



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 30th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 65: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (continued)

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL (A/37/13 and A/37/479)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/37/591)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/37/497)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/37/425 and Corr.1, A/37/426, A/37/427, A/37/488 and Corr.1 and A/37/599)

1. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that the Special Political Committee, as in previous years, was faced with the financial problem of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It was a matter of urgency for the General Assembly to provide a stable basis for financing that body. In the meantime, his delegation supported the idea of possibly meeting all or part of the Agency's deficit from the regular United Nations budget.

2. He noted that, in the light of the recent events in Lebanon, UNRWA had been unable to provide a desirable level of assistance and would probably be compelled, at the end of the current school year, to close the schools jointly administered by UNRWA and UNESCO.

3. Despite those difficulties, the Commissioner-General and the UNRWA staff had continued their activities on behalf of the Palestine refugee community without respite and had been able to cope with the many restrictions of a practical order as well as with the political problems, which, in recent months had been more acute than ever. It should be noted in that regard that West Beirut, the base for the Agency's operations, had quickly become isolated as a result of the Israeli invasion. Furthermore, as pointed out by the Commissioner-General in paragraph 4 of his special report (A/37/479), "the hostilities affected areas where previously some 198,000 of the 239,000 Palestine refugees in Lebanon registered with the Agency had been living and where most of the Agency's schools, health centres and other facilities in Lebanon had been located. It was readily apparent that many thousands of Palestine refugees had been rendered homeless, many more were in need of immediate relief and many of the Agency's installations were either damaged or destroyed". That was why his country hoped that all the parties involved in the conflict in Lebanon would demonstrate the highest degree of moderation and would guarantee respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country, whose people, more than ever before, were demanding their lawful right to live in peace.

4. Furthermore, although fully aware of the political problem affecting the countries and peoples of the region, Chile reaffirmed that the future of thousands of Palestinian refugees and the stability and peaceful development desired by the

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

nations of the region depended upon a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine and, thus also, the question of the Middle East. His country had always maintained that the achievement of those objectives demanded the withdrawal of Israel from all the Territories occupied since 1967, respect for the right of all States in the region to live within secure and recognized boundaries, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their lawful right to self-determination.

5. His country therefore urged all States to provide financial support, within their means, to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to assist it in other ways in fulfilling its noble task. His country was ready, as it always had been, to make its contribution to that body, which was safeguarding in a tangible way the most basic of human rights. The States Members of the United Nations should therefore demonstrate a real political will and seek permanent solutions that would guarantee peace and stability in the Middle East.

6. Mr. LEVIN (Israel) said that the special report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/37/479) mentioned in a number of places that installations had been damaged or destroyed during the hostilities. He pointed out in that regard that Israel had been engaged with a peculiar enemy in Lebanon - the conglomerate of Palestinian terrorist organizations, Arab organizations and mercenaries - who had absolutely no regard for the norms of civilized behaviour in conflict. The world had seen how the terrorists had shielded themselves behind civilians had concealed their weapons in residential areas and had deployed their artillery next to schools, hospitals and camps marked by UNRWA signs. Furthermore, as was pointed out in paragraph 45 of the special report, an armed unit of the Palestine Liberation Organization had been posted at the entrance of UNRWA'S central warehouse and had prevented any supplies from entering or leaving the warehouse, with the result that for approximately one month, UNRWA had been unable to send supplies to refugees in West Beirut and southern Lebanon.

7. Of the approximately 110,000 Palestinian refugees residing in southern Lebanon, 45,000 to 50,000 had succeeded in leaving the camps and becoming integrated in Lebanese society. Most of the remaining refugees had resided, prior to the hostilities, in five refugee camps: Ein-Hilwe (24,000-25,000), Rashidiye (15,000), and Miya oua-Miye, Bourj ech-Chimali and El-Bas (each with 3,000 to 5,000). The UNRWA figures on the homeless ("some 75,000 persons") did not coincide with the figures previously provided by the Agency nor with those given in a special study on displaced persons in southern Lebanon, carried out by Mr. Howard Adelman, in which the number of homeless persons was estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000. As Israeli estimates resulted in a figure of 30,000, an adjustment of the UNRWA estimates was essential. The existence of refugee camps constituted not only a humanitarian problem but also a security problem to Israel. The report of the Agency's Legal Adviser, dated 18 October 1982, clearly demonstrated that the vocational training centre at Sibliin had been used as a terrorist training facility. That was clearly a flagrant violation of the terms of United Nations aid, and it was the strong conviction of the Israeli delegation that UNRWA should not give assistance to persons engaging in warfare against a State Member of the United Nations.

/...

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

8. Although Israel had no intention of imposing its will on Lebanon and had no designs on Lebanese territory, it had assured the Agency of its full co-operation in preparing the camps for the approaching cold season. Tents which had arrived at the port of Haifa had been transported to Lebanon by Israeli authorities, who, moreover, had offered to supply 200 to 500 prefabricated housing units to supplement the tents. Israel had also offered cement to help individual families to make repairs. Israel's efforts to assist the homeless refugees had comprised four stages. Originally, Israel had thought of providing housing for refugees within small neighbourhoods separate from the camps. The total estimated costs had been between \$300 million and \$400 million, but the plan had been rejected by the Lebanese authorities. After ruling out the construction of permanent or even prefabricated structures, the Lebanese Government, on the insistence of Israel, had agreed to the use of tents. However, a survey of Government land where tent encampments could be erected had never been delivered, and, what was more, when the infrastructure work necessary for the construction of the tent cities had been about to begin, the co-ordinator of UNRWA activities in southern Lebanon had been sent on a two-month home leave even though his experience had been desperately needed at that critical moment. The project had therefore fallen behind schedule, and two to three critical work-weeks had been lost. The problem had been further exacerbated by the Lebanese Government's insistence that Palestine refugees could reside only in the original areas of the camps - which were a fraction of the current dimensions of the refugee camps - and by the fact that the municipalities of Tyre and Sidon had destroyed Palestinian refugee homes beyond the original limits of the camps. As of mid-October, the situation had been as follows: a large number of sites had been readied for the tents, 200 buildings suitable for refugee housing had been proposed to UNRWA by the Israeli defense forces, and Israel had offered to provide 200 caravans, 2,800 heaters and the services of Israeli contractors to help speed up the work. Refugees living outdoors would be the first to receive tents, and those housed in public buildings would not be evacuated until shelters were ready for them.

9. With regard to basic rations (para. 7 of the foreward to the report published in document A/37/13), no untoward developments had resulted from UNRWA's decision to phase out the distribution of basic rations to 830,000 persons. Israel welcomed that decision by the Agency, since it indicated that the conditions of the refugees had improved considerably. With regard to the Canada construction project (paras. 75 and 186 of the report), the draft implied that difficulties had resulted from an action supposedly taken by Israel, whereas in reality the problem stemmed from the re-establishment of the border between Sinai and the Gaza Strip, as outlined in the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Israel, continuing its assistance to the refugees remaining on the Egyptian side of the border, had transferred a medical clinic with its staff and equipment to the Egyptian authorities and had assisted in transferring 150 tons of food from UNRWA warehouses in Gaza. It had also enabled seven UNRWA teachers working in Sinai to come to Gaza for professional training and had approved the request of civil administration workers wishing to live in Israel rather than remain in Sinai. He therefore requested a corrigendum to that affect.

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

10. With regard to assistance to the poorest families, he said that paragraph 7 of the report contained no mention of the co-operation between the Israeli Government and the Agency, whereas references were made to the Governments of Jordan and Syria. Israel supported that humanitarian programme and would continue to co-operate with the Agency in extending special assistance to the poorest families. Besides the 12,000 persons receiving such aid from the Agency, 8,319 other persons were receiving full rations from Israel. That fact deserved mention and must be stated in the corrigendum.

11. With regard to the number of refugees, paragraph 19 of the report stated that on 30 June 1982 there had been 1,982,726 registered refugees, and paragraph 21 stated that the number of registered refugees living in camps was only 35.11 per cent of that total, or 683,964 persons. The implications of those figures were particularly important with reference to alleged situations of need and hardship among Palestinian refugees. It should be noted that the majority of the names on UNRWA lists today were those of persons born after the 1948 war which had created the refugee problem. The perpetuation of refugee status from generation to generation was an unprecedented anomaly which must be corrected. At the same time, no serious attempt had been made to ascertain the exact number of registered refugees. Forged registrations had become commonplace, with the result that those who wished to perpetuate the misery of the Palestinian Arab refugees were able to exploit UNRWA to that end.

12. Paragraphs 36 and 152 contained references to the assistance and co-operation extended to the Agency's programmes from various sources, but there was no mention of Israel's co-operation and goodwill towards the Agency. During the past 30 years, Israel had taken a number of constructive steps towards the resolution of the refugee problem: the absorption of more than 50,000 Palestinian Arab refugees in Israel in the early 1950s through a family reunion programme; the resettlement of another 50,000 Arabs within Israel who had been displaced during the course of the war; the release by the Government of Israel since 1952 of approximately \$US 10 million from bank accounts and safe deposits belonging to Palestinian Arab refugees; and the granting since 1967 of some 60,000 resettlement permits to persons who had been displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities.

13. With regard to the current needs of the refugees, Israel's direct monetary contributions for 1982 had been the following: \$23,559,999 for direct services provided to the refugees in Judea, Samaria and Gaza especially in the spheres of housing, education, social welfare, medical services and infrastructures, and \$543,000 in the form of tax refunds, free customs benefits and transportation. Thus, Israel's direct contribution to UNRWA's budget placed it in the twenty-first rank among all contributor States Members of the United Nations, while the Arab States and the USSR had each paid only 6 per cent of the total contributions to the Agency.

(Mr. Levin, Israel)

14. In the matter of welfare and housing, paragraph 79 of the report documented Israel's extensive social projects. During the past year, 358 families, comprising 2,183 individuals, had moved out of the camps in Gaza into government-sponsored housing projects, 393 refugee families (2,424 persons) had moved into homes built on land they had purchased (para. 155), and by the end of June 1981, 5,050 refugee families had moved to houses in Israeli rehabilitation and housing projects in the Gaza district. That demonstrated that the crowded camps were being replaced by modern housing.

15. With regard to education (paras. 89 and 90 of the report), the high enrolment in the Agency's schools reflected the support given by the Israeli authorities to education. Pupils benefited from health and education services which had been approved and expanded by the Israeli authorities, and students were able to go abroad to pursue their studies, at universities in Arab countries and elsewhere. Textbooks had been imported from Egypt and Jordan; however, Israel forbade the importation of books which instigated hatred or hostility towards Israel, Jews or Zionism. With respect to employment, he said that there was no more unemployment in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Paragraph 144 of the report stated that today nearly all refugee families were self-supporting, as a consequence of high-level employment. That should be a welcome statement, especially for the countries which had been shouldering the burden of upkeep of the refugees since 1949.

16. Mr. JAMES (Australia) expressed once again his Government's deep concern at the desperate situation confronted by UNRWA and reaffirmed Australia's support for the Agency, which appeared to be operating as effectively as possible, given the present situation in the area.

17. With regard to the Agency's financial situation, he observed that even before Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Commissioner-General had already had to face a series of very difficult choices, which had inevitably had most adverse consequences on the welfare of the refugees. He therefore strongly endorsed the Commissioner-General's appeal for increased financial support.

18. His delegation had taken note of the suggestion that UNRWA's expenses should be met from the United Nations regular budget, but it doubted the feasibility of such a suggestion. Nevertheless, steps must be taken to put UNRWA on a more regular financial footing, and any such steps must meet the realities of the situation. The answer to the immediate crisis must be a more generous response from Member States.

19. Australia had increased its contribution to the Agency by about 75 per cent during the past year, and in the current year there would be a further increase to \$A 1.3 million. Another contribution of \$A 500,000 was being set aside for emergency relief to Lebanon.

20. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his Government's appreciation of the efforts made by UNRWA and the Commissioner-General in attempting to alleviate the plight of the Palestinian refugees under the most difficult circumstances.

21. Mrs. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) said that the question of the Palestinian refugees tended to be considered in an abstract light, even though it was the greatest tragedy and the most obvious case of injustice of the present time. For more than 30 years, an entire people had been deprived of its most basic and most sacred rights and had been forced to live in camps in uncertainty about its future. Some were perhaps trying to apply to the Palestinian people what had been called in the recent past "the final solution". The suffering of the Palestinian people, of a scale unequalled except in the case of the victims of apartheid, was not arousing as intense a reaction on the part of the international community as the latter. It was the lack of such a reaction that was doubtless responsible for the arrogant attitude and blindness of the representative of Israel, who, forgetting the destruction and loss of life caused by the aggression of the Israeli forces in June, saw fit to sow confusion and presumed to define the term of "refugee". The representative of Israel accused the Arab leaders of living in the past and painted an idyllic picture of the life of the Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

22. The Mauritanian delegation had read carefully the Commissioner-General's reports and had three main comments to make about them. First, those reports described the many difficulties confronting the Commissioner General and his colleagues, whose tenacity, clear-sightedness and commitment were to be commended. Secondly, the report showed that UNRWA was playing a vital role despite its precarious financial position. In that respect, it was necessary to repeat that the United Nations must consider other solutions and find other ways of making up for the inadequacy of contributions. It might be realistic to explore whether the Agency should be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, with a system of supplementary voluntary contributions. His delegation endorsed the Commissioner General's view that education should be given high priority, since education enabled the refugees to regain some dignity and prepare for their future. Thirdly, the reports made known some of the acts of the Israeli authorities, which for 30 years had been committing excesses against the Palestinian refugees and, recently, the United Nations, which had seen some of its premises destroyed, the work of officials disrupted and staff members intimidated and even arrested.

23. Her delegation believed that, in carrying out its humanitarian tasks, the Agency was contributing to stability and peace in the region. It therefore welcomed the decision taken by the General Assembly in 1982 to study ways of improving the Agency's financial situation. In that respect, it would expedite matters if the Committee was to be informed forthwith of the tentative conclusions reached by the Joint Inspection Unit, pending the issue of the Unit's final conclusions in 1983.

24. The continued existence of UNRWA was undoubtedly necessary in order to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian refugees and to prepare their future, but clearly the ultimate solution to the problem must be political, in the context of the settlement of the Middle East question. Such a settlement could not be brought about unless account was taken of the Palestinian people itself and the organization which it had formed in its struggle for sovereignty, namely the

(Mrs. Ould Daddah, Mauritania)

Palestine Liberation Organization. As her delegation had stated at the preceding session of the Assembly, peoples did not disappear but, on the contrary, grew stronger and acquired greater stature through trials and tribulations. It would be to the credit of the United Nations if it could complete the process of decolonization by restoring to the Palestinians their inalienable rights, including, of course, the right to return to their homes.

25. Mr. BRATSTROM (Sweden) said that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East played a unique role among the organs of the United Nations by providing services to Palestinian refugees in five separate geographical areas. Since those services were comparable to the services normally provided by Governments, UNRWA was endowing the Palestinian people with a sense of national identity.

26. The Commissioner-General's report (A/37/13) described with the habitual clarity the enormity of the tasks and the multiple difficulties with which the Agency was confronted in carrying out its widely extended operations. The special report on the Agency's relief operations in Lebanon (A/37/479) provided specific and convincing testimony of the devastation and suffering caused by the Israeli invasion.

27. The refugee camps had been among the primary targets of the Israeli invasion and the UNRWA installations had not been spared. One of the most urgent tasks was to provide shelters for the thousands of homeless people. It was gratifying that, following a lengthy period of uncertainty, the work of clearing the camps and setting up temporary shelters was progressing. Technicians seconded by the Swedish Government were assisting the Agency in that task. The temporary shelters, however, must be replaced by more lasting ones as soon as possible, and it was to be hoped that very shortly the necessary conditions for rebuilding the homes of the Palestinian refugees would be in place. In the meantime, emergency relief must continue. It was of the utmost importance that UNRWA should be given all the necessary support in its efforts to assist Palestinians in need, whether in Lebanon or elsewhere in the Middle East.

28. The financial crisis of UNRWA continued unabated. In response to the appeal made by the General Assembly in March 1982, some contributors had declared their willingness to convert gifts in kind into cash contributions. Such conversion would help the school programme to survive but would mean that fewer foodstuffs were available for distribution. In taking the difficult decision to give precedence to education, the Commissioner-General appeared to his delegation to have shown a correct sense of priorities.

29. The measures employed recently to avert financial disaster would not suffice, in the longer term, to assure the financing of UNRWA services. A more stable basis for the financing of the Agency had to be agreed. Sweden was prepared to participate in any arrangement to that end. An inevitable feature of any such arrangement must be a more equitable sharing of the financial burden. As one of the largest contributors to the Agency's budget, Sweden felt entitled to appeal to

(Mr. Brattstrom, Sweden)

the Governments that did not at present contribute to UNRWA to contribute according to their means and to join in a common effort to put the Agency on a more assured financial basis. Sweden would continue to give substantial support to UNRWA and would do so on a multi-year basis in order to facilitate financial planning.

30. His delegation noted with concern the lack of any improvement with regard to the detention and other maltreatment of UNRWA staff. It appealed to the Governments concerned to take steps to eliminate those problems.

31. The role of UNRWA would remain indispensable for as long as there was no comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. It was therefore necessary to ensure, at the forthcoming pledging conference, that the firm political support accorded to UNRWA was translated into firm financial support.

32. Mr. ELHOFARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) congratulated the Commissioner-General and the UNRWA staff for having continued to provide assistance to the Palestinian refugees in recent months under the difficult conditions created by the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, which had only increased the problems confronting the Agency.

33. In connection with the report of the Commissioner-General (A/37/13) and the special report of the Commissioner-General (A/37/479) on relief and assistance activities for the refugees who had suffered the consequences of the latest Zionist invasion of Lebanon, he stressed that the problem of the Palestinian refugees was not simply one of relief and assistance but, first and foremost, one of justice and right - the right of a land that had been usurped by force, and a people that had been driven out to the last man and forced to live in camps, looking to the international community for help.

34. UNRWA had been created under a United Nations resolution to aid Palestinian refugees and provide them with medical, educational and social services until their problem was settled and they regained what were rightfully theirs. It was up to the international community, and in particular the Organization which had helped to create the problem, to defend the rights of the Palestinians to return to their homeland and exercise self-determination.

35. The report of the Commissioner-General passed over those points in silence. The Commissioner-General was, of course, to be congratulated for the information his report gave on the services provided by UNRWA to the Palestinian refugees, but the report should have annexed to it a description, however brief, of the origins of the Palestinian tragedy and the hardships that the Palestinian people were enduring, especially since the collective genocide perpetrated by the Zionist gangs in Lebanon. Furthermore, the report did not mention the United Nations resolutions reaffirming the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and exercise self-determination.

(Mr. Elhofari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

36. Once again, the report of the Commissioner-General drew attention to UNRWA's financial deficit, which had occasioned cuts in assistance for the refugees and might result in the suspension of services and the closure of almost all the schools. It was incumbent on the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to investigate possible means of ensuring the continuation of UNRWA's activities until the Palestinian refugees returned to their homeland. No cuts in services for the refugees should be contemplated, even if other services had to suffer.

37. The constant threat to halt UNRWA's activities was just one aspect of the plot being hatched against the Palestinian people while, in a parallel move, attempts were being made to annihilate the Palestinian cause in violent attacks. The international community should shoulder its responsibilities and carry out in full the commitments it had made regarding the Palestinian people, in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

38. He felt that it was also important for the report to reflect the point of view of the refugees themselves in future; those views could be ascertained from the correspondence that UNRWA maintained with various categories of refugees.

39. The Zionist invasion of Lebanon had added to the hardships that the Palestinian refugees had been suffering for 34 years. The refugees were now in a more desperate situation than they had been at the very beginning of their tragedy. But it would never have been possible to expose the Palestinian people to the hardship inflicted upon them by the Zionist gangs without the support that the United States Government gave to the Zionist entity. The weapons - the cluster bombs in particular - that had been used to kill thousands of innocent Palestinians and Lebanese came from the United States, which also gave the Zionist entity political backing in international bodies. For example, the United States used its power of veto to block all resolutions condemning the Zionist entity.

40. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), speaking on a point of order, asked the Chairman to remind the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya that the country to which he was alluding was called Israel, and that it was incorrect to call it anything else. In the same way, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was not called the Qaddafi entity.

41. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that in political discussions they should refer to Member States by the names under which they were known in the United Nations.

42. Mr. ELHOFARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), continuing his statement, said that the Zionist entity with its 3.5 million inhabitants had, thanks to the aid provided by the United States Government, become the fourth largest military Power in the world, after the United States of America, the USSR and China.

43. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), interrupting the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, asked to speak on a point of order.

44. The CHAIRMAN asked the representative of Israel to allow the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to conclude his statement. He could make his comments at the end of the meeting, in exercise of his right of reply.

45. Mr. ELHOFARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), resuming his statement, said that as reported in The New York Times of 22 September 1982, a quarter of all United States foreign aid, or some 3 billion dollars per year, went to Israel; that came to \$3,500 to \$4,000 for each Israeli family of five, or more than the benefit paid to an out-of-work labourer in Detroit. That aid, which was increasing, allowed Israel to perpetrate its acts of aggression against the refugee camps. It was thus the duty of the United States, as all honest American citizens insisted, to set to work on resurrecting Lebanon and reconstructing the refugee camps; as Mr. Ball, former Under-Secretary of State of the United States, proposed in The New York Times of 25 August 1982, the United States should provide aid to Lebanon and deduct the sum involved from the assistance it gave each year to Israel.

46. It was sad to record that the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, a body which came into daily contact with the refugee drama, barely mentioned the effects of the Zionist invasion of Lebanon and the acts of genocide reported on in the media. It did not cite the high-handed, inhuman acts of the Zionist gangs on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, or the harassment to which the inhabitants of the occupied territories had been exposed. Moreover, the resistance by the people of the occupied territories, which had been the subject of a number of special meetings of the Security Council, had not been faithfully described in the report, which mentioned only a few incidents and regarded the resistance as mere hooliganism.

47. His country was convinced that the colonialist and imperialist nations that had provoked the tragedy of the Palestinian people should shoulder the responsibility for their acts and bear the costs of UNRWA. But their contributions to the Agency's budget were merely symbolic, or at any rate substantially lower than the aid they gave to Israel. His country, on the other hand, gave far more aid to the Palestinian refugees than UNRWA provided.

48. In conclusion, he stressed that any solution to the Palestinian problem that did not safeguard the rights of which the Palestinians had been deprived, or treated the Palestinians as mere refugees, would be doomed to failure and could only perpetuate the tension in the Middle East which was threatening international peace and security. The Palestinian people were fighting for the success of a just cause, and it was the duty of the international community to help them to return to their homeland and exercise their right to self-determination.

49. Mr. SALONEN (Finland) said that the tragic events of the year had demonstrated once again the necessity of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. That was also the only way to reach a solution to the economic, social and cultural problems which were being encountered by the nearly 2 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA.

(Mr. Salonen, Finland)

50. His Government remained convinced that the Agency, whose mandate was principally humanitarian, was a stabilizing factor in a highly volatile situation and that it must therefore continue to assist Palestine refugees until a negotiated peace in the Middle East had been achieved. The Commissioner-General's reports bore eloquent testimony to the extremely precarious operating conditions of the staff and to the difficult financial position of the Agency. The Government of Finland was deeply concerned at the situation created by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which had considerably disrupted the activities of UNRWA, and paid a tribute to the Agency for the speed with which it had restored most of its services to the refugees and made urgent arrangements for re-housing them despite the disappearance or detention of members of its staff. The international community should shoulder its responsibility for contributing in the fullest measure to those efforts. Because of the political unrest in the Middle East, UNRWA had been able to maintain its services without interruption in only one of its five fields of activity and the Commissioner-General had once again been obliged to make painful choices because of the financial constraints under which it was operating. Thus the programme of basic food rations would be phased out to maintain the education programme. It should be noted, however, that those refugees who genuinely needed assistance would continue to receive more than the basic ration in addition to other forms of help.

51. The financial position of UNRWA remained unsolved. His delegation was grateful to the Commissioner-General for his frankness in presenting it and for courageously making the necessary choices. The creation of the minimal financial conditions for UNRWA's continued humanitarian activities was the common task of all States Members of the United Nations. The Government of Finland was ready to do its share.

52. Mr. KERGIN (Canada) said that the recent tragic events in Lebanon had made it even more urgent to discuss the activities of the Agency. Canada deplored the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the resulting death and destruction. It condemned the recent barbaric massacre of Palestine refugees.

53. Despite the concern aroused by those events, polemics must be avoided since they would neither ease the plight of the refugees nor serve the cause of peace. The Committee should instead concentrate on ensuring the efficient operation of the Agency in a situation vastly complicated by the turmoil and destruction caused by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The supply of emergency relief and medicines and the task of reconstructing UNRWA facilities required the moral and financial support of the whole international community. Canada would continue to shoulder its share of that burden.

54. His delegation had read with concern that UNRWA facilities had been used for military purposes, which were inconsistent with the Agency's mandate. It was encouraging to note that the Commissioner-General had taken the appropriate disciplinary action to prevent further such occurrences.

(Mr. Kergin, Canada)

55. With regard to the financing of the Agency, his delegation, while understanding the budgetary difficulties imposed on UNRWA, noted that each year deficits appeared to fade away even though funds said to be indispensable had not been provided. Such a state of affairs, if it persisted, would seriously affect the credibility of UNRWA when soliciting voluntary funds.

56. The work of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA and the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) demonstrated that sound accounting and reporting practices were prerequisites to any agency's credibility, both in the raising of capital and in the delivery of programmes. His delegation therefore urged the Agency, with the assistance of JIU, to devise a more accurate annual financial forecast.

57. The necessity of stabilizing UNRWA's financial position was clear and urgent. In that connection, Canada, as it had stated in the Committee the preceding year, was prepared to work with other interested parties to search for long-term solutions to UNRWA's financial problems. It continued to believe, however, that any solution must respect the principle of voluntary funding.

58. In addition to its regular contribution, Canada had contributed a further \$Can 950,000 in July 1982 in response to the special appeal launched by the Commissioner-General. It urged all countries to contribute generously to the expenses of the Agency which had increased significantly after the events in Lebanon. Canada was confident that UNRWA, in managing its programmes effectively, would endeavour to keep operating costs to a minimum.

59. The Agency was still the principal source of assistance to the Palestine refugees. The international community must therefore endeavour to relieve their misery pending a peaceful settlement based on respect for the security, legitimate rights and aspirations of all parties concerned in the Middle East.

60. Mr. AKIN (Turkey) expressed the gratitude of his delegation for the praiseworthy efforts of the Commissioner-General and his staff in the service of the Palestine refugees.

61. The Agency was again faced with a large deficit which could lead to curtailment of its essential operations. His delegation was very much concerned at the financial situation of the Agency; it was evident that, unless significant new contributions were made or existing contributions increased, the functions of the Agency, especially its educational programmes, would be affected. The Turkish Government, despite the economic hardships it was encountering, had contributed some \$20,000 to the Agency the preceding year and hoped to do the same in 1982. Modest though it was, that contribution reflected the importance attached by the Government to the maintenance of the Agency's activities.

(Mr. Akin, Turkey)

62. His Government was convinced that the Agency was an invaluable instrument for the provision of humanitarian aid to Palestine refugees in the form of education, relief and health care. Those activities must be maintained until the question of Palestine was resolved on a just and lasting basis. Any further reduction in the Agency's services, particularly in the education programmes, would create additional problems and exacerbate the deplorable living conditions of the Palestine refugees. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon had made the essential functions of the Agency even more complex and difficult, and that must be taken into account when assessing the performance and needs of UNRWA. The financing of the Agency's services was the responsibility of the international community as a whole. Turkey therefore urged all States, especially those in a financially more favourable situation, irrespective of their geographical location and their political attitude towards the question of Palestine and the Middle East issue, to provide the Agency with the funds required to enable it to fulfil its undertakings. More stable financing for the Agency would also give its staff a greater sense of security and continuity.

63. He reaffirmed his country's view that no comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East question could be found until the question of Palestine was settled. The latter in turn could not be resolved until the Palestinian people exercised in full their right of self-determination and their right to establish an independent State in their own territory. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the people of Palestine, was an essential condition for a comprehensive settlement of the Palestine question. The question of the Palestinian refugees was primarily political in nature and the international community's responsibility towards the Palestinian Arab people did not end with the provision of humanitarian assistance. The delegation of Turkey, whose Permanent Representative was Chairman of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, was ready to assist the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA in exploring all possible means of enabling the Agency to carry out the task entrusted to it.

64. Mr. ABOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the point of order raised by the representative of the Zionist entity, who had called upon delegations to respect the official designation of his country as a State Member of the United Nations. There was no provision to that effect in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and delegations were perfectly free to use whatever words they wished in their statements.

65. The tragic situation of the Palestinian refugees, resulting from acts of aggression committed by the Zionist entity, had drawn crocodile tears from its representative, who had yet again made a mockery of the truth in trying to give the impression that his country was concerned about the well-being of the Palestinian refugees.

(Mr. Abouchaer, Syrian Arab
Republic)

66. In lamenting the fact that the UNRWA Training Centre at Sibliin (south Lebanon) had been used by the PLO as a military training centre, the representative of the Zionist entity had been careful not to mention that the Zionist authorities had been informed of the disappearance of valuable equipment from the workshops of the Centre, for which his own country's Defence Force was responsible (document A/37/479, para. 59). The Zionist forces had not only occupied other UNRWA centres and installations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in flagrant violation of the Agency's status, but had also destroyed UNRWA installations in south Lebanon.

67. As for the humanitarian aid that the occupying authorities dispensed to the refugees after expelling them from their homeland and committing acts of genocide in the refugee camps, it was reminiscent of the deceptively given aid by the wolf to the lamb. What had become of the humanitarian spirit when the refugee camps were bombarded with a violence rarely witnessed in history?

68. The Zionist entity, which survived only because of the colossal subsidies received from the United States of America, was trying to demonstrate that occupation was beneficial to the refugees. If it really cared about their welfare, it should start by implementing the resolutions of the United Nations concerning the restoration of their legitimate rights and, first and foremost, their right of return and their right to set up an independent State in Palestine.

69. Mr. LEVIN (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that if the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was not going to respect Israel's official designation, the delegation of Israel would also use various designations for the Arab States, for the practice adopted by the Arab States should by no means be unilateral. Perhaps that representative would prefer to be dubbed the representative of the Alaouite minority. In their own interests, the Arab delegations should avoid such childish behaviour, at any rate in the United Nations. As far as the refugee camps were concerned, he reminded the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who was concerned about the fate of the Palestinians, that the Syrian occupation forces in one sovereign State, Lebanon, had never prevented terrorist activities and in recent years had even backed them. The representative of the country which was responsible for more than 100,000 dead and more than 300,000 wounded and which had left more than a million people homeless during years of its enforced presence in Lebanon should be more careful about accusing other States.

70. Anyone who had visited the refugee camps in the areas under Israel's control, either a few years earlier or recently, could confirm without bias that the living conditions there were very different from those in any other camp.

71. Mr. ELHOFARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed surprise that no delegation had interrupted the representative of the Zionist entity, whose statements were a veritable tissue of lies. That representative should have had the decency to allow him (Mr. Elhofari) to finish his statement, especially since it was perfectly accurate to call the country

(Mr. Elhofari, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

concerned "the Zionist entity", as it had not been recognized by all States and a large number of States had severed their relations with the régime of the country following the barbarous acts committed against Palestinian refugees. A few days earlier 49 States had expressed reservations about the credentials of the Israeli delegation. The General Assembly had adopted a resolution which equated Zionism with racism, and at the resumed seventh emergency special session in August 1982, had adopted a resolution requiring Israel to implement the provisions of earlier Assembly resolutions concerning the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. As the result of a plot hatched by certain forces against Palestine, the Zionist entity had established itself in Palestine and Jews from all corners of the earth had converged on it. The Arab States would continue to call that State "the Zionist entity" until the Palestinians had regained their rights.

72. Mr. ABOUCHAER (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, in exercising his right of reply, the representative of Israel, had tried to divert attention from the crimes perpetrated by the invasion forces against the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories. The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic was not going to be forced to use the official name of an artificial State which was not recognized by all the States Members of the Organization. The list of epithets which were applicable to that State was endless and its Government was that of the Ashkenazi minority.

73. Mr. LEVIN (Israel) reminded the representative of the Alaouite minority that Israel had a majority of Sephardic Jews who had been expelled from Arab countries and who occupied an excellent position in Israeli society. In his surprise at being interrupted, the representative of the Qaddhafi entity had actually pronounced the very word which so upset him, namely "Israel". The attempt made by certain Arab countries a few days earlier had been a miserable failure. That proved that Israel had its place among the Member States and, as in the case of the Arab Member States, its official designation was the one under which it had been admitted to the Organization. Regarding aid to Palestinian refugees, it was enough to give the following figures: the total amount contributed to UNRWA (from 1950 to 31 December 1981) by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, one of the richest Arab countries owing to its oil resources, had been barely \$15 million and the total contribution of the Syrian Arab Republic had been \$3 million, while UNRWA's total budget for that period had amounted to approximately \$2 billion.

74. Mr. ELHOFARI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), replying to the representative of the Zionist entity, said that he had used the word "Israel" only in quoting articles from The New York Times. His country's contributions to UNRWA were mere token contributions, most of the funds for the Palestinian people being paid direct to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.