



United Nations

**Report of the Commissioner-
General of the United Nations
Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the
Near East**

Programme budget 2024–2025

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**Report of the Commissioner-General of the
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Introduction to the budget for the biennium 2024–2025

A. Overall orientation

1. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established within the United Nations system as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly by the Assembly in its resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949. Since starting operations, UNRWA has adapted and enhanced its programmes to meet the increasingly complex needs of Palestine refugees and to provide them with a measure of protection and stability amid chronic instability in the region. The Agency is the main provider of basic services – education, health and relief and social services – for the benefit of 5.9 million¹ registered Palestine refugees across Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.²

2. The UNRWA Commissioner-General reports directly to the General Assembly. The Commissioner-General receives advice and support regarding Agency programming from an advisory commission, comprising the major donors and host countries of UNRWA.

3. The mission of UNRWA is to help Palestine refugees achieve their full human development potential under the difficult circumstances in which they live. In line with this mission, and as defined in the Agency's strategic plan for the period 2023–2028,³ UNRWA works towards the following objectives: (a) Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law; (b) Palestine refugees lead healthy lives; (c) Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education; (d) Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities; (e) the most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance; (f) Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation; and (g) the mandate of UNRWA is implemented effectively and responsibly.

4. To realize these objectives, all of which are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Agency will maintain and modernize its protection, education, health, relief, microfinance and infrastructure and camp improvement services.

5. UNRWA also provides emergency assistance to almost 2 million Palestine refugees in distress as a result of the blockade of Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank, the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the economic collapse in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁴ The Agency also maintains services to persons displaced as a result of the 1967 and subsequent hostilities in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 2252 (ES-V), 73/93 and 74/84.

6. During 2024 and 2025, UNRWA will expand and invest in its renewed and enhanced protection function, increase the environmental sustainability of its operations and prioritize the modernization of its services.

¹ In addition to 750,000 other registered persons. A definition of “other registered persons” can be found on the UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard (www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard).

² All further references to the West Bank in the present document are to be read as including East Jerusalem.

³ See www.unrwa.org/resources/about-unrwa/strategic-plan-2023-28.

⁴ The caseload pertains to emergency food and/or cash assistance extended in 2022. See UNRWA Statistics Bulletin (www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/unrwa-statistics-bulletin).

B. Context

7. The Middle East is contending with multiple challenges, rooted in prolonged social and political instability and amplified by global economic, environmental and health shocks. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has wiped out years of human development gains while the war in Ukraine has precipitated major increases in fuel, food and basic living costs, placing a further strain on governments already struggling to meet the needs of young and growing populations.

8. While a peaceful, comprehensive and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that includes a just and lasting resolution of the plight of Palestine refugees seems unlikely during the coming biennium, the United Nations will remain actively engaged with all relevant actors in an effort to bring about peace.

9. During the current biennium, the Agency's funding situation remained critical as demand for UNRWA services and rising costs again outpaced contributions. In 2022, critical operations were sustained only through additional donor support, Central Emergency Response Fund loans and the deferral of payments to suppliers.

C. Planning assumptions

10. Funding for Agency operations is expected to remain tightly constrained. UNRWA has reached the limits of its use of cost controls, austerity measures and debt to manage the chronic underfunding of its programme budget.

11. The current cycle of complex emergencies is expected to continue. With a growing number of refugees living in poverty and in the absence of a solution to their plight, demand for UNRWA core services and emergency assistance will persist.

12. It is expected that the State of Palestine will continue efforts to establish itself as a self-reliant State. It is assumed, however, that its resilience will remain tested by the blockade of Gaza, Israeli occupation, the withholding of tax revenue by the Government of Israel and intra-Palestinian political division. As such, many Palestine refugees will remain reliant on UNRWA.

13. Security conditions in Gaza are expected to remain volatile. The blockade, illegal under international law, and repeated cycles of violence will continue, and its inhabitants will suffer under one of the weakest economies in the world, characterized by high unemployment rates and natural resource concerns.

14. The West Bank is expected to remain under occupation. Israeli military operations and security incidents, including settler violence, are expected to continue. The demolition of homes, forced evictions, internal displacement of Palestinians and the expansion and establishment of settlements, possibly through annexation of significant parts of the West Bank, are expected to increase protection challenges faced by Palestine refugees. High rates of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity are also likely to persist.

15. In the Syrian Arab Republic, despite conflict subsiding in parts of the country, fighting is expected to continue and the threat from explosive remnants of war and widespread destruction of infrastructure is likely to have devastating consequences for Palestine refugees. In the north-western Syrian Arab Republic, Palestine refugees will additionally remain affected by the February 2023 earthquakes. These hardships are expected to be amplified under deteriorating economic conditions.

16. The socioeconomic crisis in Lebanon is expected to continue. As a result, Palestine refugees, already among the most vulnerable and marginalized in the country, will continue to endure high rates of poverty, unemployment and difficulty in accessing basic commodities and services, which may heighten the risk of unrest in Palestine refugee camps, also having an impact on UNRWA staff and installations.

17. Jordan will continue to host millions of refugees from Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. While the country is expected to enjoy strong and steady levels of peace and security, economic growth may be constrained by a high unemployment rate.

18. The lingering consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to exacerbate the human development crisis faced by Palestine refugees. Levels of food insecurity, poverty and unemployment are projected to remain high. Despite Palestine refugees having strong human capital because of the education and health structures provided by the Agency and host authorities, the majority do not have access to the full range of assets required to achieve sustainable livelihoods.

19. Palestine refugees are likely to face continuing protection threats from armed conflict, violence and civil unrest. The vulnerability of women, children and persons with disabilities to violence and abuse is also expected to increase.

D. Budget structure

20. UNRWA funding portals, including for the programme budget, projects and emergency appeals, are aligned with the strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 and the Agency's unified framework structure.

21. In compliance with regulation 9.2 of the Financial Regulations of UNRWA, the budget for the biennium is presented on a modified cash basis. For internal management purposes, the annual operational budget is also structured to reflect accrual budgeting.

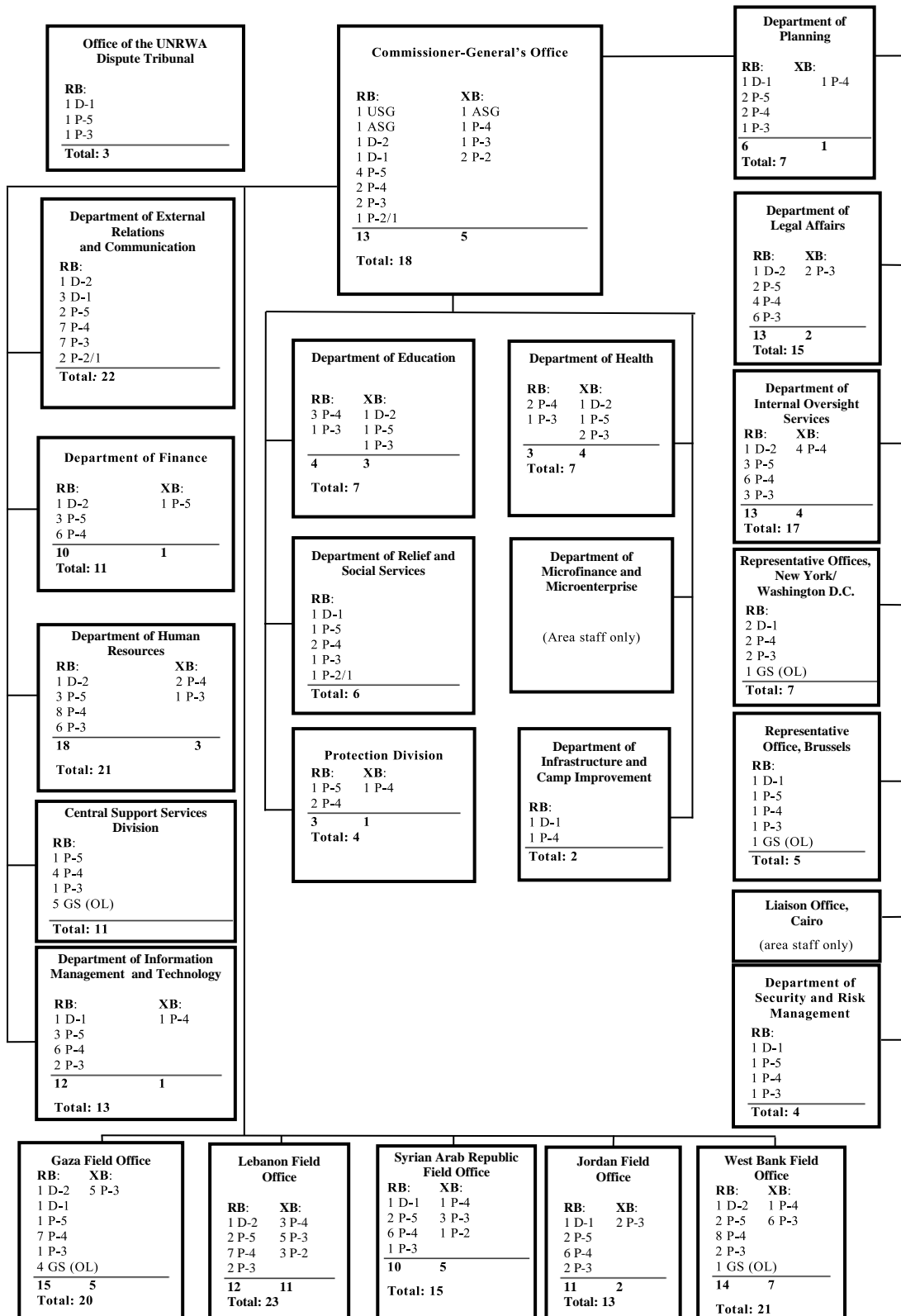
22. In its resolution [3331 B \(XXIX\)](#) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly decided that, with effect from 1 January 1975, the salaries of international staff in the service of UNRWA which would otherwise have been charged to voluntary contributions should be financed by the United Nations regular budget for the duration of the Agency's mandate (see figure I).

23. In its resolution [77/122](#) of 12 December 2022, the General Assembly decided to consider a gradual increase in the regular budget allocation to UNRWA that would, in addition to covering international staff requirements, be utilizable to support operational costs related to executive and administrative management functions of the Agency.

24. Consistent with the strategic plan for the period 2023–2028, a growth rate of 3.8 per cent will be assumed for planning purposes. This will be applied according to the different needs and requirements of the field offices and departments, rather than across the board, and does not preclude further adjustments – upwards or downwards – at or subsequent to the approval stage. The 3.8 per cent growth rate is designed to allow for the continuation of services and operations at current levels, with space for increases in different areas, such as the following: annual step increments; expected increases due to salary surveys; severance cash payouts; the regularization of daily paid contracts; changes to the group medical insurance policy; programmatic norms identified in the strategic plan, including updated norms related to determining class sizes and assigning teachers to them (teaching and non-teaching staff), health (medical and paramedical staff) and relief and social services staffing (social workers); hospitalization and social safety net programme norms; increases in prices for medical supplies; costs associated with software licences; running costs linked to the modernization of the registration system; and other initial costs related to the kick-off assessment of the new enterprise resource planning system.

25. The budget for the biennium reflects total requirements for: (a) the programme budget, inclusive of 3.8 per cent natural growth; (b) prioritized projects; and (c) in-kind donations. Due to the fluid nature of humanitarian crises, emergency appeal budgets are not part of that document.

Figure I
Organizational chart



Abbreviations: ASG, Assistant Secretary-General; GS (OL), General Service (Other level); RB, regular budget; USG, Under-Secretary-General; XB, extrabudgetary.

Table 1
Budget by objective, 2024–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Objective	2024					2025					2024–2025				
	Programme budget			Projects	Total	Programme budget			Projects	Total	Programme budget			Projects	Total
	Cash	In kind	Total			Cash	In kind	Total			Cash	In kind	Total		
Objective 1: Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	5 788	–	5 788	7 862	13 650	5 858	–	5 858	8 411	14 269	11 646	–	11 646	16 274	27 920
Objective 2: Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	143 170	6 275	149 445	6 898	156 344	150 323	6 651	156 975	5 400	162 375	293 493	12 926	306 420	12 298	318 718
Objective 3: Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	476 297	3 853	480 150	14 068	494 218	496 572	4 084	500 656	5 483	506 139	972 870	7 937	980 807	19 550	1 000 357
Objective 4: Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	22 007	–	22 007	2 125	24 132	22 893	–	22 893	2 075	24 968	44 900	–	44 900	4 200	49 100
Objective 5: the most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance	52 493	–	52 493	3 437	55 930	54 195	–	54 195	–	54 195	106 688	–	106 688	3 437	110 125
Objective 6: Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	26 218	–	26 218	127 666	153 884	27 096	–	27 096	60 214	87 311	53 314	–	53 314	187 880	241 194
Objective 7: the Agency’s mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	154 250	359	154 609	94 495	249 103	156 734	380	157 114	65 628	222 743	310 984	739	311 723	160 123	471 846
Total requirements	880 224	10 487	890 711	256 552	1 147 262	913 672	11 116	924 787	147 211	1 071 999	1 793 896	21 602	1 815 498	403 763	2 219 261

Table 2
Budget by programme, 2024–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Programme	2024					2025					2024–2025				
	Programme budget			Project	Total	Programme budget			Project	Total	Programme budget			Project	Total
	Cash	In-kind	Total			Cash	In-kind	Total			Cash	In-kind	Total		
Education	506 318	3 853	510 171	16 193	526 364	527 577	4 084	531 661	7 558	539 219	1 033 895	7 937	1 041 832	23 750	1 065 583
Health	147 363	6 592	153 955	9 440	163 395	154 614	6 988	161 601	5 600	167 201	301 976	13 580	315 556	15 040	330 596
Relief and social services	57 823	–	57 823	7 645	65 468	60 102	–	60 102	4 000	64 102	117 925	–	117 925	11 645	129 570
Infrastructure and camp improvement	35 189	30	35 218	181 604	216 822	35 609	32	35 641	87 245	122 886	70 798	62	70 859	268 849	339 708
Protection	4 545	–	4 545	7 862	12 408	4 656	–	4 656	8 411	13 068	9 202	–	9 202	16 274	25 475
Executive direction	41 036	–	41 036	8 748	49 784	41 858	–	41 858	11 750	53 608	82 894	–	82 894	20 498	103 392
Support departments	87 950	12	87 962	25 060	113 022	89 256	12	89 268	22 647	111 916	177 206	24	177 230	47 707	224 937
Total requirements	880 224	10 487	890 711	256 552	1 147 262	913 672	11 116	924 787	147 211	1 071 999	1 793 896	21 602	1 815 498	403 763	2 219 261

Table 3
Programme budget requirements by location

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Location</i>	<i>2022 expenditure</i>	<i>2023 budget</i>	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Gaza	300 846	332 194	349 194	364 159
Lebanon	108 174	125 309	128 695	133 352
Syrian Arab Republic	46 634	53 708	55 518	57 099
Jordan	139 602	148 151	153 079	159 658
West Bank	118 492	125 735	129 578	133 315
Headquarters	59 455	62 903	64 160	66 089
Total resource requirements	773 203	848 000	880 224	913 672

Table 4
Programme budget requirements by resources, 2022–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Resources</i>	<i>2022 expenditure</i>	<i>2023 budget</i>	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Staff costs				
International staff	34 953	43 315	43 315	44 317
Area staff	606 495	649 655	677 294	705 214
Subtotal, staff costs	641 448	692 970	720 608	749 532
Operational costs				
Supplies	35 901	35 752	38 091	40 311
Utilities	5 930	5 840	6 013	6 083
Maintenance of premises	2 540	7 919	8 397	8 551
Rental of premises	2 609	2 837	3 003	3 058
Equipment	6 623	5 293	5 379	5 426
Training	368	402	403	405
Travel	1 191	1 424	1 427	1 436
Administrative support services	3 836	4 124	4 167	4 197
Consultancy services	2 736	4 146	4 163	4 193
Hospital services	29 703	34 195	34 393	35 200
Miscellaneous services	10 152	13 497	14 907	15 086
Subsidies to hardship cases	29 736	39 428	39 153	40 072
Third-party subsidies	2 351	2 398	2 408	2 423
Other subsidies	246	264	218	223
Cost recovery	(2 167)	(2 489)	(2 507)	(2 523)
Subtotal, operational costs	131 755	155 030	159 616	164 140
Total requirements	773 203	848 000	880 224	913 672

Table 5
Project budget by objective and location, 2024–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Gaza</i>	<i>Lebanon</i>	<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>West Bank</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Total</i>
Objective 1: Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	–	–	–	1 358	–	14 916	16 274
Objective 2: Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	–	10 800	–	–	–	1 498	12 298
Objective 3: Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	–	–	–	–	–	19 550	19 550
Objective 4: Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	–	–	–	4 200	–	–	4 200
Objective 5: The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance	–	–	–	–	–	3 437	3 437
Objective 6: Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	61 143	41 500	22 000	26 694	34 000	2 543	187 880
Objective 7: the Agency's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	57 717	6 000	4 952	–	13 000	78 454	160 123
Total	118 860	58 300	26 952	32 252	47 000	120 399	403 763

E. Human resources

26. In compliance with resolution [3331 B \(XXIX\)](#), international staff posts are funded by the United Nations regular budget. Through the 2022 and 2023 budget process, an additional 217 posts were approved to be funded through the regular budget. The number of approved posts will remain the same in 2024 (see table 6).

27. As at 30 June 2023, 55 international staff posts were funded from extrabudgetary resources, including: (a) two posts funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); (b) two posts funded by the World Health Organization (WHO); and (c) one post funded by the Provident Fund.

Table 6
International staffing, 2024–2025

<i>Grade</i>	<i>United Nations regular budget</i>	<i>Extrabudgetary</i>
Professional and higher		
Under-Secretary-General	1	–
Assistant Secretary-General	1	1
D-2	9	2
D-1	16	–
P-5	38	3
P-4	92	15
P-3	44	28
P-2/P-1	4	6
Subtotal	205	55
General service	12	–
Subtotal	12	–
Total	217	55

Table 7
Approved workforce as at 1 January 2023 by objective and location

	<i>Gaza</i>	<i>Lebanon</i>	<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>West Bank</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Total</i>
Objective 1 (protection)	8	9	6	5	18	1	47
Objective 2 (health)	1 118	320	336	659	672	–	3 105
Objective 3 (basic education)	10 717	1 733	2 078	4 784	2 220	–	21 532
Objective 4 (livelihoods)	191	114	104	245	186	8	848
Objective 5 (social assistance)	155	84	70	91	135	–	535
Objective 6 (shelter, water and sanitation)	276	192	85	201	193	3	950
Objective 7 (management)	799	429	332	445	550	454	3 009
Total	13 264	2 881	3 011	6 430	3 974	466	30 026

Table 8
Approved workforce as at 1 January 2023 by programme and location

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Gaza</i>	<i>Lebanon</i>	<i>Syrian Arab Republic</i>	<i>Jordan</i>	<i>West Bank</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>	<i>Total</i>
Education	10 944	1 884	2 214	5 093	2 427	40	22 602
Health	1 135	338	349	669	695	11	3 197
Relief and social services	194	108	85	102	160	8	657
Infrastructure and camp improvement	337	214	99	216	215	48	1 129
Protection	–	7	5	–	–	1	13
Executive direction	47	46	25	64	75	81	338
Support departments	607	284	234	286	402	277	2 090
Total	13 264	2 881	3 011	6 430	3 974	466	30 026

F. Update on the financial situation

28. Some 91 per cent of UNRWA core funding is provided through voluntary contributions. The remainder is received from the United Nations regular budget (6 per cent) and indirect support costs and interest earned (3 per cent). This funding model has led to repeated liquidity crises, an ongoing struggle to maintain service delivery standards, the degradation of Agency installations, an increased vacancy rate and reliance on short-term contracts to fulfil core functions.

29. In 2022, resource mobilization efforts yielded a total pledged amount of \$699 million for the programme budget against planned expenditure of \$817 million. The UNRWA programme budget received income from the United Nations regular budget (\$35 million) and in-kind contributions (\$17 million), as well as from other sources, such as indirect support costs, the receipt of pledges made in previous years, foreign exchange gains, value-added tax reimbursements and the repayment of advances.

30. Through its 2022 emergency appeal for the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Jordan, UNRWA sought \$365 million, with pledges covering 40.3 per cent (\$147.2 million) of funding needs. In the occupied Palestinian territory, the Agency appealed for \$406.2 million, and pledges reached 40.7 per cent (\$165.2 million). Some \$106.9 million was also pledged for projects, corresponding to 55.4 per cent of funding needs (\$193 million).

31. The funding situation of UNRWA, which has deteriorated over the past several years, remained critical in 2022. While total funding increased compared with previous years, it remained at the level of 2013, despite rising demand for Agency services and higher costs. UNRWA began 2022 with \$62 million in liabilities carried forward from 2021 and initially operated on the basis of a 90 per cent allocation of the approved programme budget. Expenditure was controlled through strict vacancy management, reductions in non-staff expenditure and the deferral of non-critical payments to suppliers. Critical operations were maintained only through Central Emergency Response Fund loans. The Agency carried forward \$75 million in liabilities to 2023.

32. UNRWA total programme budget requirements for 2023 are \$848 million and, as at the end of June 2023, some \$200 million was still required to sustain services and pay salaries beyond September with no carry-forward of liabilities to 2024 (see table 9).

33. The project budget for 2023 is estimated at \$250 million, with forecast income of \$108 million.

Table 9

Status of the Agency's programme and project budgets, 2023

(Millions of United States dollars)

	<i>Programme budget</i>	<i>Project budget</i>
Income forecast	722	108
Budget requirements	848	250
Budget gap^a	(126)	(142)

^a 2023 budget gap excludes \$75 million in liabilities carried forward from 2022.

G. Funding projection for 2024–2025

34. Current income and expenditure projections, shown in table 10, indicate a budget gap for the programme cash budget of \$67 million and \$63 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively, resulting from projected income of \$813 million and \$851 million (excluding in-kind donations), compared with planned expenditure of \$880 million and \$914 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively.

Table 10

Expected status of the Agency's programme cash budget, 2024–2025

(Millions of United States dollars)

	2024	2025
Projected income	813	851
Programme budget	880	914
Budget gap	(67)	(63)

35. Programme budget income forecasts, by donor, for 2024 and 2025 appear in table 11.

Table 11

Projected income for the programme budget by donor, 2024–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Donor	2024	2025
United States of America	228 630	235 489
European Union	103 534	106 640
Germany	38 484	39 639
Sweden	58 455	60 209
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	14 779	15 223
Saudi Arabia	27 810	28 644
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	21 302	21 941
Switzerland	24 534	25 270
Canada	19 603	20 192
France	24 884	25 631
Denmark	16 222	16 708
Norway	23 225	23 922
Japan	4 475	4 610
Türkiye	10 300	10 609
Belgium (including Flanders)	8 422	8 675
Italy	7 526	7 752
Qatar	10 815	11 139
Spain (including regional governments)	8 684	8 945
Australia	14 212	14 638
Kuwait (including the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development)	12 360	12 731

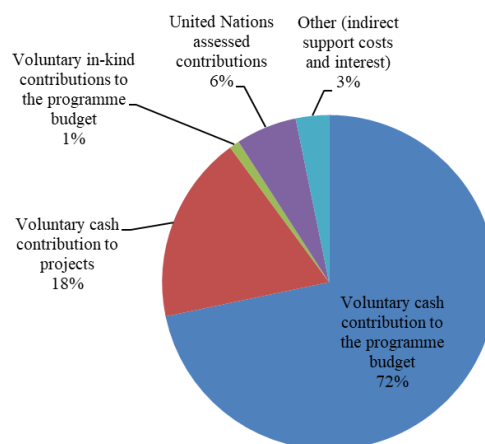
<i>Donor</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>
Other donor income	41 733	42 985
In kind	10 487	11 116
Subtotal	730 478	752 707
United Nations assessed	57 701	73 298
Indirect support costs	35 000	35 000
Interest	700	700
Total	823 879	861 704

36. Figure II shows the expected sources of funding in support of the Agency's total budget estimates for 2024 and 2025, including through the programme budget, projects and in-kind contributions.

Figure II
Funding sources, 2024–2025

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Voluntary cash contribution to the programme budget	1 591 497
Voluntary cash contribution to projects	403 763
Voluntary in-kind contributions to the programme budget	21 602
United Nations regular budget	130 999
Other	71 400
Total	2 219 261



37. The funding from the United Nations regular budget for 217 international posts and operational costs accounts for 6 per cent of the annual budget, while 3 per cent of forecast income is derived from: (a) interest and miscellaneous income, including indirect support costs of \$71.4 million annually; and (b) funding of two international and four area posts by UNESCO and two international and two area posts by WHO.

38. Voluntary contributions will be requested to cover approximately 91 per cent of the budget, of which 72 per cent will be requested as cash contributions to the programme budget, 18 per cent as cash contributions to projects and 1 per cent as in-kind contributions.

39. The unpredictability and unsustainability of the Agency's funding, combined with a lack of working capital, have resulted in an inability to plan interventions with certainty. Because UNRWA provides public-like services, it has limited ability to rapidly adjust its programming to available resources. Furthermore, most costs are fixed staff costs. Any workforce changes, through applying staffing norms and standards, retraining, redeployment, termination or separation, require additional funding.

Chapter II

Objective 1: Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law

A. Current operations

40. For UNRWA, protection is about putting Palestine refugees at the centre of its work, using its mandate, resources and authority to directly support Palestine refugees and encourage others responsible for protection to play their part. The Agency applies a holistic approach to protection, in line with its 2021 protection strategic framework, which defines three complementary approaches of protection mainstreaming, programming and advocacy. UNRWA efforts to protect Palestine refugee rights are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships).

41. The Agency mainstreams protection throughout its service delivery by incorporating protection principles into programming and building staff capacity, ensuring that the rights of Palestine refugees are advanced and the principle of do no harm is respected.

42. Direct preventative and remedial services are extended to Palestine refugees at risk of or already experiencing protection threats. In this regard, the UNRWA network of 249 professional social workers offers systematic support to refugees affected by gender-based violence, violence against children, disability and social issues.

43. The Agency promotes the rights of Palestine refugees under international law through the monitoring and documentation of protection incidents, and by engaging in targeted interventions with duty bearers and other stakeholders on potential violations of international human rights, humanitarian and/or refugee law. UNRWA also contributes to United Nations international human rights mechanisms.

44. The Agency pursues gender mainstreaming at both the organizational culture and programmatic levels. UNRWA is committed to promoting the right to equality among the sexes and eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination, violence and exploitation and engages in advocacy with duty bearers to ensure the safety of women and girls.

45. The Agency also retains responsibility for registering Palestine refugees and others eligible for its services. Individual registration records are organized under family ledgers and constitute the backbone of the management of all UNRWA services.

B. Constraints and challenges

46. Across the region, Palestine refugees face a profound protection crisis due to: (a) the impact of conflict, occupation and violence in Gaza, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank; (b) movement limitations; (c) deepening inequality and exclusion due to prevailing socioeconomic conditions; (d) the continued use of force, evictions and demolitions in the West Bank; and (e) restrictions and infringements on the rights of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic and Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic residing in Jordan and Lebanon.

47. Many Palestine refugees are unable to live in dignity due to their precarious legal status, restricted access to civil documentation and lack of enjoyment of rights, including, in some instances, the rights to work and access to basic services.

48. The Agency's protection function remains constrained by its reliance on project funds, causing unstable staffing and hindering sustainable progress on strategic priorities.

C. Expected accomplishments

49. During the 2024–2025 period, UNRWA will continue to systematically mainstream protection issues across its operations. Through training and technical support, the Agency will ensure that: (a) all personnel understand who is at risk and the consequences associated with inaction; (b) all personnel have the capacity to design and deliver services that incorporate protection principles; and (c) UNRWA better collects, analyses and uses protection-related data. Biennial internal protection alignment reviews and quarterly integrated assessments of installations will gauge the efficacy of these efforts.

50. The Agency will expand its preventative and remedial protection services, including through engagement with Palestine refugees and support to community-based protection organizations. Social work interventions will also be enhanced through the capacity-building of social workers and the consolidation of referral mechanisms.

51. Advocacy for the respect of Palestine refugee rights under international law will continue through the monitoring and documentation of protection incidents, and regular engagement with duty bearers on potential violations of international human rights, humanitarian and/or refugee law. Engagement with the international human rights system will also be maintained.

52. In 2024, the Agency will launch an updated gender equality strategy to promote equality among the sexes and eliminate discrimination, violence and exploitation. The Agency will ensure that its services are equally accessible and responsive to the needs of women, men, girls and boys and other vulnerable groups, including disabled persons. A holistic range of gender programming will be maintained, including: (a) sexual, reproductive and maternal health services; (b) clinical care and targeted mental health and psychosocial support for survivors of gender-based violence; and (c) skills development and livelihood support for women and girls.

53. Furthermore, UNRWA will modernize its refugee registration information system through the introduction of a digital identity verification process and promotion of the e-UNRWA platform, launched in 2023. An e-archive project for the preservation and accessibility of family registration files will also be initiated.

54. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

- (a) Palestine refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity;
- (b) The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine refugees are met through preventative and remedial action;
- (c) Duty bearers respect, protect and fulfil the rights of Palestine refugees under international law;
- (d) Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality.

D. Financial resources

Table 12

Resource requirements for objective 1

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Palestine refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity	1 243	1 202
The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine refugees are met through preventative and remedial action	4 540	4 651
Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality	5	5
Total programme budget	5 788	5 858
Projects	7 862	8 411
Total	13 650	14 269

Chapter III

Objective 2: Palestine refugees lead healthy lives

A. Current operations

55. UNRWA plays a critical role in protecting and promoting the right to health for Palestine refugees. Since 1950, the Agency has provided universal, non-discriminatory access to primary health care to Palestine refugees in partnership with WHO, as well as targeted secondary and tertiary care. UNRWA support for Palestine refugee health is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality) and 17 (partnerships).

56. From 2011, the Agency progressively implemented reform on the basis of the family health team approach and the development of electronic medical records (e-health). Fundamental to the family health team approach is a patient focus, centred on holistic, lifelong care for the entire family, provided through integrated teams comprising doctors, nurses and auxiliary health staff.

57. The Agency also provides maternal health services, including family planning, preconception and antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care. In addition, services are provided to improve the health of Palestine refugee children, including assessments of newborn children, periodic physical examinations, immunization, growth monitoring and nutritional surveillance and supplements, oral health and referral for specialized care.

58. Since the 1990s, the disease burden affecting Palestine refugees has shifted to non-communicable diseases, leading the Agency to adopt a preventative strategy on the basis of screening those patients most at risk. Services provided to patients with non-communicable diseases include: (a) monitoring of their conditions; (b) foot care for diabetes mellitus patients; (c) dispensation of medication; and (d) hospital referrals.

59. Since 2016, mental health and psychosocial support has been extended to all Palestine refugee patients displaying need and targeted to at-risk groups, reflecting the difficult conditions in which they live. Patients with more severe mental health issues are referred to specialists.

60. In addition to primary health care, UNRWA provides hospitalization support to Palestine refugees through contracted services at discounted prices in governmental, private and non-governmental hospitals. The Agency's hospitalization policy focuses support on the most vulnerable.

B. Constraints and challenges

61. In recent years, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases has risen at an alarming rate due to an ageing population and sedentary lifestyles, to the point that such diseases are now the main cause of death among Palestine refugees. By the end of 2022, more than 305,000 patients with non-communicable diseases were registered with UNRWA health centres, representing approximately 15 per cent of total health-care users. This translates into higher costs for the Agency as patients require long-term management of their conditions.

62. An increasing number of Palestine refugees are also afflicted by mental health and psychosocial issues. Case numbers are particularly pronounced in communities affected by emergencies. As is the case for non-communicable diseases, treatment of mental health and psychosocial support cases often requires long-term support.

63. Funding constraints have affected the recruitment and training of health staff, support for hospitalization services and the maintenance of health centres. These constraints are set within the context of increasing service demands.

C. Expected accomplishments

64. During 2024 and 2025, UNRWA will continue to provide universally accessible primary health care and hospitalization support for those most in need.

65. Maternal health needs will be addressed through the systematic delivery of preconception, antenatal and postnatal care and family planning services. Furthermore, the Agency will maintain high-quality child health-care services.

66. Non-communicable diseases will be targeted through a three-pronged strategy, comprising disease surveillance, health promotion campaigns and other preventative activities, and cost-effective interventions for the management of such diseases.

67. Mental health and psychosocial support programming will be reinforced, in particular, for children, adolescents and survivors of gender-based violence, and with regard to suicide prevention. In addition, counsellors at UNRWA health centres will work more closely with Agency social workers and schools to ensure better-coordinated responses.

68. UNRWA will maintain its strong surveillance and response capacity to tackle communicable diseases, remaining engaged in infection prevention and control efforts. The Agency will also participate in immunization campaigns and maintain vaccine supplies.

69. With demand for hospitalization support increasing, the Agency's limited resources will be utilized to achieve the best value for money. Patients who require critical care but lack the resources to obtain it will be prioritized for support.

70. Furthermore, UNRWA will maintain health service quality. In this regard, e-health will be replaced with a new electronic medical records system from late 2024. Contingent on funding, health staffing norms, introduced in 2022, will also be implemented to ensure fully staffed family health teams, and health centres will continue to be upgraded.

71. The Agency will continue long-standing partnerships with WHO and host country ministries of health to improve its technical health capacity and access to primary health-care services for Palestine refugees.

72. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

- (a) Improved maternal and child health;
- (b) Improved control status of non-communicable diseases and mental health;
- (c) Improved control status of communicable diseases and infection prevention and control;
- (d) Improved access to quality health services.

D. Financial resources

Table 13

Resource requirements for objective 2

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Maternal and child health of Palestine refugees is improved	734	803
Improved control status of non-communicable diseases and mental health	617	680
Palestine refugees have improved access to quality and safe health services	141 819	148 841
Total programme budget	143 170	150 323
Projects	6 898	5 400
Total	150 069	155 723

Chapter IV

Objective 3: Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education

A. Current operations

73. UNRWA provides inclusive and quality education to Palestine refugees in line with four dimensions of quality: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and well-being and inclusion. As at the end of the 2022–23 academic year, the Agency was delivering basic education to over 540,000 children at 706 schools. The UNRWA education programme is the largest in the Agency, accounting for 44 per cent of total expenditure and 70 per cent of all staff in 2022. UNRWA efforts in support of the education of Palestine refugees are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education) and 17 (partnerships).

74. Quality education is central to the Agency's approach to learning. To that end, measures have been put in place to provide professional training for teachers, enrich curricula, encourage critical thinking and promote United Nations values. Academic progress is monitored through triennial Agency-wide assessment of learning outcome exams.

75. A commitment to inclusive education also runs through the Agency's educational system by ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to learn and are supported to reach their full potential. Teachers and counsellors are trained to identify and respond to student needs, with targeted interventions for students with specific physical, protection, psychosocial and/or academic needs.

76. UNRWA has also been a pioneer in programming related to education in emergencies, ensuring that Palestine refugee children can access quality education and learning opportunities in times of crisis, conflict and social unrest. The education in emergencies approach ensures: (a) a safe and secure learning environment; (b) parental, community and student engagement; and (c) quality teaching and learning, including through alternative methods in times of crisis. In this regard, in 2021 the Agency launched its digital learning platform, developed with Microsoft.

77. Underpinning the UNRWA educational system is evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making. To that end, the Agency employs an UNRWA-wide education management information system.

B. Constraints and challenges

78. Until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency consistently met or exceeded key targets for student retention and academic performance. The pandemic resulted in significant learning losses across all fields of operation. Assessment of learning outcome exams, held in October 2021, showed – consistent with global trends – a steep drop in the percentage of students meeting minimum proficiency levels in Arabic and mathematics compared with 2016 results. Dropout rates also increased following the return to in-person learning.

79. The psychosocial needs of students enrolled in Agency schools have increased due to COVID-19 and, in some fields, repeated cycles of conflict, occupation and unrest. In Gaza, for instance, almost 50 per cent of students enrolled in UNRWA schools suffer from trauma and require special attention.

80. Furthermore, Agency schools have suffered from underresourcing, increasing demographic pressure and, in some fields, conflict. Many school buildings are old, often dilapidated and not compliant with protection standards.

81. UNRWA has absorbed additional students without a corresponding increase in teacher numbers, resulting in ever-larger class sizes. Some 54 per cent of classes in Agency schools accommodate more than 40 students and half of all schools operate on a double-shift basis.

C. Expected accomplishments

82. The Agency will continue to deliver high-quality educational services, improve student learning and enhance well-being and inclusion, with an emphasis on addressing student psychosocial needs, closing the learning gap and reducing dropout rates.

83. UNRWA will endeavour to close the learning gap through: (a) the implementation of field-specific response plans that include catch-up classes and increased testing; and (b) analysis of learning losses to determine their immediate and deeper causes.

84. The Agency will continue to roll out its information and communications technology for education strategy, which will address the digital divide by facilitating access to the Internet and devices for learning and teaching, enhancing the digital learning platform and developing capacities related to learning, teaching and management in education technology.

85. The education management information system, class formation and other information systems will remain central to UNRWA forecasting of educational needs. On the basis of a 2022 assessment, the Agency will improve the use of the education management information system by education staff. In addition, the class formation process – a key cost driver – will be reviewed.

86. UNRWA will remain committed to student well-being and inclusion. Targeted actions to decrease dropout rates will be taken and inclusive education will be furthered through the realization of the Agency's school health strategy, efforts to address violence in schools and strengthened psychosocial support.

87. UNRWA will preserve educational services in extremely challenging environments. Drawing lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency will enhance its education in emergencies programme with new approaches developed and tested during the pandemic.

88. UNRWA will maintain existing partnerships with UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Right to Play, the World Bank, Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education. The Agency's educational expert advisory group will also continue to provide strategic guidance to the objective.

89. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

(a) Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills are improved;

(b) Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive, with their well-being ensured.

D. Financial resources

Table 14
Resource requirements for objective 3

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills are improved	472 858	493 160
Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive, with their well-being ensured	3 439	3 412
Total programme budget	476 297	496 572
Projects	14 068	5 483
Total	490 365	502 055

Chapter V

Objective 4: Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities

A. Current operations

90. UNRWA contributes to livelihood opportunities for Palestine refugees through direct programmatic interventions, employing Palestine refugees in its own operations, and advocacy with host governments and economic actors to promote access by Palestine refugees to employment. Agency efforts in support of livelihood opportunities are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 17 (partnerships).

91. Through its technical and vocational education and training programme, UNRWA provides Palestine refugee youth with the skills and knowledge needed to find work. The Agency's eight technical and vocational education and training centres provide one and two-year trade courses, two-year semi-professional courses, and short-term courses. In addition, UNRWA runs two teacher training faculties in the West Bank and Jordan.

92. The Agency also offers microfinance services in all fields of operation except Lebanon. Loans are extended to households, entrepreneurs and small-business owners which create and sustain jobs, reduce poverty, empower women and youth and provide income generating and asset-building opportunities.

93. UNRWA infrastructure and camp improvement works contribute to demand for construction materials while generating employment. In 2022, camp improvement works were valued at \$42 million and created 2,074 full-time equivalent positions.⁵

94. UNRWA implements specific livelihood initiatives in Gaza to address the economic challenges there. The Agency's job creation programme extends short-term employment to Palestine refugees and the UNRWA Information Technology Service Centre employs more than 100 highly skilled staff to work on projects for a range of United Nations entities via a partnership with the United Nations International Computing Centre.

95. In addition to these programmatic interventions, UNRWA is one of the largest employers of Palestine refugees in the Near East. Providing employment with the Agency is not an objective in and of itself; however, the salaries paid by the Agency, especially to the approximately 30,000 full-time area staff members, represent an injection of income into refugee communities.

B. Constraints and challenges

96. Although Palestine refugees have strong human capital as a result of the educational and health structures provided by UNRWA and host authorities, the majority do not have access to the full range of assets – social, natural, physical and financial – required for sustainable livelihoods.

97. Employment conditions remain extremely difficult. Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have been beset by deep and protracted economic crises, with Palestine refugees in both places facing widespread unemployment. In Gaza, the level of joblessness remains among the highest in the world.

98. Across the Agency's fields of operation, structural barriers inhibit the integration of Palestine refugees into labour markets. In Lebanon, Palestine refugees remain legally barred from several syndicated professions and, in Jordan, access to

⁵ Full-time equivalent is defined as the total hours worked by all employed persons divided by the average number of hours actually worked in full-time jobs.

the labour market is restricted for ex-Gazans and Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. In line with trends across the region, female labour force participation is particularly low.

C. Expected accomplishments

99. UNRWA will expand its work on livelihoods through: (a) improving livelihood capacities; and (b) strengthening Palestine refugee income generation and work opportunities, especially for women and youth.

100. The Agency will regularly review the relevance of its technical and vocational education and training programming against labour market needs and develop more market-relevant curricula, with a focus on life and entrepreneurship skills. Linkages between training centres and employers will be strengthened and an online training platform will be developed to strengthen technical and vocational education and training access for the most vulnerable. The teacher training facilities in the West Bank and Jordan will also continue to train teachers who will work in UNRWA and other educational institutions.

101. The microfinance programme will remain committed to providing financial services that meet the diverse needs of small business owners and micro-entrepreneurs whose investments sustain economic activity and empower refugees and other poor and marginalized groups. Lending products will be adapted to serve the digital and gig economies and to meet e-commerce needs.

102. Participation in infrastructure and camp improvement works will continue to enhance the livelihood capabilities of Palestine refugees, through both training and the creation of paid employment opportunities. The job creation programme in Gaza will also be maintained.

103. The Agency will enhance its partnership with the United Nations International Computing Centre to provide information technology resource augmentation services to the entire United Nations family. Furthermore, advocacy with host governments and economic actors will continue to promote access by Palestine refugees to employment opportunities and their right to work.

104. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

- (a) Palestine refugees' livelihood capacities improved;
- (b) Palestine refugees' income generation and work opportunities improved.

D. Financial resources

Table 15

Resource requirements for objective 4

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Palestine refugees' livelihood capacities improved	21 679	22 497
Palestine refugees income generation and work opportunities improved	328	396
Total programme budget	22 007	22 893
Projects	2 125	2 075
Total	24 132	24 968

Chapter VI

Objective 5: the most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance

A. Current operations

105. Social assistance systems are critical in helping the most vulnerable meet basic needs, manage risks and cope with shocks and crises. In this regard, UNRWA provides predominantly cash-based assistance to refugees in need, with emergency food distributions extended in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic to address prevailing market conditions. Agency efforts to provide effective social assistance for the most vulnerable Palestine refugees are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty) and 2 (zero hunger).

106. Annually, UNRWA provides food and cash assistance to over 1.9 million Palestine refugees. Support is provided through: (a) a programme budget-funded social safety net programme that mitigates poverty and reached over 325,000 recipients in 2022; and (b) emergency programming to those affected by humanitarian crises, through which 1.8 million Palestine refugees were assisted during the same year. Although the value of social transfers does not cover all basic needs, such transfers represent a lifeline for the most vulnerable.

107. The social safety net programme is aimed at mitigating poverty and food insecurity among poor refugees, with the abject poor prioritized,⁶ through social transfers, including a basic food basket, cash transfers and/or electronic cash vouchers (e-cards). In Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank, the social safety net programme is aimed at recipients using a proxy means-testing formula.⁷ However, in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic, which have exceptionally high levels of poverty, universal assistance is extended to the registered population through emergency funding, with the social safety net programme providing supplementary assistance to those unable to generate income irrespective of the economic situation.

108. Under emergency programming, the Agency provides food and cash assistance to Palestine refugees affected by the blockade of Gaza, the occupation in the West Bank, the hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic and the socioeconomic crisis in Lebanon.

B. Constraints and challenges

109. Poverty among Palestine refugees remains high and is growing. Rising food prices have affected all UNRWA fields of operation due to the region's high dependency on imports of food commodities. The situation is exacerbated by the high share of disposable income spent on food, currency depreciation in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and increasing energy prices in all fields.

110. In the Syrian Arab Republic, there is a large contingent of working poor due to the devaluation of the local currency; in Gaza, the lack of a productive economic sector makes income generation elusive. Lebanon is also on a path towards a similar scenario given severe economic, financial and political crises.

⁶ UNRWA defines those in a state of abject poverty as individuals who cannot meet their basic food needs.

⁷ The proxy means-testing formula assesses a range of indicators to measure household poverty status, including housing conditions, demographics, education, health, labour force participation and household assets.

111. The Agency remains unable to mitigate poverty and food insecurity for all poor and vulnerable Palestine refugees due to funding constraints. Although the aim of the social safety net programme is to ensure social transfers equivalent to at least 50 per cent of minimum survival-level food expenditure, only in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic has this been achieved. In all other fields, the transfer value ranges from 20.4 per cent in Jordan to 23.3 per cent in the West Bank. High inflation in all fields has further eroded transfer values.

C. Expected accomplishments

112. During 2024 and 2025, UNRWA will extend social transfers through the social safety net programme to the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the Palestine refugee population. In all fields, the Agency will seek to calibrate its social transfer levels with household expenditure needs. In Jordan and the West Bank, assistance will continue to be determined through assessments based on the proxy means-testing formula, but opportunities to align the social safety net programme with host government social protection programmes will be pursued. In the Syrian Arab Republic and Gaza, social safety net programme assistance will remain targeted at the most vulnerable, supplemented by universal ultra-basic assistance provided to all registered Palestine refugees.

113. UNRWA will seek sufficient resources to ensure that emergency social transfers are maintained. Demand for emergency food and cash assistance is anticipated to increase due to an expected continuation of the dire conditions in the Syrian Arab Republic and Gaza, continued displacement of Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon and Jordan and the possible worsening of the economic situation in Lebanon.

114. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishment: poverty among Palestine refugees is alleviated.

D. Financial resources

Table 16

Resource requirements for objective 5

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Poverty among the most vulnerable Palestine refugees is alleviated	52 493	54 195
Total programme budget	52 493	54 195
Projects	3 437	–
Total	55 930	54 195

Chapter VII

Objective 6: Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation

A. Current operations

115. Adequate housing and access to safe water and sanitation are basic needs that are fundamental to human dignity. UNRWA addresses those needs through its shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction works, camp improvement plans and environmental services. Interventions are centred in the 58 official Palestine refugee camps, as well as in unofficial camps in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Agency does not administer or manage these camps but supports public services within them, where needed, appropriate and possible. UNRWA efforts in support of meeting the shelter, water and sanitation needs of Palestine refugees are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 13 (climate action) and 17 (partnerships).

116. The Agency rehabilitates substandard shelters and repairs and reconstructs homes affected by emergencies, including conflicts. Shelter rehabilitation is largely administered through a self-help approach, whereby families are engaged in the rehabilitation of their own shelters, with Agency financial and technical support.

117. More comprehensive camp improvement planning takes place through a participatory approach whereby communities lead the process and identify priorities. Since 2007, UNRWA has completed camp improvement plans in 10 camps, resulting in the creation of public spaces, the upgrading of environmental infrastructure, greening initiatives and improvements to urban economic spaces and road networks.

118. Although responsibility for public service provision within camps resides with host authorities, the Agency supports access by Palestine refugees to potable water and basic sanitation through the maintenance of environmental health infrastructure, providing sanitation services and the planning, design and construction of sewerage, drainage and water supply network upgrades.

119. Guided by its environmental sustainability policy, UNRWA also takes steps to combat climate change in relation to its own operations and its impact on refugees' living environments. Greening technologies, renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures are increasingly incorporated into construction and maintenance work. Furthermore, the 2022 UNRWA environmental and social management framework establishes clear procedures for the environmental and social management of all construction and maintenance projects.

B. Constraints and challenges

120. Conditions in the 58 official Palestine refugee camps have deteriorated. Urban planning and integrated infrastructure development have largely been non-existent. With rapid urbanization continuing, planning interventions may become increasingly difficult and costly in the future.

121. Access to safe water remains a significant challenge in camps due to: (a) increasing overcrowding; (b) ageing networks, leading to possible water contamination; (c) the use of private pumps and informal additional connections; and (d) a lack of available water resources.

122. Sanitation-related communicable disease outbreaks are still potential risks in some camps, in particular those affected by conflict and deepening poverty. This is

due to insufficient network capacity and ageing infrastructure, planning and design gaps, lack of wastewater treatment and standing wastewater near camps.

123. In addition, there remains a critical need for investment to improve shelters, public spaces, environmental infrastructure, sanitation services and solid waste management across all fields. Over 39,000 refugee families are assessed as living in substandard shelters. Recurrent conflicts have also extended the backlog of shelters requiring rehabilitation, with approximately 59,000 shelters in Gaza and 900 in Lebanon awaiting repair or reconstruction. No reliable estimate of the extent of shelter damage in the Syrian Arab Republic is available.

C. Expected accomplishments

124. UNRWA will continue to target the most vulnerable families for shelter rehabilitation. During 2024 and 2025, the Agency will seek to rehabilitate 830 substandard shelters and prioritize the reconstruction of shelters destroyed in Nahr el-Bared camp in Lebanon in 2007 and during recent conflicts in Gaza. UNRWA will also commence planning for the rehabilitation of damaged shelters in the Syrian Arab Republic if the security situation allows.

125. The Agency will seek to initiate two new camp improvement plans, contingent on the receipt of adequate funding. In partnership with refugees, UNRWA will continue to integrate protection measures across the design, construction and maintenance of facilities and camp improvement work.

126. The Agency will continue to ensure the basic needs of environmental health and infrastructure, including a safe, equitable and sufficient quantity and quality of water and adequate sewerage, storm water drainage and solid waste collection systems that meet minimum acceptable standards.

127. UNRWA will also remain committed to mainstreaming and integrating its environmental sustainability policy across all Agency operations and the environmental and social management framework into camp improvement and rehabilitation work.

128. The strategic plan for the period 2023–2028 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

- (a) Palestine refugees residing in camps live in adequate and safe shelters;
- (b) Palestine refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions.

D. Financial resources

Table 17

Resource requirements for objective 6

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
Palestine refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions	26 218	27 096
Total programme budget	26 218	27 096
Projects	127 666	60 214
Total	153 884	87 311

Chapter VIII

Objective 7: the Agency's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly

A. Management services goal

129. Objective 7 focuses on the management of UNRWA operations to ensure they are: (a) delivered in an effective, efficient and safe manner; (b) transparent and accountable; and (c) socially and environmentally sustainable. These outcomes are aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships).

130. Management priorities build on recent reforms, including the 2019–2021 management initiatives, aimed at making UNRWA more accountable, inclusive, transparent and agile. In 2024 and 2025, a long-term plan of interconnected initiatives that will modernize Agency management practices and organizational culture will be enacted.

B. The Agency's operations are delivered effectively, efficiently and safely

131. In line with its resource mobilization and outreach strategy, the Agency will work towards predictable, sustainable, flexible and diversified funding that ensures sufficient resources to deliver its mandate. Two dimensions will guide this approach: (a) deepening and broadening long-term public and private partnerships; and (b) increasing the use of digital tools to develop new partnerships. UNRWA will also continue to engage with host countries and donors to find long-term solutions towards a sustainable Agency.

132. The safety and security of UNRWA personnel will remain critical to the Agency's ability to operate, in particular in fields affected by conflict, where many are on the front line of service delivery. To effectively manage security risks and respond to emerging threats, UNRWA will integrate best practice into internal security risk management processes.

133. More broadly, to better manage complex geopolitical, conflict-related, humanitarian, operational, financial, environmental and reputational risks, the Agency will strengthen its enterprise risk management capacity as the basis for better understanding the current context, immediate priorities and longer-term needs.

134. UNRWA will continue to reinforce its human resources systems, structures and processes, focusing on organizational design, talent acquisition, career development, and workforce and succession planning. Well-being activities will be maintained and conflict resolution mechanisms will be strengthened, building on the Ombudsman Office, established in 2021, and the leadership dialogue initiative, launched in 2023.

135. Agency procurement practices will seek best value for money and fair, ethical and transparent operations. UNRWA will implement these principles through (a) the institutionalization of environmentally and socially sustainable procurement practices; (b) the further digitalization of manually implemented procurement actions; (c) the strengthening of internal procurement, stock handling and distribution procedures; and (d) the deepening of cooperation with other United Nations entities.

C. The Agency's operations are transparent and accountable

136. The Agency's Department of Internal Oversight Services will continue to work in high-risk areas, focusing on: (a) internal audits dedicated to strengthened risk management, governance and internal controls; (b) evaluations that strengthen accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making; and (c) fair and objective investigations of serious allegations of misconduct, including with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption.

137. UNRWA will remain committed to accountability to affected populations through processes that facilitate: (a) information gathering and sharing, consultation and the participation of the most vulnerable; (b) safeguarding, including in relation to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; (c) the delivery of Agency programming in accordance with humanitarian principles; and (d) the systematic engagement of Palestine refugee communities during the annual programme cycle and change management processes.

138. UNRWA will continue to engage its Advisory Commission on: (a) improving its role as a platform for open and constructive dialogue; and (b) engendering a deeper sense of collective responsibility for continued service delivery to Palestine refugees.

D. Agency operations are socially and environmentally sustainable

139. UNRWA is committed to ensuring that Agency-wide policies, systems and processes are gender-sensitive. Its updated gender equality strategy will reflect strategic priorities and ensure alignment with international gender frameworks. The women's advisory forum, established in 2022, will be a key body to advance implementation of the strategy.

140. In line with the Agency's 2022 disability inclusion policy, UNRWA will seek to address barriers to the full enjoyment of the rights of Palestine refugees with disabilities, including through advocacy with duty bearers.

141. The Agency's 2022 environmental sustainability policy will continue to be implemented. Throughout, UNRWA will strengthen environmental sustainability partnerships across all fields, including with Palestine refugees, host governments, the donor community, other United Nations entities, civil society and the private sector.

E. Financial resources

Table 18

Resource requirements for objective 7

(Cash, thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>2024 estimate</i>	<i>2025 estimate</i>
UNRWA operations are delivered effectively and efficiently	144 756	146 887
UNRWA operations are transparent and accountable	9 494	9 847
Total programme budget	154 250	156 734
Projects	94 495	65 628
Total	248 745	222 362

