum represent by comparison with the needs of the refugees and with the enormous wealth which Saudi Arabia obtained from oil? Not even a drop of water. Saudi Arabia would perhaps reply that it had made an enormous contribution to the Palestinian cause. One might, in that case, ask whether the purpose of that generosity had been to encourage the PLO in the terrorist activities which it was carrying on throughout the world or whether it was simply a ransom paid for protection.

52. It was also clear from the report of the High Commissioner (A/41/13 and Add.1), that Kuwait also had made only a minimal contribution and that Iraq and Libya had not contributed at all to the Agency.

53. Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the members of the Committee were not deceived by the manoeuvres designed to divert their attention from the item under consideration. All the representatives who had spoken during the current meeting had supported the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their country as well as the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. That proved that the international community considered that the claims of that people were just and was clear evidence of the isolation of the Zionist entity, which persisted in its policy of intransigence, carrying its obstinacy to the point of refusing the refugees their right to return to their homes. Such were the questions which the members of the Committee were to consider today, and the manoeuvres of the Zionist representative could not divert them from that purpose.

54. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq) said that, according to information carried by the Israeli newspaper The Black Panthers during the 1960s, the Chief Rabbi of the Iraqi Jewish community had recognized that, for the past 1,000 years, the Jews of Iraq had enjoyed the same rights as their Arab compatriots. The terrorist acts perpetrated by the Israelis in 1950-1951 had not constrained them to abandon their country. It was only when the Israeli secret services had intensified their campaign of terror, by creating a climate of insecurity, that they had begun to emigrate. The same sources had mentioned outrages perpetrated by Israel against the United States Information Office in Baghdad for the purpose of provocation.

55. Zionist pressure groups had permanent control over the political activities of many countries. Anyone who dared to denounce their practices was automatically accused of being a Nazi and an anti-Semite. Unfortunately, most of the persons who were thus labelled ultimately gave in to the Zionist pressures, allowing their political and material interests to come before ethical considerations.

(Mr. Al-Haddawi, Iraq)

56. The representative of the Zionist entity probably had to exaggerate and distort the facts in order to gain the approval of his masters and show them that a humble Jewish emigré from Iraq was as competent as a white Jew from Europe and that the segregation policy applied against Oriental Jews was mistaken.

57. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to reply to the accusations of lying and invention made by the representative of the Zionist entity against the representative of Iraq and to consider in that connection the actions and conduct of the Israeli Government. He asked how Israel could accuse other Governments of lies when a recent New York Times article stated that agents of the Shin Beth had committed perjury and had regularly lied about the way testimony had been obtained in order to convict persons suspected of terrorist activities. Since 1972, 3,000 or 4,000 Palestinians had thus been found guilty on the basis of lies and fabrications.

58. He also referred to an article written by a former member of the Knesset and published in a German magazine which stated that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon had had the full support of the current Israeli Prime Minister, who had done nothing to stop the Sabra and Shatila massacres and had denied that he had received any information on the matter, when he had been aware of the blood-bath which was being prepared.

59. With regard to the question of terrorism, everyone knew of the Israeli Government's conduct in the occupied territories. Only recently, an Israeli newspaper had reported that a 12-year-old child had been killed by a bullet in a refugee camp and that a 54-year-old woman living in the Gaza Strip had been killed when Israeli soldiers had opened fire on youths who had been throwing stones at them. Lastly, it should be recalled that the current Prime Minister had, in the 1940s, been the head of an organization described as perhaps the most effective terrorist organization of the century.

60. Mr. AL SABAH (Kuwait), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he could not allow the fallacious allegations made by the representative of Israel to be left unanswered. That representative knew better than anyone that the contribution made by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to UNRWA was but a minute part of their support for the Palestinian people. The two countries had admitted a very large number of refugees, who were not registered with UNRWA, and spared no effort in order to ensure them a decent life until they regained their rights.

61. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) said that, in drawing up the report for next year, he would give the most careful consideration to the many positive comments and suggestions made by delegations about his report (A/42/13 and Add.1). Nevertheless, he stressed the complex nature of the problems which UNRWA had to tackle and the impossibility of satisfying everyone, however objective one tried to be.

(Mr. Giacomelli)

62. Despite the relatively more favourable financial situation of the Agency in 1987 and the efforts made by the staff, many of the problems had still not been solved. The surplus was of a purely technical nature: it was a question of the cash in the General Fund. Everyone recognized, however, that, with regard to the overall activities, the Agency still faced difficulties, particularly concerning the financing of construction activities.

63. A number of delegations had commented on what they regarded to be the inadequacy of the current level of services. Like them, he considered that there were many areas in which the Agency could improve and expand its services. Nevertheless, UNRWA could not do so without additional resources. He was endeavouring to maintain financial stability and draw up plans realistically by trying not to upset the delicate balance achieved between the Agency's requirements and the capacity of donors to contribute. Nevertheless, the medium-term plan provided for expanding health facilities, reducing the number of school children per classroom, and making other improvements in the programmes. He very much hoped that the support demonstrated during the discussion would find concrete expression at the Pledging Conference to be held on 23 November and that most donors would be able to announce the exact amount of their contributions, which would facilitate programme planning and execution.

64. He expressed gratitude to the host countries for the assistance which they provided to the refugees and which was often a heavy burden for them. He stressed the difficulties which the Agency faced in carrying out its duties in certain areas and referred particularly to the increasingly difficult conditions in the Gaza Strip. He was gratified that Governments had recognized the seriousness of the situation in that area and had expressed a willingness to help the Agency. UNRWA would continue to do whatever it could to improve the level and quality of the health services, education and training offered to the refugee population in the Gaza Strip. The programme of the Training Centre in Gaza would be expanded the following year through the addition of three courses financed by special grants from the European Community and the Italian Government.

65. The Agency would continue to co-operate closely with the Government of Lebanon and with other United Nations organizations to bring vital relief assistance to the Palestine refugees in Lebanon. The most urgent task currently was to assist the refugees affected by the fighting in and around the Beirut camps to repair their homes before the onset of winter. He hoped that he would receive the additional resources - some five million dollars - which he had requested in the appeal that he had made the preceding February concerning the emergency situation in Lebanon. That amount would make it possible to carry out the programme of assistance in co-ordination with the Lebanese Government.

66. The representative of Lebanon had referred to an outstanding financial issue relating to the Bayssarieh project. The Agency's sole interest in that matter was to find a way of utilizing or returning the funds originally made available for that project so that UNRWA could carry out its responsibilities with regard to all of the parties involved in the original arrangement. It was his understanding that

(Mr. Giacomelli)

the Lebanese authorities concerned were to propose to the Agency appropriate arrangements for that purpose.

67. Lastly, he recalled the important role played by the Agency in maintaining a degree of stability in the Middle East while the search continued for a settlement to that difficult political question. He also thanked those delegations which had given their encouragement and support to the Agency and its staff.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.