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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

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INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM ORGANS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) 1/

1. At its fourth session, the Commission on Human Settlements, in its resolution 4/3 of 6 May 1981, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian People", requested the Executive Director, *inter alia*, to continue his efforts, within the responsibility and competence of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), to implement the General Assembly resolutions concerning assistance to the Palestinian people, and in particular resolution 34/133.

2. Following the adoption of this resolution, officials of the Centre met with the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) at Nairobi in order to consult with him on the implications of the resolution. Subsequently, the Executive Director wrote to the Palestine Liberation Organization requesting its views and advice on how the Centre could best provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of human settlements. Since that time, the Centre has contacted the Permanent Observer on several occasions regarding the matter. The Permanent Observer informed the Centre that he had conveyed its communication to the headquarters of his organization at Baghdad and that he would communicate with the Centre as soon as a response was received.

3. Pending the response of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and without prejudice to any specific future projects, a number of possibilities are being explored by the Centre with regard to the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of human settlements. For example, the Centre plans to organize a course on management and public housing programmes, including sites-and-services schemes, for countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This course will include the provision of fellowships for suitably qualified Palestinians. The Centre is also consulting with a number of universities and specialized institutes with a view to their offering fellowships to qualified Palestinians for training in selected human settlements fields. Another possibility being explored is the participation, with the assistance of the Centre, of qualified Palestinian candidates in the various training programmes, workshops and study tours to be organized by the Centre under its 1982-1983 work programme.

4. At the second regular session of 1981 of the Economic and Social Council, during the Council's deliberations on agenda item 9, entitled "International co-operation in the field of human settlements", the observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization called upon the Centre "to find ways and means of assisting the housing co-operative societies in the occupied territories" (see E/1981/C.1/SR.8, para. 49). As the Israeli authorities have formally requested that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should serve as the sole

1/ Additional information (see A/37/214, sect. II.E.

executing agency for United Nations projects involving the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, this request was forwarded by the Centre to the Administrator of UNDP for consideration and possible inclusion in the UNDP programme of assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of human settlements. The Administrator was also informed that, should UNDP require any technical assistance, the Centre's expertise and experience in this field would be at its disposal.

5. It may be noted in this regard that the extent to which the Centre can provide direct technical assistance to the Palestinian people is limited by the above-mentioned position of the Israeli authorities regarding the execution of United Nations projects. The projects which had originally been identified with the assistance of the Centre include the project entitled "Training in housing", for which approval for its implementation by UNDP had been received from the Israeli authorities. A second project, entitled "Housing fund", was approved by the Governing Council of UNDP, but approval for its implementation has still not been received from the Israeli authorities. Two other projects, entitled "Housing survey in the West Bank and Gaza" and "Construction machinery and equipment for municipalities and co-operatives", were also identified but were not submitted to the Governing Council of UNDP because of the over-all financial limitations of the UNDP programme of assistance to the Palestinian people.
