

REPORT ON UNRWA

PREPARED BY
THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

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I. INTRODUCTION

Object of the report

1. The General Assembly by its Decision 36/462 of 16 March 1982 requested the Joint Inspection Unit to "carry out a comprehensive review" of UNRWA's "organization, budget and operations with a view to assisting the Commissioner-General to make the most effective and economical use of the limited funds available to the Agency".
2. The wording of this sentence and, indeed, of the other parts of the Decision which call upon governments to "contribute more generously", to "increase contributions" or to "start contributing" would appear to indicate that one of the main issues of concern to the General Assembly, in inviting JIU to review UNRWA's activities, was the Agency's financing problems and the cost effectiveness of the use of its scarce resources.
3. In addressing the problem from this angle, JIU was soon to discover that the financial constraints were the source of serious difficulties for the fulfilment of UNRWA's mandate. It seemed obvious that helping UNRWA to have the best possible management would reinforce the confidence of member States in its effectiveness, improve its image and credibility and facilitate regular and stable financing.
4. In this report, JIU examines the results obtained by UNRWA through the execution of its three main programmes on education, health and relief (chapter II). An examination of operational difficulties and methods leads to the problems of budget and finance, personnel, structures and decentralization (chapter III), and issues related to UNRWA's mandate and institutional setting (chapter IV). Conclusions and recommendations are presented in chapter V.

Preliminary remarks

5. Before entering the subject matter, a few basic facts about UNRWA are presented:

(a) UNRWA was established by General Assembly resolution 302(IV) of 8 December 1949 and became operational early in 1950, taking over the tasks and responsibilities of the UNRPR (United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees) which had already started, in co-operation with other United Nations system and voluntary agencies, to provide essential services to Palestine refugees, without prejudice to paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194(III) which provided for the repatriation and compensation of Palestine refugees choosing not to return. Under the founding resolution, UNRWA's functions were primarily to carry out relief and work programmes in collaboration with local governments. The mandate to provide assistance in the areas of health, education and welfare - although implicit since such services were already provided by UNRPR - first appears in General Assembly resolution 513(VI) of 1952. These services were to become the backbone of the Agency's activities since it gradually became clear that the public works programme could not be implemented.

(b) The Agency's mandate has been extended by the General Assembly on the average every two-three years, most recently until 30 June 1984. Originally, UNRWA was to provide assistance to refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the

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Gaza strip displaced as a result of the 1948 Israeli-Arab hostilities. Since 1967, UNRWA has also been authorized by the General Assembly to provide "humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to other persons in the area who are at present displaced and are in serious need of immediate assistance" as a result of the June 1967 hostilities (resolution 2252-ES-V of 4 July 1967).

(c) UNRWA provides education, health and relief services which are of concern to some 2 million Palestine refugees. No provision for their protection is made in General Assembly resolutions.

(d) In terms of staff, UNRWA constitutes by far the largest organization of the United Nations system : it has some 110 international staff members (20 of whom are paid by UNESCO and five by WHO) and some 17,000 area staff, the majority of whom are Palestine refugees.

(e) UNRWA's annual budget amounts to more than US\$ 200 million. Except for a small contribution from the United Nations, UNESCO and WHO regular budgets covering the staff costs of international professionals, the bulk of the Agency's resources come from voluntary contributions. In recent years, the resources made available to UNRWA have not been sufficient to cover the requirements of the three programmes and even less to meet the additional costs arising from the increase in the refugee population and the rate of inflation.

6. Since its inception in 1950, the Agency has operated under very difficult conditions due not only to uncertainties regarding its financing and the continuation of its mandate, but also to the extremely delicate political context in which it is placed. Military operations have often caused casualties and bloodshed amongst UNRWA staff and the refugee populations, and also disruptions in services.

7. Throughout the preparation of this report, the JIU received valuable assistance from the Commissioner-General and his staff. The Inspectors visited Vienna Headquarters on several occasions to discuss various issues with the Commissioner-General and his staff. UNRWA also arranged for a JIU team to visit Amman Headquarters and all UNRWA field offices, including various camps and installations, in January-March 1983. Valuable discussions were also held with UNESCO and WHO staff both in the Fields and at the Headquarters of these organizations, and with staff of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The Inspectors express their appreciation to all who assisted them.

II. PROGRAMME AND OPERATIONS

A. Education and training

8. UNRWA in co-operation with UNESCO provides education and training for some 340,000 Palestinian refugee children. This accounts for about 60 per cent of UNRWA expenditure (US\$ 110.5 million in 1982) and is by far the largest of its three programmes. UNESCO is responsible for the technical and professional aspects of the education programme while UNRWA assumes administrative responsibility and meets the costs of the educational system, except for the salaries of 20 UNESCO international staff members.

1. Levels and scope of educational services

9. Table I summarizes quantitative information on the educational services provided by UNRWA. It should be noted that UNRWA provides only 9 years of formal education for most refugees (10 years in Lebanon). After completing the ninth year (end of the preparatory or lower secondary cycle), refugee children are eligible for upper secondary schooling in the government schools of the area in which they live. Vocational and technical education is provided on a small scale by UNRWA. UNRWA teacher training institutes provide the teachers needed for UNRWA schools. A small number of university scholarships are provided by UNRWA.

10. The organizational structure within UNRWA may be seen from the organization chart in annex I. At the Vienna Headquarters there is a Department of Education and at the Amman Headquarters there is a large branch of the Department of Education. In each Field there is also a Department of Education which manages the educational services in the Field. JIU found this general structure to be satisfactory.

2. Quality of education

11. The educational system and curriculum in the five Fields are similar to those of the schools for the non-refugee population. In Lebanon, students begin to learn English or French at the first elementary grade. Because of the particular importance of foreign languages to refugee children the possibility of extending this practice might be studied in other Fields. UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza use, to the extent that the lack of certain textbooks does not make it impossible, the Jordan and Egyptian curriculum (see para. 38). In Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, the curricula of those countries are followed. This permitted JIU to compare the educational achievements of children in UNRWA schools with those in government and private schools using the same curriculum and education system. It was also able to form an opinion on the quality of education by visits to schools of various kinds and during discussions with educational personnel of UNRWA.

12. Despite many difficulties, including disturbances and strikes, poor physical facilities, lack of sufficient equipment and teaching materials, overcrowding, etc., JIU found that the quality of education in UNRWA/UNESCO schools is good. When UNRWA students took state examinations, generally at the end of the preparatory cycle in most Fields, the results compared favourably with those of equivalent government or private schools. Girls did better than boys. These results are attributable to the importance that refugee parents attach to education, which is reflected by a high degree of motivation among students. Equally important is the

Table I
Levels and scope of educational services provided by UNRWA - 1982/1983 school year

Field	Number of UNRWA schools <u>1/</u>	Number of teachers (all levels of educ.) <u>2/</u>	Elementary school pupils	Preparatory school pupils	Teacher training students <u>3/</u>	Vocational + Technical Post-preparatory students	Post-secondary students	Total students	University scholarships
Lebanon	86	1,300	23,217	9,425	110	480	232	33,464 ^{4/}	28
Syrian Arab Republic	115	1,529	34,213	15,426	-	544	176	50,359 ^{4/}	100
Jordan	215	3,891	93,826	39,903	550	608	432	135,319	110
West Bank	101	1,398	28,404	11,164	650	432	440	41,090	46
Gaza Strip	142	2,197	59,942	20,687	-	604	-	81,233 ^{5/}	65
Total	659	10,315	239,602	96,605	1,310	2,668	1,280	341,465	349

In addition 88,662 ^{6/} refugee children attend elementary, preparatory and secondary government and private schools, and in compensation 45,746 ^{6/} non-eligible children attend UNRWA schools and are included in the above figures.

^{1/} Including vocational, technical and teacher training centres.

^{2/} Including instructors and chief instructors at vocational and teacher training centres.

^{3/} Training places.

^{4/} Excluding 1,021 displaced refugee pupils presently attending UNRWA schools in Syria.
The number of pupils enrolled in Syria includes these displaced pupils.

^{5/} In addition, 1,500 refugee children attend 15 pre-school centres.

^{6/} 1981/82 figures. The 1982/83 figures are not yet available.

strong motivation of teachers and the technical competence and devotion of UNRWA staff managing the education programme, particularly the senior Palestinian educational personnel. But this motivation would not have sufficed to produce good results without the sound professional guidance provided over the years by UNESCO.

13. In education (as in the other programmes) the local senior Palestinian staff in each Field Office manage the programmes. They receive guidance from the UNRWA/UNESCO Director of Education in HQ Vienna and from the UNRWA/UNESCO Division Chiefs and local specialists in HQ Amman and administrative support and supervision from the Directors of UNRWA operations in the Fields. But the local officials in the Field run the programmes and the quality of services depends largely on them. These officials in each Field include the Field Education Officer, the Head of the Education Development Centre and the Supervisors of the Centre, the Area Education Officers and the heads of training centres. The JIU team discussed the education programme with many of them. The local officials are now capable of managing the education programme with less frequent advice and guidance from outside specialists. Their main problem is the lack of adequate resources for school buildings, teaching materials, equipment, etc.

14. Many of the local senior educational personnel have been with UNRWA for a long time, some for more than 30 years, and are approaching the age of retirement. Since because of its temporary character there has been no formal career planning in UNRWA, the replacement of a number of key officials who will be retiring will be difficult - in some Fields both a head of unit and deputy will be retiring at about the same time. Urgent measures are required if the quality of education is to be maintained.

(a) Comparisons with other educational systems

15. JIU identified a number of indicators to compare the UNRWA educational services with those of nine countries at a similar level of development throughout the world. Comparisons were made with the help of UNESCO. It was not possible to make precise comparisons because educational systems differ widely between countries. However, UNESCO was able to provide sufficient information to permit a judgement to be made on the achievements of UNRWA in education. In general, the comparisons were favourable to UNRWA, despite the special difficulties and constraints under which it operates. Information is summarized below for the principal indicators.

16. Enrolment ratio. At the elementary level (ages 6 to 11), 83 per cent of the refugee children in the age group attend school. At the preparatory level (ages 12 to 14), 73 per cent attend school. Although these figures are not directly comparable with those of some of the nine countries because of differences in the age groups in each cycle, it is evident that the enrolment ratio for refugee children is above the average. This is explained by the strong demand for education among refugee families. It is all the more commendable since UNRWA has no way to enforce compulsory schooling for refugee children.

17. Percentage of girl students. With an average 48 per cent of girls in each class at the elementary level and 47.7 per cent at the preparatory level, UNRWA schools have a higher percentage of girls than the average of the nine countries selected for comparison.

18. Teacher/pupil ratio. With an average of 41 students per teacher at the elementary level and 31 at the preparatory level, UNRWA schools have considerably

more pupils per teacher than the average in the nine countries. This was the only indicator unfavourable to UNRWA. It is explained by budget limitations. But it does not seem to have had a detrimental effect on the quality of education because of the exceptionally high motivation of pupils and teachers.

19. Cost per student per year. The annual recurrent direct operational costs per pupils in UNRWA schools of the elementary and preparatory cycle for the 1981/1982 school year averaged US\$ 245. This cost excludes common costs and such non-recurrent costs as school construction. It was particularly difficult to compare these costs precisely with those of the nine countries because of different duration and age groups of the educational cycles, fluctuating and unrealistic exchange rates and different accounting systems. However, it does appear that UNRWA costs are somewhat below the average. They are approximately the same as the costs of the countries in which the refugees live, slightly higher than in Jordan and lower than in Lebanon. The cost of vocational training in UNRWA schools averages between US\$ 1,500 and US\$ 2,100 per year including board and lodging. Because of the small number of vocational students in UNRWA schools (about 4,000), no comparisons were made with other countries, but the cost for this type of education appears to be low.

20. Dropouts and repeaters. Dropouts, by the cohort method, are 6.7 per cent in UNRWA elementary schools, which is lower than the percentage for seven of the nine countries for which figures are available. However, it was not possible to determine the reasons why children drop out of school, since records are not kept and there are no counsellors to advise on corrective measures.

(b) Biennial Education Work Plan

21. The first such work plan was prepared for the years 1980-81/1981-82 with the encouragement and supervision of the UNESCO specialists at Headquarters Amman. It covers each of the five Fields and includes objectives, priorities, and activities in a time schedule with provision for periodic assessment and evaluation. An accompanying reporting system provides information on the state of advancement of each activity and signals any corrective action needed. A second biennial work programme has now been prepared for the years 1982-83/1983-84.

22. Some of the Field Education Officers were at first reluctant to take the time from other urgent matters for planning. They are all, in the light of positive experience, convinced of the importance of this planning instrument and use it as an effective management tool. UNRWA should consider using a similar planning and control technique for Health and Relief (see II.B and II.C below).

(c) Educational Development Centres

23. In four of the five Fields there are Educational Development Centres (EDCs). In Lebanon, the Educational Development Unit is being upgraded to become a full Centre. The function of the EDCs is to improve the quality of education through school supervision (inspection), in-service training of educational personnel, curriculum development, strengthening of the testing and evaluation process, library, documentation and audio-visual services for the field educational personnel and other education activities, as prescribed in the biennial education work plan of the Field.

24. Each EDC works under the direct supervision of the Field Education Officer and each has a Head responsible for the management of the Centre. The professional

staff comprise in addition to the Head an Assistant Head, a Librarian and a number of School Supervisors ranging from 24 to 38, who participate in all of the activities of the EDC. Because of the multidisciplinary functions of the School Supervisors, it has been difficult to establish accepted norms for determining the number of Supervisors required in each Field. One norm that is used is one Supervisor for each 100 to 120 teachers, but consideration was given to raising considerably the number of teachers per supervisor. This would be counter-productive as it would no doubt adversely affect the quality of education and in the long run cause additional expenses for corrective action. Even at present there are subjects without adequate supervision and the School Supervisors, who try to review the work of each teacher on the spot twice a year, and more frequently for new teachers, have difficulties in view of their many other responsibilities in devoting sufficient time to this essential task.

25. The JIU feels that an acceptable norm would be one School Supervisor per 100 teachers at the elementary level and one per 75 teachers at the preparatory level. This would imply an increase in the number of Supervisors in some Fields, particularly Jordan. It is desirable to permit the filling of vacant supervisory posts without the presently required prior reference to Headquarters Vienna.

26. The UNRWA/UNESCO specialists stationed at Headquarters Amman visit the Fields from time to time and work with EDCs on, among other things, the implementation of biennial work plan for education. Since they have contact with all Fields, they can point to successful initiatives taken in one Field which could be applied in others.

(d) Teachers

27. There are over 10,000 teachers working in UNRWA schools. During the early years of UNRWA operations, very few of the teachers possessed the required professional qualifications. Now this situation has completely changed. The great majority of teachers satisfy the qualification standards; those who do not were mostly appointed in the early years and are now approaching retirement. This is true despite the fact that qualification standards are high. For example, preparatory school teachers in Lebanon have to be university graduates with either a formal education diploma or satisfactory completion of in-service training within three years of appointment.

28. UNRWA operates both pre-service and in-service teacher training which has enabled the Agency to keep pace easily with the demand for new teachers required because of the increase in the refugee population, resignations and retirement of teachers. JIU reviewed some of the examination records of teacher training centres and briefly observed the work of many teachers. The records showed very good achievement by trainee teachers and this was corroborated by the effective way in which teachers organized their classes, the generally good discipline in classrooms and the overall impression of effective education. In-service training run by the Educational Development Centres is also effective. Approximately 1,000 teachers benefit from in-service training each year.

29. The salaries and allowances of UNRWA teachers are based in principle on those of government teachers in their area. It is reasonable that UNRWA salaries should be somewhat higher to compensate for the lack of security of employment and also because UNRWA teachers have more varied responsibilities; UNRWA does not have many of the supporting staff found in government schools - counsellors, monitors, etc., and teachers often work in difficult conditions (lack of textbooks, teaching materials, inadequate heating, etc.) Also, UNRWA teachers have fewer possibilities for outside employment than government teachers.

3. Outstanding problems

30. Despite the positive assessment of the quality of education, there are a number of serious problems which require urgent solutions if quality is to be maintained. Most of these problems are caused by the lack of sufficient and stable financing, but they could be eased by management and procedural reforms and by auxiliary financing for specific priority projects (see in addition chapter III).

(a) School buildings

31. There are two main types of school building : those constructed by UNRWA and rented premises. There are also some donated schools of generally good quality. The rented schools are generally in very poor condition with small classrooms. UNRWA-built schools vary in quality from Field to Field and within Fields. In Jordan, the condition of schools is the least satisfactory; extensive repairs are needed together with an effective maintenance programme to bring the buildings up to acceptable standards. When the JIU team visited schools in Amman it found that classrooms were unheated, although the temperature was close to freezing. Many windows were broken, sanitary facilities were inadequate and school furniture was primitive. In the West Bank, by contrast, even if heating was lacking, schools were generally in good condition, clean and well maintained, with gardens and adequate sports facilities. This difference may be explained at least partially by the fact that in the West Bank the refugees consider that they are at home so, through self-help programmes, they have looked after and improved the schools. The self-help programmes were initiated by the refugees who present specific proposals to UNRWA. Generally, UNRWA furnishes supplies and building materials and the refugees do the required work themselves. If it were possible to encourage some self-help programmes in other Fields, the condition of school buildings and their surrounding areas could be greatly improved at minimum cost.

32. In Lebanon, much damage was done to UNRWA schools by the war. Four schools were completely destroyed and many damaged. Some schools were used by refugees as dwellings because their homes were destroyed. Thus, in January 1983, many schools were operating on three shifts, but UNRWA officials hoped that school repairs and rebuilding, using emergency funds, would solve this problem.

33. Rented school buildings pose a particular problem. Not only are the buildings usually in very poor condition but also the classrooms are small - usually with room for only 20 to 30 pupils. On the whole, about 18 per cent of children still attend school in rented buildings, though there are no rented schools in Gaza. If rented buildings could be replaced by simple inexpensive schools constructed by UNRWA, the building costs would be recovered in 2 to 5 years, due to savings in rent and the fact that larger classrooms would make it possible to employ fewer new teachers as the school population increases (by about 2 per cent per year). The possibility should be considered of establishing a revolving fund for school construction to replace rented schools to be reimbursed by savings in operating costs. However, this solution would probably not help much in Lebanon where some 50 per cent of the schools are rented (compared with an average of 29% for all Fields) because land is scarce and what is available is prohibitively expensive; for this reason it is not possible to use much of the available construction budget in Lebanon.

34. Fields which have funds for school construction and major repairs are handicapped by being unable to find qualified engineers to plan and supervise construction. This has delayed construction. Another source of delay is the need to seek

the approval of Vienna Headquarters for major school repairs and even minor construction (adding a classroom), although well-established construction norms exist. This approval has taken up to seven months. A solution to this problem would be to transfer two of the six posts for architectural technicians now at the Vienna Headquarters to the Fields with most construction (Syria and Jordan). As the workload required, they could also help out in neighbouring Fields. They should be authorized to take decisions on the spot with the approval of the local contracts committee and the Field Office Director.

35. Because the JIU team visited schools in January 1983, when the weather was inclement and cold, they had the opportunity to observe the total lack or inadequacy of heating in the classrooms, particularly in Jordan and Syria. In Syria, when heating services existed, only one litre of fuel per day was allocated. In Jordan, there was no heating. A study should be made as a matter of urgency of the heating problem and how best to solve it, with the participation of medical staff.

36. Overcrowding is typical in most UNRWA schools and takes the form of large classes - up to 50 students - and double shifting. In all Fields, more than half the students attend double-shifted schools and some 75 per cent of UNRWA schools have double shifts. This, of course, is not satisfactory since double shifting imposes inconvenient hours on students and teachers and prevents the use of schools for some extra-curricular activities. There is an obvious need for more and better school-building construction in order to reduce overcrowding and to make for satisfactory physical schooling conditions.

(b) School libraries

37. Budgetary constraints have prevented the adequate development of school libraries and the provision of reading material for students and teachers. Central school libraries serving several schools in an area are planned. Where they exist they are understaffed and under-equipped. Each school has a small collection of reading material which could hardly be considered to be a library. JIU was informed that there is a strong desire and need for reading materials, both for students and teachers. It does not seem that the school libraries will be able to satisfy this need. UNESCO could launch a campaign to obtain gifts of books and periodicals in Arabic and in foreign languages. United Nations organizations should be asked to make available their considerable stock of those surplus publications and periodicals (such as the UNESCO Courier) which would be suitable for students and teachers. In Gaza and the West Bank, the occupation authorities should allow the import of such books without question.

(c) Textbooks and other teaching materials

38. The textbooks used in UNRWA schools are the same as those used in the countries which provide the curricula for UNRWA schools - Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic. Under an agreed procedure, UNESCO clears these textbooks for use in UNRWA schools. This has created problems in Gaza and the West Bank. For example, in Gaza, of 115 prescribed Egyptian textbooks only 61 are in use. Some 38 textbooks have not been approved by UNESCO and 9 textbooks approved by UNESCO have been refused import permits by the occupation authorities. This places a great burden on teachers and the Education Development Centres, who have to improvise substitute notes which are a poor replacement. Often when clearance and import authorizations are obtained, the textbooks have been replaced by a new edition and the authorizations have to be obtained again. JIU urges that UNESCO speed up its clearance process as much as possible and that all textbooks thus cleared be authorized without question by the occupation authorities for import by UNRWA in Gaza and the West Bank.

39. UNRWA schools are not well equipped with other teaching materials and aids. Most of what exists is made by the teachers and pupils themselves. However, the Amman Headquarters does produce a limited quantity of audio-visual aids mainly for language teaching and teacher training. But an effort is required to improve both the quality and quantity of teaching aid.

(e) Vocational and technical education

40. UNRWA operates seven Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) (excluding teacher training schools) with about 4,000 students. The demand for this type of education is particularly high, with 4 to 9 candidates for each vacant place (depending on the Field). Graduates of VTCs usually have no difficulty in finding employment in their specialty, except in Lebanon during the last two years - refugees in Lebanon have difficulty in obtaining work permits and visas to work in other countries. To a lesser extent, there have been some problems in Gaza because of travel restrictions abroad where 30 per cent of graduates have had to accept non-skilled employment outside their specialty.

41. The VTCs have suitable buildings and, except for Amman, adequate equipment. Many of the instructors are former students of the VTCs who have received additional training. The JIU team was impressed with the qualifications, organizational ability and dedication of the heads of the four VTCs they visited.

42. JIU is convinced that vocational training should be greatly expanded as a first priority for the education programme. The great obstacle is cost. The per-student per-year cost, including board and lodging, varies between US\$ 1,500 and US\$ 2,100. The cost is low for the results achieved, but it puts expansion beyond the present budgetary possibilities of UNRWA.

43. Much of the existing buildings and equipment has been obtained by grants from governments and such organizations as the OPEC Fund. JIU recommends that UNRWA, together with UNESCO, mount a campaign to induce governments, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, private firms and individuals to contribute funds and equipment for the expansion of vocational education. Such contributions could be for specific projects, including the introduction of a third year of technical training for more of the post-secondary students and increasing the capacity of vocational training centres.

44. The fact that most graduates of VTCs easily find employment in their specialty, including sometimes successful self-employment, indicates that the courses offered are suited to the requirements of the area. However, UNRWA has never formally studied the need for technicians in each locality and country in which refugees can find employment. If it is possible to expand vocational training as suggested above, it would be prudent to base decisions either on the expansion of existing courses or on the creation of new workshops on an employment survey. UNRWA should seek the assistance of ILO in this.

45. One promising subject not now covered is the maintenance and repair of electronic data processing equipment. Another promising subject is the training of dental hygienists. It has already been decided to train twenty-two such technicians for employment with UNRWA itself (see para. 60) at a total cost of US\$ 70,000 over two academic years, including US\$ 17,200 capital cost for equipment. It would plainly be reasonable to spread the capital cost by continuing this training in future years, provided that the existence of a demand for dental hygienists elsewhere in the region can be demonstrated.

(f) University scholarships

46. After completing the preparatory cycle, UNRWA students may continue their secondary education usually at local schools, with or without a small subsidy from UNRWA. Upon successful completion of secondary school, refugee students may compete for a small number of UNRWA university scholarships. The number is so small that only the most brilliant students - those with exceptionally high academic results - can be considered. During the 1981-1982 school year there were only 351 holders of UNRWA university scholarships and the amounts of the scholarships were small - US\$ 690 per year per student.

47. The General Assembly in February 1981 (resolution 36/146 H) and again in 1982 (resolution 37/120 D) appealed to governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations for grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training, for refugees. To date, the response has been very small. However, JIU believes that there is a good potential for obtaining outside funds or scholarships. UNESCO, UNRWA and the other Agencies of the United Nations system should renew efforts for better implementation of the General Assembly resolutions. In addition, the establishment of a University of Jerusalem for Palestine Refugees, as called for in resolutions 36/146 G and 37/120 C, would meet an obvious need for the higher education of Palestine refugees. If these resolutions are implemented, UNRWA should ensure that scholarship funds be used in priority to allow refugees in need to attend this university.

(f) Role of UNESCO

48. The formal agreement between UNRWA and UNESCO first signed on 26 January 1967 and renewed periodically since then provides the following "general principles of co-operation":

"(a) The Commissioner-General of UNRWA is administratively responsible for the educational programme for the refugees, whilst the Director-General of UNESCO assumes technical responsibility for the programme."

"(b) UNESCO will provide from its own budget the higher directing staff required for the planning and execution of the Programme, whilst UNRWA will, as far as possible, meet all other expenditures."

49. Under this agreement UNESCO pays from its regular budget the cost of 20 international Professional posts in the UNRWA Department of Education and recruits and administers the incumbents of these posts. In the past, there was a high number of vacancies, but at present (May 1983) all but three posts are filled. The posts of the Department of Education are as follows:

	International Professional posts	Cost US\$ (UNESCO Budget)	Cost US\$ (UNRWA Budget)	Area posts	Cost US\$	Totals	
						Posts	Cost US\$
HQ (Vienna)	2	136,596	-	10	348,733	12	485,329
HQ (Amman)	UNESCO : 19 UNRWA : 6	1,469,928	453,024	56	672,374	81	(2,595,326 (
Total	27	1,606,524	453,024	66	1,021,107	93	3,080,655

50. UNESCO is to be commended for having put into place a viable school system of good quality under exceptionally difficult circumstances. A measure of UNESCO's success is the gradual constitution of a group of highly qualified local Palestinian officials who manage the educational programme. Whereas in the early years these officials required guidance and supervision from UNESCO specialists, the situation has now changed. The local education managers have both the professional competence and intimate knowledge of local situations and problems which enable them to administer efficiently and improve the educational system with much less outside advice than in the past. Consequently, a discussion between UNESCO and UNRWA should be envisaged with a view to a partial reorientation of UNESCO's role and to ascertain to what extent its action could be directed to the reinforcing of the high priority education aspects, vocational training in particular.

51. It might be possible also, in the framework of these discussions, to define the form of assistance which UNESCO would provide for the putting into effect of specific projects which could not be financed from the UNRWA budget. It would be possible to appeal for supplementary financing to donor sources, especially governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (see also paragraph 117).

52. This partial reorientation of the UNESCO role could make it possible for UNRWA to assign some of the area staff now located in the Education Department to specific Fields to reinforce the management capacity of the Fields and to replace retiring senior area personnel.

B. Health

1. Description of the programme

53. UNRWA's policy is to maintain health services for eligible Palestine refugees concordant with the humanitarian policies of the United Nations and the basic principles and concepts of the World Health Organization, and consistent with the development and progress achieved in public health and medical care provided by the Arab host governments to their indigenous population at public expense. WHO provides technical supervision of the health programme by assigning to UNRWA Headquarters on a non-reimbursable basis five WHO staff members including the Director of Health. All the health personnel in the five Fields are locally recruited, most of them being Palestinians.

54. The health programme takes up about one-sixth of the total annual budget : US\$ 39.5 million out of US\$ 233.5 million in the revised budget for 1982. It has three main components : environmental sanitation, medical services and supplementary feeding. All these are being energetically pursued despite severely limited resources. There are over 1.6 million eligible refugees; the resources available per refugee are therefore about US\$ 24.5 per annum overall. Of the eligible refugees, rather more than half a million live in the camps to which the health programme is mainly but not entirely directed, and about 78 per cent of the eligible refugee population make some use of the UNRWA health services. In Lebanon, a number of UNRWA clinics and medical installations were damaged or destroyed in the Israeli invasion and the health programme was seriously interrupted for some time; the disappearance of the Palestine Red Crescent hospitals in South Lebanon at which, until the invasion, Palestine refugees received free treatment, may have a more lasting impact on the Lebanon programme; in present circumstances all refugees and displaced Palestinians in Lebanon are considered eligible to benefit from the health programme.

a) Environmental sanitation

55. This comprises the provision of such basic environmental services as paved streets, running water and the disposal of sewage and garbage, services which in most countries are not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. These are provided for those refugees who live in the refugee camps, about one-third of the total, at a cost of about US\$ 7 million in 1982: this figure includes both current costs and some improvements and extensions of services. Much has been achieved but much remains to be done. Visiting camps near Amman in bad weather in January 1983, the JIU team saw many alleys deep in mud and rainwater whilst neighbouring alleys had been concreted, with central drains for surface water to run off. Many refugee shelters have to share standpipes with groups of others; many are unconnected to main sewers and a small proportion of refugees still uses public latrines. Garbage is brought to local collecting points, from which unskilled labourers remove it periodically. On the other hand, communal and individual efforts have been energetically made in some camps, with UNRWA help, to raise the environmental level. The paved streets which the JIU team observed in the Amman camps have been paved for the most part through self-help efforts by families living there, UNRWA providing only the necessary materials. In one camp near Jerusalem, 570 refugee families have at their own expense extended private water connections to their shelters, and 534 private latrines have been built with nominal assistance. In another, refugees have paved over 7,000 square metres of lanes.

56. There is no present prospect of funds being available for the provision of full environmental services in the camps but much can be done by self-help projects, with UNRWA providing materials and engineering expertise and the refugees providing the labour and some of the funds. Self-help projects seem to be more frequent in some Fields than in others but they should be encouraged in all Fields.

b) Medical services

57. This sub-programme is the largest in financial terms, costing about US\$ 17 million in the revised 1982 budget. This amounts to under US\$ 10 per head of the 78 per cent population served by UNRWA, as against an average of over US\$ 17 in the host countries. The medical problem is tackled through prevention rather than cure. A strict watch is kept on notifiable diseases and there is a large programme of immunization against six major diseases. There are also programmes of health and hygiene education in each Field and a substantial mother and child programme, with pre-natal clinics, supervised home and hospital deliveries and regular health supervision and immunization of children up to three years of age. UNRWA has 100 health centres of its own and provides services in 22 more; there is thus one clinic per 13,000 eligible refugees or one per 4,800 refugees in the camps. The results of the programme are to be seen in falling rates of morbidity in the most important diseases to figures below those in the surrounding populations, and in the declining rate of infant mortality, which is down to about 70 per 1,000 in some camps in Lebanon and 50 in Syria, from figures double these numbers twenty years ago. The rate of infant mortality in the West Bank camps is now about 35 only, from 60 in 1971. These figures are comparable with those in other developing countries.

58. The staff are severely handicapped in a number of areas by inadequate buildings, lacking heating or hot water and unmaintained for years because of the lack of funds. Medical and dental equipment in the health centres is mostly old and worn; replacements and improvements are urgently needed. The dispensar-

ies seem to have adequate stocks of the more commonly prescribed drugs, but the JIU team was told that cases had arisen when refugees had had to buy prescribed drugs on the local market. What has been achieved is therefore the more creditable. A brief comparison with governmental clinics in two host countries indicated that the governmental clinics had generally better buildings with some heating as well as running hot water, more staff and rather better equipment. Some UNRWA clinics, on the other hand, are in well-maintained buildings and in one instance the refugees had themselves constructed a waiting room at the clinic. Here too there seems every reason to encourage communal self-help projects in repairing, painting and maintaining the buildings used for the health centres.

59. On the curative side, UNRWA relies almost entirely on government and other hospitals for in-patient care, against payment. Shortages of funds for reimbursements have frequently resulted in refugees having to pay for treatment, especially towards the end of the year. For financial reasons UNRWA has been unable to continue a contract with the Jordanian authorities for the provision of in-patient services to refugees (a special scheme has been introduced to help hardship patients) and in South Lebanon the disappearance of the Palestine Red Crescent hospitals has deprived refugee patients of free treatment. Out-patient treatment is provided to a large extent at the UNRWA health centres. UNRWA has 26 laboratories for clinical (and public health) tests; in 1981 over 350,000 clinical tests were done. Investigations beyond the scope of the UNRWA laboratories are done in other institutions, sometimes for a fee paid by UNRWA, sometimes free of charge.

60. There is a serious lack of dental facilities: there are 24 dental clinics attended by 14 dentists in all and, in statistical terms, fewer than 1 in 12 of the eligible refugee population, or 1 in 4 of the camp population, went even once to an UNRWA dentist in 1981. In at least three Fields over 90 per cent of the school children have decayed or missing teeth and only 1 per cent have any filled teeth. UNRWA appears to have far to go before it reaches the WHO global indicator of no more than three decayed, missing or filled teeth at the age of 12 years (set as a target for 1989 for at least 55 per cent of WHO member States). The WHO advisers have recommended a three-year programme covering the recruitment of one additional dentist per Field, the creation of seven additional dental units, the training of 22 dental hygienists in the Vocational Training Colleges and a vigorous oral health programme in the schools, at a total cost of US\$ 480,000. This has been approved.

c) Supplementary feeding

61. Costing about US\$ 10 million in 1982, this sub-programme provides extra nutrition for vulnerable groups: infants and young children, and pregnant and nursing mothers in particular. About 7 per cent of children up to 2 years and 3 per cent in the 2-3 years age groups suffer from different degrees of malnutrition. These percentages are closely comparable with those pertaining in the host countries and show considerable reductions over the last 20 years. In 1966, for example, 44 per cent of the 1-2 age group in the Syrian camps was under-nourished. In 1982, the percentage was 3.5 per cent. In all Fields, severe malnutrition among children has disappeared (N.B. this service has to be distinguished from the issuance of special hardship rations under the relief programme; see paragraphs 85-86).

2. Organization

62. The programme is controlled from Headquarters by the Director of Health, D-1 on loan from WHO, acting under the general guidance of the WHO Eastern

Mediterranean Region and responsible for advising the Commissioner-General on all health matters. He is also responsible for the allocation of available resources. With him at Vienna is his Deputy (P-5 International) who is also Chief of the Curative Medicine Division, and the Chief of the Nutrition and Supplementary Feeding Division (area staff, grade 18). At the Amman section of UNRWA Headquarters are the Chiefs of the Preventive Medicine, Environmental Health and Nursing Divisions, all P-4 Internationals. All the international staff are lent by WHO free of charge.

63. This structure is repeated at each Field headquarters. Each has a Field Health Officer at grade 18 with a deputy, also responsible for curative medicine, at grade 16 or 17 and Preventive Medicine, Environmental Health and Nursing offices headed by officers in grades 14 to 16, with a small field Food Supervisory office with a grade 13 officer-in-charge. In each area, one Area Health Officer is responsible for all aspects of the health programme. There are over 2,900 health personnel in the five Fields, but those with any medical or paramedical qualifications total only 733. There is one doctor in the field per 11,300 eligible refugees, 1 nursing staff member per 3,000 eligible refugees and at present 1 dentist per 115,000 eligible refugees. If only the camp population is considered each of these figures should be divided by three, but the average time that a doctor or dentist can give to each patient is very short.

64. There are periodical meetings of all the Field Health Officers, sometimes in one of the Fields, to discuss health problems arising out of the day-to-day work of the agency. Field Health Officers appreciate the value of these meetings with their professional colleagues but there was some criticism that the agendas are sometimes too diffuse, and papers for discussion and the discussions themselves not always sufficiently action-oriented.

65. The Divisional Chiefs at Headquarters keep in close touch with each Field and make frequent visits when problems arise, such as a sudden increase in cases of a notifiable disease or in the percentage of under-nourished children. All Field Health Officers stressed the value they placed on the easy availability of expert advice from these Divisional Chiefs, based on their intimate knowledge of local conditions.

3. Budgeting

66. The various Field health budgets are presented as part of the budget of the field to which they belong, but they must, in the first place, be discussed and defended with the Director of Health in Vienna. The basis is, in general, continuation of the current year's programme adjusted for inflation or other unavoidable factors as necessary; in present circumstances any request for additional funds meets strong resistance. Field Health Officers are responsible for monitoring their own expenditures and can usually get permission to use any savings for other purposes within the health programme. The Inspectors heard no criticism of the financial rules, as implemented; one Field Health Officer thought that a desire at Headquarters to have things uniform as between all Fields prevented the different Fields from developing their own ways of meeting the needs of each Field individually. When asked what were the most deserving objects of any possible extra expenditure, most Field Health Officers said environmental sanitation, with mother and child care second. One FHO mentioned better equipment as second priority.

67. Given the paucity of resources, the quality of services provided can reasonably be described as good. UNRWA can point to creditable achievements in the

control of diseases and in maternal and child health. But the financial stringency has put a brake on the development of the services, so that whereas 20 or 30 years ago UNRWA was a standard-setting organization in the region and pioneered a number of medical innovations, it has not been able to keep pace with the expansion of governmental medical and hygienic services that has occurred in the host countries, as a result of the general economic development of the region. Medical and environmental services are now somewhat behind those of the local authorities.

4. Outstanding problems

68. Almost all the problems are the result of the shortage of funds:

a) Inadequate buildings and lack of maintenance. The construction and maintenance of clinics has (like the construction and maintenance of schools) been of necessity neglected for years. This matter is discussed further in paragraphs 80-84 of this report. Suffice it to say here that action to repair some health centres and to renovate and bring up-to-date others is urgently needed;

b) Inadequate equipment. Medical and dental equipment is wearing out or becoming obsolete more quickly than it can be replaced, to say nothing of the need to expand and upgrade equipment in the light of the growth in the refugee population and of the improvement in standards elsewhere;

c) Inadequate emoluments. Salaries for all medical staff are established by comparative surveys by the International Civil Service Commission, but in some fields the emoluments (taken with other conditions of employment such as promotion prospects, training possibilities) seem to be insufficient to attract and retain medical staff of the right calibre. In 1982, 38 per cent of the doctors, 40 per cent of the dental surgeons and field pharmacists, and 54 per cent of the laboratory technicians had been with the Agency for five years or less. Preference in recruitment is rightly given to Palestine refugees, but many refugees, especially dentists and nursing staff, prefer the high salaries available elsewhere in the Arab countries, especially the Gulf States; and local government service (where refugees are eligible) carries fringe benefits and the possibility of a pension. The policy of requiring the higher medical staff to be able to read and write English also places UNRWA at a recruiting disadvantage in a country such as Syria, where medical training is given in Arabic and local government employees are not required to speak a foreign language. Even the salaries offered to sanitation labourers are, in some fields, insufficient to attract able-bodied men. This situation has led, not only to a high turnover of staff and a high ratio of vacancies, but also to a lack of qualified personnel in the middle grades who might be expected to take over in the top posts in five or ten years' time, when the present occupants retire;

d) Inadequate environmental sanitation. It appears that the environmental sanitation in some camps may in the past have been on a level comparable to that provided by Arab host governments to members of the indigenous population living in similar circumstances, but it has not been possible everywhere to keep pace with improvements in the past ten years in the level of sanitation provided by governments;

e) In-patient curative facilities in South Lebanon have suffered from the disappearance of the Palestine Red Crescent hospitals. The lack of dental care mentioned in paragraph 60 above may be on the way to a solution as a result of recently adopted measures.

69. Given the present financial situation, there are few prospects of wide-spread changes in the programme but there are ways of eking out what is available;

- self-help projects have already given good results for the improvement of buildings and installations and should continue to be encouraged. Over US\$ 400,000 was spent from UNRWA funds on self-help environmental projects in 1982;
- all Fields should avail themselves fully of such discretion as they have to carry out minor works on buildings, including health centres;
- Field Directors and Field Health Officers should not neglect opportunities to tap local voluntary sources for supplementary drugs or foodstuffs or for items of medical equipment. Some are already doing this;
- the possibilities of obtaining supplementary funding on a project basis (see chapter III, paragraph 117) should be fully explored.

70. On the organizational side, mention is made in the education section of this report of the good results that have followed the introduction of a two-year work plan. The same considerations apply to the health programme. A two-year plan would encourage greater flexibility and more thought about the future than the present annual plan allows. The two-year health work plan, which would not need to be drawn up in as much detail as the education plan, should of course be related to the biennial budget proposed in chapter III of this report. The newly-approved measures in respect of dental health (paragraph 60 above) and a new plan to develop the health and hygiene programme in the schools over a two to three-year period, represent useful steps in this direction.

C. Relief

1. Description of the programme

71. UNRWA's relief programme has provided assistance, in the form of food and shelter, to Palestine refugees in a virtually constant manner from the Agency's beginnings until September 1982 when a major change in services occurred.

72. The relief programme, which over the years has been efficiently administered often in difficult conditions, is a complex operation falling under the overall objectives of relieving distress among refugees. It had, until recently, three distinct functions: a) a mass programme of basic rations distribution; b) provision of shelter and c) assistance to special hardship cases. However, as a result of constant shortage of resources and the need to allocate additional resources to meet the emergency situation in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion in June 1982, the Commissioner-General decided to suspend general ration distribution to eligible refugees in all Fields, except in Lebanon. In addition, catering services in hospitals, schools and vocational training centres within the education and health programme, and self-help projects, are administered by the relief programme.

73. In recent years, expenditures related to relief have accounted for a little over 20 per cent of UNRWA expenditures (US\$ 52.4 million in 1982, according to the revised budget estimates, or 23.4 per cent). The largest portion of the

programme is basic rations (US\$ 35.4 million) with the special hardship assistance and shelter components falling far behind (US\$ 4.5 and US\$ 1.2 million respectively). An additional US\$ 11.1 million represents the programme's share of UNRWA common costs. According to the latest available budgetary information, as a result of the interruption of the ration distribution, the relief programme's share in UNRWA expenditures is scheduled to drop from over 20 per cent to just over 5 per cent in the 1984-1985 biennium, with corresponding increases in shares of the education (+13.5 per cent) and health programmes (+3.5 per cent). For the implications of this shift in emphasis, see paragraphs 88-90 below.

74. The organization for relief services is similar to that of the other programmes. The Director of Relief Services (D-1) is located in Vienna Headquarters and co-ordinates the work of the Supply Division (headed by a P-5), the Technical Office (P-4) and the Relief Services Division (headed by a P-5 located in Vienna, while his staff is located in Headquarters Amman). Altogether, there are 5 international professionals in HQ Vienna and none in HQ Amman. In all the Fields except Syria there is an international professional Field Relief Services Officer (P-4) and an international Field Supply and Transport Officer (P-4) accountable to the Field Director. These are assisted by area staff deputy Field Relief Service Officers, Field Welfare Officers, engineers, supply officers also assisted by eligibility and registration officers, distribution inspectors and other administrative and manual field staff. This structure appears to be logical and in line with UNRWA operational needs, though it will doubtless require streamlining with eventual redeployment of resources in the area of operations if the suggested new approach to the relief programme is adopted (see paragraph 90). JIU found that a good co-operative relationship existed between the international and the locally-recruited staff in the field. This is an important asset to UNRWA in discharging its difficult task. No complaints were reported concerning the distribution of functions between international and local staff. Some psychological and practical difficulties were encountered however in regard to the location of Headquarters. The distance from which operations are directed, particularly in cases of emergency, is causing some disquiet among the field staff. This is felt particularly in what seems a rigid centralization of decision concerning the repair and maintenance of shelters and other installations. This is discussed in paragraph 93 below.

(a) Distribution of basic food rations

75. The administration (eligibility and registration, control and maintenance of refugee records) and distribution of basic rations (flour, rice, sugar and cooking oil) was a large-scale field operation carried out with a skeleton international staff (5) and a small complement of area staff (168). The number of refugees registered with UNRWA was 1,925,000 in June 1982; however, before the cancellation of the basic ration programme the average number of refugees receiving rations was 820,000, or about 43% of the total.

76. JIU found that the monitoring and distribution of basic rations, which is delicate and time-consuming, was well organized and had been functioning without serious difficulties for many years. Eligibility procedures, registration and control of refugees in need were well established, although the Agency cannot investigate employment and income conditions of refugees in such a way as to establish without doubt the individual refugee's need of rations. Difficulties in the rectification of ration rolls, whether due to lack of co-operation on the part of host governments or to a low level of confidence in UNRWA on the part of the refugees themselves, have been experienced practically since the inception of the programme. This led the Agency to introduce an arbitrary annual ceiling on the number of ration recipients as early as 1952 and that policy was followed in all Fields until the interruption of basic rations distribution in September 1982.

77. The impact of basic relief on the nutrition of the average recipient could not be fully ascertained. JIU gained the impression that it did not play a significant part in the daily subsistence of refugees. In 1981, for example, each of the 820,000 refugees received on average about US\$ 29 in food support or about US\$ 0.08 per day, which is really a negligible amount, particularly since in most instances one member in each refugee family is employed (with the exception of Lebanon and Gaza, where employment possibilities are scarce or restricted). The relatively calm reaction of the refugee population to the decision of the Commissioner-General to suspend basic rations in September 1982 could partly be attributed to this.

78. It is important to note however that over the years basic rations have acquired the significance of an institution which exceeds by far their nutritional or monetary value: they are seen as a status symbol by the refugees and, what is more important, as a tangible proof of the obligation assumed by the international community to assist them - an obligation which since resolution 302(IV) of 8 September 1949 has been repeatedly confirmed by the General Assembly. This was emphasized in all five Fields with an expression of concern that the interruption of basic rations would represent a step in the direction of phasing out UNRWA services altogether.

79. JIU would like to pay tribute to the dedication and endurance of UNRWA relief staff in Lebanon for their professional and humane efforts in the performance of their duties in most difficult and at times precarious situations. Relief services in Lebanon are operating on an emergency basis, with some help from other Fields, particularly from the West Bank (supply services to South Lebanon) and from Syria (distribution of food and other support in the Tripoli and Beqaa Valley areas). A daily subsistence of 2,100 calories is given to all refugees regardless of eligibility. At the time of preparation of this report, it was not possible to see for how long this emergency assistance would be needed. However, considering the generally appalling conditions created for the refugees by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the strife in that country, continued support of the refugee population seems to be necessary for the foreseeable future.

(b) Provision of shelter

80. This part of the relief programme covers the construction, repair and maintenance of UNRWA installations (i.e., schools, clinics, warehouses), and the construction or repair of shelters (huts) occupied by refugees. On the average, expenditures for the shelter component represent less than 3 per cent of relief expenditures (US\$ 588,000 in 1981, of which US\$ 401,900 were spent on rental of buildings). 1/. The programme is run by a relatively small staff - in each Field: one engineering officer, with one engineer and two technical assistants. This may be in line with the reduced budgetary allocation and workload. However, after visiting the area, it seemed to the JIU team that the provision of shelter needs to be given higher priority. The outposting of two qualified building officials from Headquarters to the Fields recommended in paragraph 34 above might help to ease the situation.

81. An examination of expenditures on relief services during the last 15 years shows that this function has constantly been under-budgeted, with the exception of operations in Jordan for the two years immediately after the 1967 war. This has resulted, as repeatedly stressed by the Commissioner-General in his annual

1/ See A/37/5/Add.3, p. 13.

report to the General Assembly, in a considerable deterioration in UNRWA premises. The JIU team visited some of these - for example, New Camp schools and health centres in Amman and some rented schools in Damascus - and found that in many cases extensive repairs or even total reconstruction were needed.

82. Although they could not visit all installations in UNRWA's fields of operation, the Inspectors noted that the maintenance of premises varies considerably. In some places, like the Am'ari Camp on the West Bank, schools and health centres - boys preparatory school, girls preparatory school, health centre and youth activity centre - are kept in good condition. Similar good maintenance was noted in Ramallah Women's Training Centre, the UNRWA Swedish health centre in Gaza, the vocational training centre in Damascus and others. Most of the credit for good maintenance must go to self-help projects undertaken by the schools or by the refugee community. The contrary could be said of the places where UNRWA is expected to perform these services. Complaints were voiced against imposed shortages of resources, the stringent control of funds by Headquarters, the lack of supervisory staff in the field, etc.

83. Responsibility for the construction, repair and maintenance of shelters has almost entirely passed to the refugees. UNRWA's financial participation is limited to small cash contributions, to assistance in the form of building materials for self-help community projects and to the repair of shelters for special hardship cases. No significant difficulties were noted in this function - except problems arising from frequent punitive demolition of refugees's shelters by the Israel military authorities in the West Bank and Gaza and from the rebuilding and reconstruction of new dwellings for refugees in Lebanon and Syria as a result of the destruction of camps and installations in Lebanon. These should be taken care of on an emergency basis.

84. Most if not all of the difficulties of the shelter programme arise from the chronic shortage of financial allocations. It is understandable that the scarce resources available to the Agency have been directed to other priorities - in particular the health and education programmes. However, deterioration of UNRWA installations has now reached a point where it has intolerable effects on the quality of the services provided : it is difficult to see how UNRWA major programmes on education and health can be run successfully if installations are allowed to fall apart. Suggestions for remedial action are made in paragraphs 94-97 below.

(c) Assistance to special hardship cases

85. Welfare projects applicable to families and individuals in economic distress have been in operation in most Fields for many years. At present, some 40,000 refugees are eligible for daily support consisting of some 1,900 calories; in addition, they receive blankets, used clothing, etc. Children of special hardship families are given priority admission to Agency training centres. Shelter reconstruction or repair and small cash grants are provided by UNRWA which also provides welfare workers to solve individual and family problems through counselling and guidance.

86. In recent years, expenditures have varied between US\$ 1.6 and US\$ 3.0 million per year (US\$ 3.1 million in 1982), with regular adjustments. This function is well organized and appreciated and is controlled by a handful of staff in each Field. The JIU team met no complaints regarding their work. Some remarks were made however, regarding the administrative procedures for determining special hardship cases. The relevant relief services instructions were examined and appear to be rather detailed and may give the impression of being too bureaucratic. While some paperwork may be reduced (for example, a five-level recommendation is required before a case is approved and registered), these instructions were found

to be in line with the needs of this function. Urgent cases can be processed without unnecessary delay and the Field Directors are invested with adequate authority in establishing special hardship cases.

(d) Catering services

87. In addition to basic rations and special hardship assistance, UNRWA has been providing catering services to non-hospitalized TB patients, patients in general and mental hospitals, maternity centres, pregnant and nursing women, children's hospitals and children's units in general hospitals, staff members of hospitals, students in vocational training centres - altogether about 130,000 meals per day. The nutritional value varies according to each case - from 200 calories per day for children of 2-3 years of age to about 2,500 calories for male students in vocational training centres. These services are of a continuous character and obviously should not be curtailed.

2. Outstanding problems

(a) Implications of the interruption of basic ration distribution

88. As already mentioned, the basic ration distribution to eligible refugees was suspended by the Commissioner-General in September 1982. Despite General Assembly resolution 37/120 F requesting him to resume distribution on a continuing basis "as soon as possible", it seems unlikely that, given the present financial situation of the Agency, large-scale basic ration distribution will be re-established. The political and psychological consequences of the interruption of basic rations seem to be far more important than the food aid itself, since the Commissioner-General's decision appears to have seriously affected refugee and local government confidence in UNRWA operations. A less drastic reduction in services - for example, a lowering of the annual ceiling, perhaps with a relaxation of the conditions governing eligibility into the category of special hardship - would have been easier to explain and be accepted.

89. The Commissioner-General's decision provides a long-needed opportunity to develop a new approach to the whole problem of relief. JIU considers that the same pattern of assistance has existed for far too long. For example, the distribution of flour has long ago lost its original purpose. The refugees do not in principle bake their own bread any longer. They exchange their flour, at about 70% of its value, at the local bakery for a smaller weight of bread. It seems that they would be better off if they were given food coupons instead of flour. Similarly, it is doubtful whether continuation of traditional food assistance is necessary and whether a fresh approach to this problem would not be more beneficial.

90. In particular, the following new approaches are submitted for priority consideration:

- the merging of the present special hardship assistance and of basic ration distribution into one relief and welfare programme of assistance to refugees in need (e.g., by extending special hardship assistance to refugees in all Fields, who are considered to be in real need of assistance). The Commissioner-General in co-operation with host governments should be requested to draw up new criteria for eligibility for such assistance, to be submitted for approval to the Advisory Commission. Through the application of these new criteria a priority assistance category of refugees should be established.

- the gradual introduction of food coupons to replace distribution in kind. This seems now a realistic possibility since some contributors have agreed to give their contribution to UNRWA in cash rather than in kind. Available food would continue to be distributed according to established procedures. In addition, coupons would be made available to eligible refugees for the purchase of food in designated shops. This distribution procedure would also have the advantage of being less cumbersome and costly.
- the annual ceiling of rations would be abolished; the amount of rations - either in kind or in food coupons - would naturally be determined according to budgetary possibilities. Increases and reductions should be treated equally in all fields.

(b) Difficulties caused by lack of sufficient resources

i) Deterioration of UNRWA premises and refugee shelters

91. Most if not all the difficulties of the shelter programme arise from the lack of appropriate funding for this function. From 1970 onwards, on the average, less than 3 per cent of the relief budget was spent on the rental, construction and maintenance of installations. If UNRWA is to reinforce the confidence of the refugees in its operations it seems obvious that a more balanced planning and distribution of resources in favour of shelter is urgently required. According to the budgetary documentation available at the time of drafting this report, it is not clear whether it is intended to devote some of the resources freed by the interruption of the basic ration distribution to the shelter programme.

92. While JIU is conscious of the financial constraints under which UNRWA is operating, it feels that more efforts and perhaps new approaches are needed for financing the construction, repair and maintenance of UNRWA premises. As a first step, a biennial plan of action similar to that for education should be drawn up in which the priority areas of attention - for the construction or reconstruction of UNRWA installations in the various Fields - would be clearly identified.

93. JIU recommends that responsibility for the maintenance of UNRWA premises should be placed on education and health officers in the Fields and their respective staffs. The field engineering officers should, however, be responsible for technical supervision of the works as hitherto. In addition, the present procedure for the authorization of budgeted expenditure on repair and maintenance should be reviewed and modified so that Field Directors would have full responsibility and be accountable for the proper use of resources.

ii) Self-help projects

94. As indicated in paragraphs 82-83 above, UNRWA provides limited assistance to community self-help projects either in building materials or cash. Such projects are playing an important role in easing the living conditions of the refugees. They include the construction of concrete pathways and asphalt roads in camps and schools to the construction of additional classrooms, school laboratories, youth centres, schoolyards and playgrounds, water, sanitation and electricity installations, etc. The maintenance of health and education installations in some areas is also undertaken by self-help projects. The advantages of these activities are numerous.

95. Responsibility for self-help projects is unevenly distributed. In some Fields it rests with the health programme and in others with the relief programme, or is shared among the three programmes. This may well be the reason for the difference in emphasis given to this function with resulting variations in the development of self-help projects in the various Fields. For example, in the last 10 years in Jordan some US\$ 13 million or about US\$ 7 for each refugee was spent. Of this, UNRWA's share was US\$ 2.2 million or about US\$ 1.15 per refugee for ten years. Comparison with the West Bank shows that double that amount was spent per refugee in camps during the same period. In the other Fields, the difference was even larger. A more organized approach and a stronger emphasis on self-help is called for.

96. In view of the continuing shortage of resources with which UNRWA is faced, it seems that self-help projects conducted under the responsibility of UNRWA constitute a fresh opportunity which could help in redressing some of the psychological and political problems caused by the interruption of basic ration distribution. JIU feels that small-scale income-generating development projects sponsored by UNRWA may also give good results. A number of developmental co-operatives in the West Bank and Gaza supported by UNRWA are a good example of this. The potential of this approach should be carefully examined in conjunction with the suggestions on vocational training in contemporary professions indicated in paragraph 44 above. Should such a study prove the soundness of this method, the United Nations specialized agencies could contribute to the financing of small-scale development projects and assist with technical and other support until they become self-supporting. If properly organized and successfully operated, these in turn should generate financial feedback for the education and health programmes.

97. In conclusion, JIU considers that UNRWA has for too long continued to engage in the same pattern of relief operations. It has set up a complex system for large-scale relief operations which overall has functioned adequately in politically and militarily volatile conditions. This has played a vital role in the fulfilment of UNRWA's mandate in the Near East. Little effort has however gone into research on new approaches to assistance to refugees in need. A review of operations has only been recently initiated. Self-help community projects as well as UNRWA-sponsored co-operative developmental projects, although small in scale, seem to offer an opportunity for productive investment of the limited resources at UNRWA's disposal.

III. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

A. Budget and Finance

1. Introduction of a budgeting and financing system

98. The recurrent financial crisis of UNRWA - each year the level of voluntary contributions does not match the level of planned expenditure - could perhaps be alleviated if the methods used for informing the contributing member States on the needs of the Agency were improved. Instead of having several presentations of estimated expenditure with different figures at different moments of the year, and decisions on financing taken by member States without a thorough discussion of the budget, a more rational procedure including the following elements is outlined in the paragraphs below:

- The establishment of a real detailed budget.
- A thorough discussion of the budget and its approval by member States.
- The determination by contributing member States of their contributions on the basis of this approved budget.

99. In budgetary and financial matters, the situation of UNRWA is at variance with the usual practice of the organizations of the United Nations system. The major differences are that UNRWA does not present member States with a formal budget or programme budget providing detailed information on planned expenditures, and that consequently there is no real budgetary discussion in any intergovernmental body. There are several documents which provide budgetary information, but none is a really detailed budget, and the relations between the budget and the programme are not clearly explained.

100. For external use, i.e., for the presentation of expenditure forecasts to member States, there are only:

(a) Three pages in the United Nations biennial programme budget: these are very sketchy and the figures do not coincide with those in subsequent documents;

(b) The information provided each year in a chapter of the Commissioner-General's report, which contains a revised budget for the current year and the proposed budget for the next year. It will be recalled that the Commissioner-General's report is submitted in September and that chapter III describes the activities of UNRWA for the twelve-month period from 1 July of the previous year to 30 June of the current year. The budgetary chapter in question includes a table divided into five parts and 18 budget headings. Each of these headings distinguishes between recurrent costs and non-recurrent costs and is accompanied by a short text which generally explains any differences with the previous year. A number of tables in the annex provide a certain amount of information on the total number of refugees, pupils, scholarships, etc., and on income received;

(c) The information provided at various dates to the Advisory Commission in documents entitled "Financial Outlook for the year 19..." or "UNRWA's Financial Situation as of"; these documents do not however include more detailed information on planned expenditures and do not clearly explain the differences with the figures of planned expenditures previously given.

101. The differences between the various estimates of planned and actual expenditures are shown in the following table :

		<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
		US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$
Figures submitted in the September preceding the relevant financial year	Planned Expenditure		151,838	185,158	230,925	265,574	273,352
	Income forecast		114,727	133,545	160,536	185,316	185,294
	Deficit		37,111	56,813	70,389	80,258	86,058
Figures corrected at 30 June of relevant financial year	Planned Expenditure	139,800	166,346	211,289	238,667	233,526	
	Income forecast	125,595	138,029	164,416	193,818	191,487	
	Deficit	13,845	28,317	46,873	44,849	42,039	
True income and expenditure by end of relevant financial year	Expenditure	132,111	152,188	183,677	180,728	182,854	
	Income	130,504	158,871	184,568	190,722	181,877	
	Differences	- 1,600	- 6,683	+ 891	+10,193	- 977	

102. It can be seen from this table that the deficits announced in the September preceding the relevant financial year are generally very high (between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of the total budget), that they undergo a quite substantial decline by 30 June of the financial year and that a rough balance (in the form of a slight deficit or surplus) is achieved by the end of the year. The final outcome may be attributable:

- either, as in 1980, to a massive jump in estimated income from 133 million to 183 million dollars,
- or, as in 1981 and 1982, to no-less-massive cuts in expenditure (50 million dollars in 1981 and 80 million dollars in 1982). In 1981, the cuts were spread over all the Agency's programmes; the education budget was reduced by 32 million dollars, the health budget by 6 million and the relief budget by 11 million. Similar cuts were made in 1982, with reductions of 43 million dollars for education, 8 million dollars for health and 27 million dollars for relief services.

103. This situation can be explained only because:

(a) There is no precise date early in the year at which the amount of voluntary contributions which will constitute UNRWA's income for the year is known. A pledging conference takes place generally towards the end of November of the year preceding the budgetary year, but at the time when most of the major contributors are not yet in a position to indicate clearly their intentions. The Commissioner-General negotiates throughout the year to obtain firm pledges from each of the main contributors;

(b) As a result of these negotiations, there are variations in the estimates throughout the year. In order to avoid an excess of expenditure over income, a policy of severe restraint is followed. An internal document entitled "Budget Status Report" is updated several times a year (six times in 1979, five times in 1980, four times in 1981 and four times in 1982).

It contains in an annex a list of "not yet approved expenditures". The amount of this "not yet approved budget" generally equals the amount of the expected deficit or, in other words, the difference between the amount of the budget submitted in the Commissioner-General's report and the total value of the contributions pledged at the time that document is prepared. The indications as to possible changes given in this budget status report are extremely detailed and often refer to quite modest sums.

104. The authorizations of expenditure (allotments) sent to the Field Directors are very detailed and are made at a low level of sub codes. They make distinctions between "annual", "justification research" and "not yet approved" allotments and are divided into three periods of four months each. This procedure facilitates a precise control of the use of funds.

105. An effort is therefore made to tailor expenditures closely to the level of available income. But the cost cutting measures remain internal. Member States are not involved in such day-to-day budgetary decisions which ultimately have a severe impact on management and on the services to refugees, the maintenance of school buildings, the standard of equipment of clinics, etc. The full extent of the damage can be judged from chapter II of this report. Moreover, member States are given no precise statement concerning the consequences of the cuts and they may have been inclined to assume that it is possible to finance only some 75 per cent of the expenditure without causing any serious harm. It therefore seems indispensable to adopt a clearer, more precise system enabling member States to determine exactly the consequences of the level of contributions they set for the Agency.

106. This system should be based firstly on the establishment of a real budget. The budget should be presented with far greater clarity and precision than is currently the case in the Commissioner-General's report. In fact, it would be preferable to have a document distinct from the annual report, entitled "UNRWA Programme Budget".

107. The present structure of the budget has the merit of presenting separately each of the three main programmes (first three parts), the general administrative and common costs (fourth part) and the contingency reserves (fifth part). This structure would not seem to require any change, but the explanations provided to member States should be considerably expanded: each of the present main budget headings should be subdivided and each expenditure heading should be accompanied by clear explanations.

108. The degree of detail should be at least equivalent to that provided in schedule A of the report of the External Auditors concerning expenditure and commitments for the year in question. For example, in that report, the heading "shelter" (from Part III, "Relief Services") is broken down into four items: shelter construction and maintenance, road and camp improvements, camp rentals, administration; similarly, the "medical services" heading is broken down into 12 items including pharmacy services, laboratory services, clinic services, maternity centres and general hospitals. For each of these items of expenditure, the budget should also distinguish between operating costs and capital or non-recurrent costs; and include:

- A staffing table (and staff costs);
- The travel communications and miscellaneous costs;
- A table of equipment costs (each providing separate information for the five regions and the headquarters duty stations);

- A narrative explaining the programme corresponding to the heading and accompanied by the required numerical data (cost per pupil or per refugee, number of persons concerned, etc.).

109. The description should go into greater detail for the major items (for example, elementary and preparatory education), which account for several tens of millions of dollars and should be accurately broken down by establishment or by school for each region.

110. The budgetary discussion and approval process should be organized as follows:

- Firstly, sound technical advice on the content of the budget should be obtained. To this end, it is recommended that the UNRWA budget be submitted to the consideration of ACABQ.
- Secondly, the budget together with the relevant report of ACABQ should be discussed by the Advisory Commission which should also prepare a report on the document before its final approval by the General Assembly through the Special Political Committee (the members of the working group on the financing of UNRWA should also receive all the relevant documentation).

111. Any reduction in the planned level of expenditure should be made during the discussion and approval process. The major contributors should have an opportunity during the discussion to express their opinion on these points. This means that they should know from the detailed changes made in the Commissioner-General's budget what would be the consequences of any cuts they propose. After this thorough revision, the approved budget would represent the basis on which contributing member States could determine their contributions. Informal consultations could take place during the budgetary discussions among the major contributors in order to define the share of each. In these conditions, the decisions of contributing member States on the level and the type of activities for which UNRWA takes responsibility would be based on a better knowledge of the consequences of these decisions.

112. If some of the contributors are not in a position to make commitments on the level of their contribution before the beginning of the budgetary year, every effort should be made to obtain a clear picture of the pledges by May of the budgetary year at the latest : perhaps a second pledging conference could take place around this date, together with a special session of the Advisory Commission (and possibly of the working group on the financing of UNRWA) in order to define the final budget for the current year. Instead of dealing only with the expected level of income, such a meeting should allow a full discussion of the approved budget and adopt the changes which could become necessary if the level of expected income does not match the level of planned expenditure of the budget. Such a method would associate the member States, and particularly the major contributors, to any further possible reduction of the UNRWA budget and would give them full knowledge of the consequences of any cuts.

2. Other desirable changes

113. Other differences exist between the budgetary and financial practices of UNRWA and those of other United Nations system organizations. These concern the length of the budgetary period, the existence of a special provision for staff

separation benefits and the absence of a relationship between programming and budgeting. It would, in the opinion of the JIU, be advantageous for UNRWA to eliminate these differences.

Possibility of a biennial budget

114. JIU noted very little substantive difference between the budgets of successive years. It is therefore suggested, as a first step, that UNRWA prepare its budget for two calendar years, if necessary with adjustments towards the end of the first year. This would reduce the staff time now devoted to budget preparation in the Fields and at Headquarters. Other organizations financed only by voluntary contributions like UNDP and UNICEF have adopted biennial budgets. This example could very well be followed by UNRWA.

Particular problems relating to reserve for separation benefits

115. During the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Commissioner-General "advocated that the liability for separation benefits, in the event of mass redundancies, should be placed on the regular budget of the United Nations; the Commissioner-General's suggestion was not adopted". JIU is of the opinion that it would be desirable for the General Assembly to review this decision. The provision for separation benefits represents a serious burden on UNRWA's budget. Substantial payments for separation would only have to be made in the case that UNRWA operations were to be discontinued and its staff forced to cease its work. This corresponds to what seems an unlikely eventuality. As of 31 December 1982 this provision stood at US\$ 52,857,576. The regular increases in it amounted to 8 million dollars in 1980, 5.8 million in 1981 and 8 million in 1982. If the General Assembly simply decided that, in the event of mass redundancies, the United Nations would defray the cost of the separation indemnities payable to the staff if UNRWA was not able to do so, the Organization would incur only a small risk and the total of the UNRWA budget could be reduced by between 5 and 8 million US dollars a year.

The adoption of a programme budget and its use as a management tool

116. The budget document recommended above could be used not only to provide information to member States but also in managing the agency. It would become a programme budget adjusted to the specific requirements of UNRWA's programmes. It would present the following advantages:

(a) The budget review process could more easily concentrate on substantive matters and the allocation of priorities between programmes and subprogrammes;

(b) A programme budget would permit greater delegation of authority to Field Directors, while maintaining adequate controls at Headquarters, to ensure that expenditures did not exceed contributions;

(c) A programme budget could establish a direct link with a major tool now in use for planning and control of execution - the Biennial Education Work Plan. If similar plans are developed for Health and Relief (see paragraphs 70 and 92), these plans could be incorporated under the sub-programmes and programme elements of the programme budget.

Supplementary programmes and projects and the financing thereof

117. During its visits to camps, schools and clinics (see chapter II above), it became apparent to the JIU team that in a great many cases supplementary contributions earmarked for specific projects could substantially improve the quantity

and quality of the services extended to refugees. It has been noted, for example, (see paragraph 40 above) that UNRWA is currently unable to accept more than one in four to one in nine candidates, depending on Fields, for its vocational training activities. A special programme to expand these activities and so take in more students is exactly the kind of operation for which special contributions could be sought from member States. UNICEF's system of "noted projects" could serve as a useful model in this respect. Similar initiatives would also be desirable in the health and relief programmes. Such auxiliary funding for specific projects need not be restricted to contributions from member States; opportunities to tap local and non-local voluntary sources should not be neglected. To this end, a separate document distinct from the budget, entitled "UNRWA Noted Projects" should be published to assist the Commissioner-General in his fund-raising activities.

B. Personnel Questions

118. In terms of staff, UNRWA is by far the largest organization of the UN System. The table below summarizes the situation:

Distribution of UNRWA Posts

1 April 1983

<u>Location</u>	<u>Area Staff</u>	<u>UNRWA</u> <u>International</u>		<u>WHO</u>	<u>UNESCO</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
		<u>P</u>	<u>GS</u>			
Lebanon	2,391	4	-	-	-	2,395
SAR	2,427	4	-	-	-	2,431
Jordan	5,618	6	-	-	1	5,625
WB	2,703	7	2	-	1	2,713
Gaza	3,739	5	-	-	1	3,745
Cairo	3	-	-	-	-	3
HQ (Amman)	73	4	-	3	16	96
HQ (Vienna)	198	53	9	2	2	264
New York	-	2	1	-	-	3
	<u>17,152</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>17,275</u>

307 area posts, 6 international professional, 2 international GS and 3 UNESCO posts are vacant.

119. All international professional posts - except six paid on the UNRWA budget and those on loan from WHO and UNESCO who are paid and administered by their organization - are charged to the United Nations budget (although technically UNRWA international professionals are not United Nations staff members). The International General Service posts - except three paid by UNRWA itself - are also charged to the United Nations. A further 9 posts (6 international professional and 3 GS) are financed by special non-governmental contributions for the Lebanon emergency.

120. The grading of the 111 international professional posts (UNRWA, UNESCO, WHO) is the following: USG: 1; D-2: 3; D-1: 11; P-5: 25; P-4: 54; P-3: 16; P-2: 1. Grades for area staff range from 1 to 18, grades 13 and above corresponding to occupations and tasks of a managerial or senior operational character. The number of area staff by grade is given in the following table:

UNRWA Area General and Teaching Staff by grade
(as at 30 April 1983)

<u>Grade</u>	<u>General Staff</u>	<u>Teaching Staff</u>	<u>Total</u>
01	2,818		2,818
02	473	1	474
03	180	10	190
04	168	234	402
05	734	71	805
06	224	1,290	1,514
07	415	1,481	1,896
08	332	3,469	3,801
09	175	1,819	1,994
10	101	1,850	1,951
11	50	109	159
12	54	195	249
13	34	26	60
14	123	9	132
15	55	16	71
16	56	11	67
17	13	1	14
18	13	6	19
TOTAL	6,018	10,598	16,616

121. Among the three categories of staff: the first two, International Professionals and International GS staff, perform traditional or "normal" administrative or substantive functions, albeit in a rather unique political and cultural context; the third category - Area staff - performs a wide variety of functions. Some of these functions are comparable to those found in activities and programmes elsewhere in the UN System: e.g., administrative support, personnel and financial management, relief operations, supply distribution, etc. But the majority of tasks are essentially of a governmental nature, notably in education and health. At grades 13 to 18 (corresponding to managerial or senior operational tasks), the breakdown of functions is approximately the following (see 2/ next page):

- 18 posts at grade 18: senior administrative officers including Field Education Officers and Field Health Officers,
- 11 posts at grade 17: senior administrative officers,
1 senior medical officer, 1 medical specialist,
1 architect,
- 75 posts at grade 16: 25 medical officers,
50 administrative officers of various types,
- 79 posts at grade 15: 16 training specialists,
39 medical officers,
24 administrative officers of various types,
- 147 posts at grade 14: 55 medical officers, 10 dental surgeons and
5 pharmacists,
12 engineers,
65 administrative officers of various types,

- 70 posts at grade 13: administrative officers of various types (education officers, area officers, audit assistants, some vocational training instructors).

Grades 13 to 18 thus include posts for 136 doctors, some 30 engineers and specialists and some 230 administrative officers of various types.

122. At grades 01 to 12, the breakdown of the main functions is roughly the following:

- Education instructors and supervisors (grades 11 and 12)	400
- Teachers (grades 4 to 10)	about 10,000
- Clerks, secretaries and assistants (grades 4, 5, 8 and 9)	about 800
- Specialist workers (grades 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)	about 1,000
- Drivers (grade 5)	300
- Nurses and midwives (grades 4, 5 and 7)	360
- Labourers, manual workers, messengers (grades 1 and 2)	3,600

123. A thorough analysis of problems of recruitment, career development, etc., would have required far more precise and comprehensive statistical information than JIU was able to obtain. The introduction in the near future of an improved personnel information system, including fact sheets for staff comparable to those used by the United Nations, would permit a better evaluation of the situation. JIU merely analysed the curriculum vitae of the international professional staff and confined itself to a few soundings for its consideration of careers, number of recruitments per grade and per year, prospective departures due to age, etc., in the case of area staff. The main findings are as follows:

1. Relations between international and area staff

124. In the particular case of UNRWA, the existence of international staff is justified by the role which the organization is called upon to play in a politically sensitive environment with regard to Palestine refugees. It is necessary to bear this consideration in mind in order to understand the type of functions assumed by international staff, since, in general the area staff and in particular the 400 professionals at grades 13 to 18 are sufficiently well qualified to manage the programmes without day-to-day supervision. For this reason, as has already been noted in respect of staff seconded by UNESCO, international professionals should at the same time assume responsibility for decisions taken in a politically difficult context and be able not only to supervise but to train area staff and provide expert advice in the fields of organization, management, finance, planning, evaluation, education, health and social services. This approach implies that the existence of international staff must be justified by very specific and high qualifications different from those of the area staff. This is particularly important since the remuneration of international staff is several times greater than that of the "area professionals".^{3/}

125. In its submission for the United Nations 1984-1985 regular budget, UNRWA has requested that 18 posts be reclassified (one D-2 to ASG, seven D-1 to D-2, six P-5 to D-1, two P-4 to P-5 and two P-3 to P-4), six new posts be established (one D-1 and five P-5) and that seven posts presently financed by UNRWA resources

^{2/} Numbers of area staff by post and by grade do not always correspond since many posts - especially teaching posts - are encumbered by staff at lower grade levels.

^{3/} The conditions of employment in the United Nations system of staff generally referred to as "national professionals" are still under review by the International Civil Service Commission. The UNRWA local senior administrative staff can be assimilated to this category.

be transferred to the United Nations regular budget. JIU was informed that the Secretary-General has supported the request for the transfer of seven posts, but has deferred his decision on the reclassifications and on the establishment of new posts until the completion of the JIU report on UNRWA. After examining this question and discussing it with the Commissioner-General, JIU feels that the establishment of 5 new posts at the P-2 and P-3 levels would be justified. In recommending the acceptance of this proposal JIU has taken into account the need to increase the presence of international staff in the Field Offices. This is essential in order to permit UNRWA to fulfil its mandate, especially in difficult or emergency situations. Moreover, JIU recommends that these appointments be made at the junior professional level in consideration of the need to correct the present skewed professional grade pyramid. JIU also hopes that in the filling of these posts due consideration would be given by the Commissioner-General to the recommendations of this report on geographical distribution and the academic qualifications of international professional staff.

2. Personnel management methods

126. UNRWA has always had its own staff regulations and rules for both its area and international staff, who hold UNRWA letters of appointment and who do not form part of the staff of the United Nations. This is true even where they hold posts which since 1975 have been financed from the United Nations regular budget. One of the most interesting features of UNRWA administration is the existence of an Occupation Classification Manual (OCM). This manual basically sets out classification standards and prescribes the rates and conditions for the payment of certain allowances, and was established in the early 1960's as a result of position classification studies, carried out by consultants from the American University of Beirut. The essentials of the system of pay administration thus established have been retained, despite some modifications over the years. There are over 600 classifications (including teachers distinguished by subject specialization) and some 25 types of supplementary allowances. Some of these are the result of attempts at fine tuning of the grading system and UNRWA is working progressively to consolidate many of them in basic pay. Other allowances represent temporary additions to basic pay to compensate for scarcity and similar market considerations pending determination of revised rates of pay through surveys, and these are being phased out as surveys are completed.

127. In general, this classification system is regarded as being in need of modernization, because the job classification system has become outdated and there is no career planning machinery. However, at the time when the OCM was drawn up, it constituted a system far superior to that which still exists even today in many international organizations. Its main advantage is that it enables the level of qualifications required of local staff to be determined very precisely.

128. Personnel management is conducted at various levels. International professional and GS staff are administered from Vienna centrally regardless of their location, except for staff on loan from UNESCO and WHO, who are administered and paid by their respective organizations. Vienna and Headquarters Amman area staff are also administered centrally and are paid according to the best prevailing local rates. Personnel management of area staff in the Fields is taken care of by the Heads of the respective Field offices in accordance with rules and regulations established centrally. However, the professional supervision of area staff is the responsibility of the Headquarters specialists (Education, Health, Relief) who are located in Vienna, while the bulk of substantive professionals (both international and area) are in Headquarters Amman and in the Field Offices. In the case of major or Agency-wide labour conflicts, and for the representation

of UNRWA when a salary survey is made by ICSC, Vienna takes care of the problems involved; the Field Director handles local minor labour conflicts. This complex structure is partly the result of historical events (transfer of UNRWA Headquarters from Beirut to Vienna and Amman) and partly a reflection of the complexity of UNRWA operations.

3. Situation of the area staff

a) Levels of remuneration and staff relations

129. Until 1975, it was Agency policy to establish conditions of service and remuneration by reference primarily to government practice in the countries concerned, and governments are still leading comparators in the pay surveys made by ICSC and UNRWA. Local government practice is endemic with special allowances; there was admittedly a tendency in the past for the Agency to follow this practice to some extent, and efforts are being made to correct it. In the past three years there have been no net additions to the number of allowances and the number is falling though of course some will remain.

130. The comprehensive surveys of remuneration carried out by ICSC in 1980, 1981 and 1983 resulted in increased salaries which, except for the managerial group of local professionals, seem to have provided reasonable salary increases, if one takes into account the financial constraints of UNRWA.

131. These constraints have had negative effects: on the one hand, they have been used to delay reform, which in the minds of all interviewed by JIU is long overdue. On the other hand, the uncertainty of tenure is a source of frustration and an incentive for staff to join the brain and manpower drain towards the Gulf States and elsewhere. This is especially serious for specialized health personnel (nurses, sanitation engineers, etc.,) whose salaries are perhaps the least competitive, but is also increasingly affecting education personnel.

132. It is not surprising in a temporary organization where staff feel insecure in their employment, where there is no organized career development and where remuneration problems have been acute, that there has been some friction between the personnel and the administration resulting at times in strikes. The Agency's area staff are highly unionised and since pay rates have been negotiable, there have been continual pressures for upward revisions and for special allowances for particular groups. The Commissioner-General has taken these problems seriously and has negotiated on a continuous basis with staff representatives. However, the staff perceive these negotiations as insufficiently productive. No doubt this is due to the financial limitations and uncertainties of the Agency, which often make it impossible to meet even justified staff demands. Nevertheless, there is a system of termination indemnities which compensates, to some extent, for the insecurity of employment and is applicable also to retiring staff members.

133. The organization of staff unions varies somewhat among Fields. There is also an Inter-Staff Union Conference whose chairman has negotiated a series of memoranda of agreement with the Commissioner-General. The latest agreement of October 1982 covers a wide range of personnel questions and some unresolved issues. It has exceptionally a period of validity of only one year, but will remain in effect until a new arrangement is signed. UNRWA has undertaken to consider proposals put forward by staff representatives on their intrinsic merits. Those which can be justified to maintain overall conditions of service in each Field in line with local labour markets will be considered by the Agency, notwithstanding

its financial position. Other proposals will be considered inter alia on the basis of the Agency's ability to finance them. JIU feels that this is a sound approach on the part of both the staff and the administration, which takes into account to a reasonable and fair extent the financial difficulties of the Agency.

b) Levels of qualification

134. The academic and professional qualifications required for area staff are very precisely defined in the OCM; the following examples show that they are often comparable to those of international professionals:

- Teacher A, grade 09: first university degree (B.A.) or completion of courses recognized by UNRWA.
- Area education officer: first university degree from a college or university recognized by UNRWA.
- Teacher training specialist: university degree from a college or university recognized by UNRWA, with major specialization in the field of duty directly related to the duties of the post plus at least one year of professional teacher training.

135. For all specialized education posts, the required levels of technical and general qualifications are also rigorously indicated:

- Administrative officer: university degree from a college or university recognized by UNRWA plus a number of years of experience varying with the grade.
- All medical officers: diploma or degree from a university or medical school recognized by UNRWA including an internship of at least 12 months' duration.

136. Each of the 600 job descriptions gives a precise indication of the specialized qualifications required for each post. These definitions could have been simplified if a framework of occupational groups had been used, but this system, applied with determination, has yielded excellent results: the staff recruited in general has entirely satisfactory qualifications.

c) Lack of career planning

137. Some career prospects exist for specific occupational groups: e.g., teachers and nurses. Most elementary teachers are recruited at grade 6 and preparatory teachers at grade 8 (although, oddly enough, their posts seem to be mostly ranked at grade 10 for accounting purposes). The rules regarding promotion for teachers are described in paragraphs 17 A-C of part III of the OCM, which provides:

"Staff members occupying Teacher posts are eligible for a promotion of one grade after three years of satisfactory teaching service with UNRWA as a fully qualified teacher and for a second promotion of one grade after a further three years of satisfactory teaching service with UNRWA as a fully qualified teacher subject to the following:...." (various conditions are enumerated).

An identical promotion system exists from "Teacher", grade A (09) to "Senior Teacher", grade 10. A comparable system exists for "Staff nurses", who have to meet the following requirements at grade 7: full secondary education plus a diploma in basic nursing (three years' training). At grade 8, the same

qualifications are required plus at least three years' satisfactory working experience and at grade 9 the same qualifications plus at least five years' satisfactory working experience.

138. But career paths of this kind do not seem to exist for the very large number of other occupations. Even for the groups considered, the periods involved are very short, ranging from two years to a maximum of six, and do not cover the entire span of a professional career. Moreover there do not seem to be any substantial internal facilities for professional advancement or systematic assistance (except in the case of education grants and some possibilities for health personnel to attend professional courses) to acquire outside training.

139. A comprehensive plan should therefore be introduced, involving the establishment of occupational groups within which career patterns could be pursued (the statistics provided in paragraphs 121-122 above give an idea of the various groups which might be established) and the definition, for each group, of the conditions of entry, the minimum and average time needed for promotion from one grade to another, available training facilities, etc. Such a system is particularly necessary for the managerial and technical staff in grades 13 to 18.

140. Examination of the careers of some local staff members at the highest rank and the information acquired on the situation of those staff members regarding prospective retirements and the resultant difficulties for the organization in finding replacements show that the methods currently applied do not enable day-to-day problems to be solved or permit coherent planning for the future. There is an urgent need for an over-all plan for area professionals covering conditions of recruitment, in-service training, career profiles encompassing their entire professional life, conditions of promotion, types of post to be occupied by rotation, etc. Similar plans should then be devised for the various groups of teaching staff, nurses, specialized workers and the very large numbers of non-specialized workers.

141. JIU had thought that the new Personnel Policy Division set up in 1981 would rapidly embark on a study of these problems. In fact, little progress has been made in modernizing the OCM or in formulating the principles for a reform. The work of the Division concerned seems to be concentrated on classifying the posts of international professional staff; the results of this exercise are still under discussion and, in any event, it was certainly not the most pressing priority. Despite the production of various policy papers, no specific action seems to have been initiated as far as the area staff are concerned. In the circumstances, it seems that the above-mentioned plan for the establishment of occupational groups and career development should be devised as soon as possible and that the structures for planning and implementing this reform should be reorganized.

4. The situation of the international staff

142. Although the rules concerning geographical distribution of international staff are not applied to UNRWA, the distribution of nationalities is anomalous (compared to other United Nations agencies in a similar situation). Even considering historical factors and UNRWA operational constraints, it is difficult to understand why nearly 90% of UNRWA international professionals are nationals of developed countries and only approximately 10% are from developing countries: 33% are from the United Kingdom, 11% from the USA, 17% from other English-speaking developed countries, 9% from Nordic countries, 10% from the Federal Republic of Germany and 8% from other European countries (see table below for details). To protect the international character of UNRWA, the geographical distribution of staff should

INTERNATIONAL STAFF MEMBERS OF UNRWA BY NATIONALITY AND GRADE
as at 1 April 1983

Nationality	USG	D2	D1	P5	P4	P3	P2	P1	Int. GS	TOTAL
Australia	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Austria	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
Canada	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	5
Denmark	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
France	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Federal Republic of Germany	-	-	-	2	4	2	-	-	-	8
India	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Indonesia	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ireland	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3
Jamaica	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Japan	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Netherlands	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
New Zealand	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Philippines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sweden	1	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	1	7
Switzerland	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Tanzania	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Tunisia	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
United Kingdom	-	1	3	5	12	5	-	-	4	30
United States of America	-	1	1	1	4	2	-	-	-	9
TOTAL	1	2	9	18	36	12	1	-	10	89

be improved as a matter of urgency and, to the extent possible, follow the principles applied by the United Nations. A recruitment plan of the type recently adopted by the United Nations strongly discouraging recruitment in countries which are manifestly overrepresented and indicating the countries or regions where recruitments should be made, needs to be established.

143. The knowledge of Arabic amongst the international professionals is inadequate. Of the total, 96 persons speak English fluently, 18 French, four Spanish and 35 other languages. But only eight are fluent in Arabic. This has not only numerous drawbacks, but places the international staff in a situation of inferiority vis-à-vis the local staff. Urgent corrective measures are needed: training courses should be established for existing staff, and, as a general rule, a knowledge of Arabic should be a requirement for new recruits.

144. The academic level of international staff by grade is indicated in the table below which shows that:

- the level of academic qualifications of UNRWA professionals is below normal recruitment standards in the UN System (M.A. or equivalent),
- 35 percent of the staff is below the B.A. level,
- 34 percent of the staff reach the B.A. level and only 21 percent the M.A. level or higher.

INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS** - ACADEMIC LEVEL BY GRADE

Academic Level	Grades							
	P.1	P.2	P.3	P.4	P.5*	D.1*	D.2	TOTAL
1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1 (1%)
2	-	-	3	4	2	-	-	9 (11%)
3	-	-	2	13	3	1	-	19 (23%)
4	-	-	5	13	11	5	-	34 (40%)
5	-	2	2	4	3	4	2	17 (20%)
6	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4 (5%)
TOTAL	-	2	13	35	22	10	2	84

*Academic information not available for 2 staff members at P.5 level, and for 1 staff member at D.1 level.

**Excluding vocational training staff.

CODE:

- 1 = Secondary education without diploma
- 2 = Secondary education with diploma
- 3 = Post-secondary education without diploma
- 4 = BA or equivalent
- 5 = MA or equivalent
- 6 = PhD or equivalent

145. Considering the level of academic qualifications which the OCM requires for local staff (see paragraphs 134-135 above) and the expert and advisory role that the international staff should play, it is obvious that the situation should be urgently corrected (the figures show that 35% of the international staff have lower qualifications than the majority of local staff in corresponding occupations). It is also true that in some cases (e.g., vocational training specialists) purely professional qualifications are more important than academic results. This situation can of course be explained by the fact that the Agency has until now placed the emphasis, particularly at the field level, on practical experience rather than academic achievement. According to this philosophy, because of the Agency's operational character, the kind of international staff required is necessarily different from what one would expect to find in other United Nations organizations, which are primarily advisory in character and therefore require highly trained experts.

146. JIU believes that such a philosophy is obsolete, because of the high level of qualifications existing among the area staff. The modernization of UNRWA, the differences in remuneration between local and international staff and the role of UNRWA as an international organization, imply that in all fields of activity, education, health, social welfare, management, etc., the advisory and expert role of international staff should be considered essential. This implies a complete re-orientation of present personnel practices and the definition of a clear and precise recruitment policy. This is far more urgent than the implementation of the job classification exercise presently being conducted for international staff. ^{4/}

C. Structure and delegation of authority

147. The examination of UNRWA's finance and personnel problems has shown that the organization is marked by a high degree of centralization. Over the years, a very specific system of regulations and of organization has been put into place, thanks in particular to an individual - comptroller Lloyd Callow - who played a fundamental and positive role in the thirty years in which he exercised his functions. The centralized character of the organization is confirmed by the magnitude of the responsibilities given to the Commissioner-General. The administrative philosophy which was applied consisted mainly of ensuring the day-to-day functioning of services while, understandably, little attention was given to the future, given the uncertainty which has always surrounded the future of the Agency.

148. UNRWA, however, is now 35 years old and it is impossible to say that it will not continue to exist for many more years. Moreover, the education, health and welfare functions that it now carries out will undoubtedly have to continue regardless of the future responsibility for these functions, and probably for the most part with the area staff now being utilized. Furthermore, thanks to UNRWA, the area staff has acquired a high level of qualification and competence which entails two consequences:

- first, the need to maintain and continue to develop this asset,
- second, the need to better define the role presently attributed to the Agency's international staff.

^{4/} The use of the ICSC Master Standard seems to have led the classification team to recommend a large number of upgradings. This would increase the level of professional qualifications required from the incumbents of the posts and consequently post recruitment difficulties. Moreover, the financial implications to the Agency would no doubt be considerable.

149. The implementation of the reforms in budget, finance and personnel matters recommended in the preceding paragraphs, requires a re-organization of the administrative structures and a greater delegation of authority from Headquarters to the Fields.

1. Organization of the Headquarters administrative departments

150. At the time of drafting, a re-organization of the Headquarters structure of the Agency had recently entered into effect (see organizational chart in annex I). To some extent, the new structure corresponds to JIU's views. The main changes are:

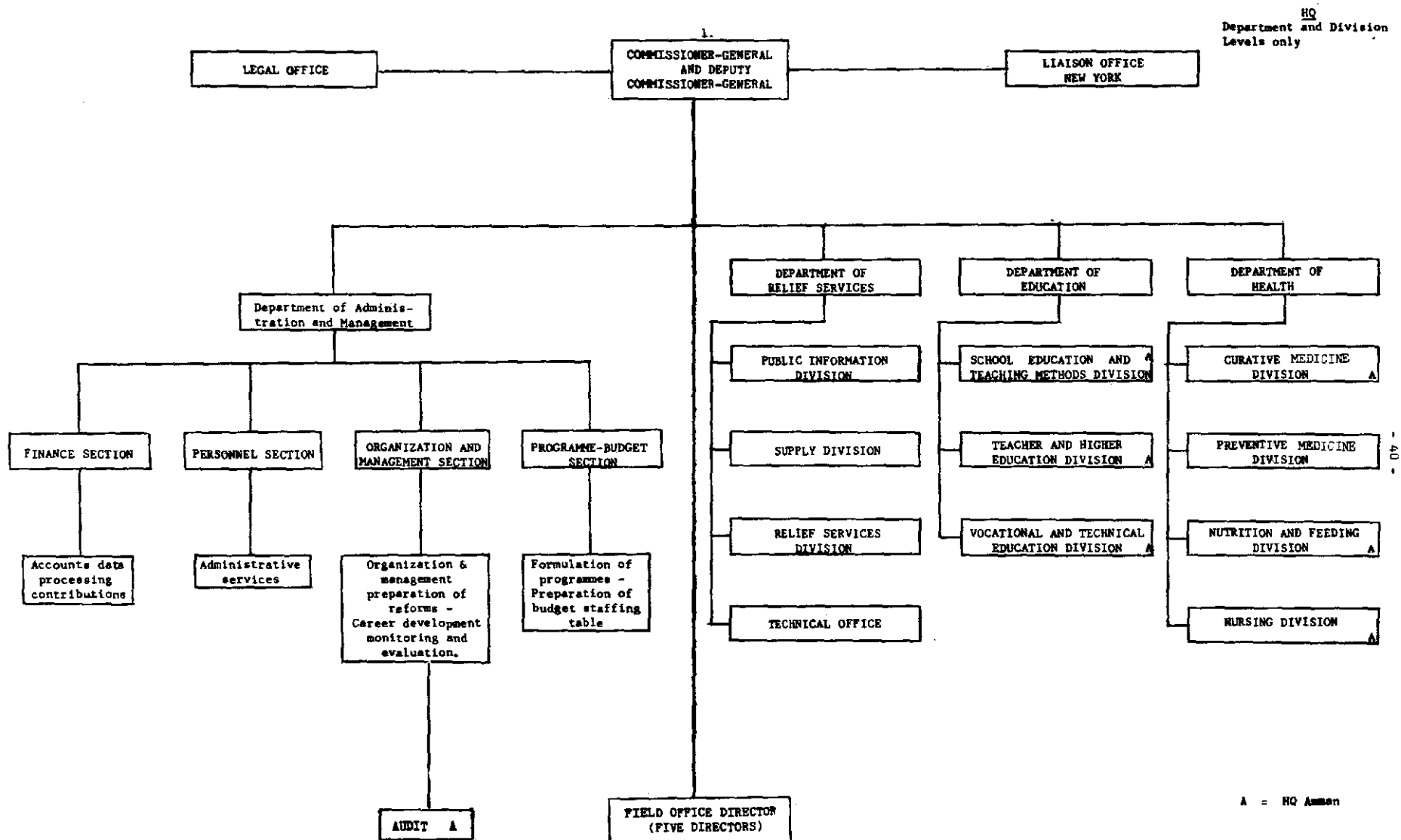
- Responsibility for job descriptions and job classification is transferred from the Management Division to the Personnel Division
- Responsibility for the staffing table has been moved from the Management Division to the Budget Division
- The Management Division - with a reduced staff - has been taken out of the Department of Finance and reports directly to the Deputy Commissioner-General
- The Deputy Commissioner-General, over and above his functions as second in command, is made directly responsible for the supervision of the two main staff functions, i.e., the Department of Finance and the Department of Personnel and Administration.

151. The new organizational chart does not seem, however, to take sufficiently into account the scope of the reforms which need to be implemented, particularly as regards budget and personnel matters. Moreover, it does not appear to solve the problem of the integration of administration, finance and personnel functions, since two distinct administrative departments are maintained. Finally, JIU considers that the Management Division should be entrusted with the function of ensuring the coherence of the measures for the administrative modernization of the Agency. The implementation of the reforms advocated in this report, especially in the areas of programme-budgeting and personnel, demands the setting up of a service composed of highly qualified experts in the fields of planning, programming, budgeting, career planning, decentralization methods, etc., (and therefore an increase in the present staffing of the Management Division).

152. It is also indispensable to entrust the Management Division with the monitoring and evaluation of programme implementation; in order to facilitate this task, the Budget Division should be associated with programme formulation, in order to guarantee the functioning of the new programme-budget system. Furthermore, the Audit Division should be attached to the Management Division. This would facilitate the modernization of audit methods and the carrying out of more management and programme audits. The transfer of the Audit Division to the region of operations should also be envisaged, preferably to Amman Headquarters. Until the Vienna Headquarters moves back to the region, such a transfer would reduce travel costs and would provide the Management Division with a branch closer to the Field offices.

153. The following chart shows the structure recommended by JIU. It differs somewhat from the present situation, particularly in that the Budget function is separated from the purely financial functions. As far as the role of the Deputy Commissioner-General is concerned and the possible merging of his post with that of Director for Administration and Management, JIU considers that this will have implications on the qualifications required in future for the Deputy Commissioner-General. The merging would be possible if - and this seems to be the case according to the new job description - particular emphasis is placed on the administrative and financial qualifications of the incumbent.

PROPOSED UNRWA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



2. Delegation of authority

154. Although only three of the five Fields felt strongly that the lack of delegation of authority from Headquarters was a major problem, JIU concluded that in budgetary, administrative and personnel matters there is need for much greater delegation to place responsibility where it belongs - with the Field line managers. Field Directors have extensive authority for dealing on the spot with a great variety of major political, policy, security and management questions, but they have to obtain Headquarters' approval for many administrative actions which have budgetary implications. Thus, there does not seem to be a lack of confidence in the ability of Field Directors and their staff to deal with major issues in accordance with broad policy directives of Headquarters, but for less important questions which have budgetary implications, the elaborate controls leave little room for initiative. JIU notes that, although existing Headquarters controls are rigorous and require considerable paperwork, they rarely result in the disapproval of a Field Director's request. It is easy to understand how this situation developed and JIU agrees that strict control of expenditure is essential, but it is convinced that it can be carried out best in the Fields, under policy instructions and audit from Headquarters. This would permit a more knowledgeable and effective approach to the use of UNRWA's scarce resources and would encourage Field staff to take constructive cost-conscious initiatives.

3. Location of UNRWA Headquarters and transfer of some posts to the Field offices

155. The General Assembly has repeatedly called for the return of UNRWA Headquarters to the region of operations. At its last session in resolution 37/120K it reiterated its request that the Headquarters should be relocated in its former site within the area of operations as soon as practicable. JIU considered the implications of prolonged location of Headquarters in Vienna and found that both from the financial and operational points of view it would be highly desirable to have it transferred to the region of operations immediately. It is conscious however that present conditions in Lebanon do not allow such a transfer. It has also noted that facilities in the other potential locations in the region do not meet the technical requirements for communication with Field Offices which are essential for the maintenance of uninterrupted operations. For these reasons, JIU refrains from recommending the transfer of Headquarters to the region of operations. It is important to underline, however, that the present location is of a temporary nature and that a return to the region of operations is only a matter of time.

156. While waiting for conditions allowing a complete transfer of Headquarters, some functions should be moved to Amman section of Headquarters or to Field offices. Some of these are indicated elsewhere (see paragraphs 34, 52 and 152) in this report and could be implemented immediately. Others should be identified by the Commissioner-General after a streamlining of Headquarters offices in line with the recommendation of JIU.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

A. Protection of refugees

157. The General Assembly in its resolution 37/120 J "deeply distressed at the sufferings of the Palestinians resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon", among other things, urged "the Secretary-General in consultation with UNRWA and, pending withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestine and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, to undertake effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories". UNRWA's mandate does not extend to the protection of refugees. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the only United Nations body formally responsible for the protection of refugees, is specifically excluded from a role in the protection of Palestinian refugees.

158. JIU is convinced that this anomalous situation should not and need not continue. It believes that the problem of protection requires regionwide consideration and that innovative and acceptable measures that could be applied wherever and whenever warranted should be sought. Humanitarian considerations should prevail over any political or bureaucratic obstacles. Political aspects are, however, important and have to be taken into account if there is to be a realistic way to provide greater security for the refugees.

159. JIU feels that the involvement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees could have a positive effect on the safety and security of Palestine refugees. It therefore suggests that the Secretary-General, in studying the measures to be taken for the implementation of resolution 37/120 J, should consult with the High Commissioner for Refugees to determine what possibilities exist for co-operation between HCR and UNRWA in the implementation of this resolution.

B. Role of the Advisory Commission

160. When the General Assembly is not in session, the Commissioner-General has to take decisions on politically sensitive issues without adequate guidance from an intergovernmental body. General policy directions of the Agency are usually proposed by the Commissioner-General himself in his annual report to the General Assembly, and when approved in Assembly resolutions, represent the only guidance available to him between General Assembly sessions. In addition, as has been explained in chapter III. A. of this report, there is no intergovernmental machinery for in-depth consideration of the Agency's programme of work and budget. In the period between General Assembly sessions, the Commissioner-General can of course seek the advice of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and in certain instances of the Advisory Commission, but the responsibility for the functioning of the Agency lies in his own hands.

161. The Advisory Commission was set up by resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 (the same resolution that gave birth to UNRWA) to "advise and assist" the Commissioner-General in the execution of the Agency's programme. The original membership was limited to four member States (France, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States). The host countries - Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria - were added in 1953. Membership was extended to Belgium in 1954 and Japan in 1972.

162. In examining the role of the Advisory Commission, JIU found that in the early years after its establishment the Commission played a more substantive role in developing plans for the organization and administration of UNRWA programmes. Until 1954, for instance, the Commission together with the Commissioner-General

presented the annual report containing policy recommendations and budget requirements. This practice was abandoned and the role of the Commission is today reduced to giving the views of individual member States on the Commissioner-General's draft report to the General Assembly. Otherwise, the Commission meets very rarely.

163. JIU is concerned by the lack of intergovernmental guidance under which UNRWA operates and with the exceptionally high responsibilities - in comparison with other United Nations organizations - given to the Commissioner-General. The JIU recommends that the General Assembly consider what steps should be taken to strengthen and reactivate the role of the Advisory Commission, including the following: the Commission should meet in New York, on a regular basis twice a year or on an emergency basis when necessary; it would consider, in addition to the Commissioner-General's draft report to the General Assembly, periodical progress reports from him on the administration, operations, budget and finances of UNRWA.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

164. At the end of its current mandate, which runs to 30 June 1984, UNRWA will have been in existence for some 35 years. Although it was set up as a temporary institution, its perpetuation through the repeated renewals of its mandate reflects the nature of the political framework in which the problem of the Palestine refugees is embedded. Numerous resolutions of the General Assembly indicate that the mandate has been continuously extended because the Agency is playing an important role in the efforts of the United Nations in the region.

165. Its substantial accomplishments should be measured primarily in humanitarian terms and its shortcomings should be judged against the background of the lack of prospects to date for a political solution and a just settlement of the question of the Palestine refugees.

166. UNRWA's achievements are a clear example of what international co-operation can do in pursuit of a humanitarian goal. The Agency in co-operation with UNESCO and WHO has developed an efficient and effective programme of humanitarian assistance in three areas - education, health and relief. The programmes consisting of the management of primary and preparatory schools, a modest vocational training programme and a limited number of university scholarships; preventive, curative and environmental medicine; distribution of basic rations and maintenance, repair and construction of shelters for special hardship cases, provide, with varying degrees of effectiveness, essential services to the refugees.

167. UNRWA continues to operate under difficult conditions including ever-increasing financial needs and continuing uncertainty concerning the availability of resources. Despite this, over the three and a half decades of its existence, the Agency has developed services of a recurrent, quasi-governmental nature directed towards the establishing and maintaining of levels of education, health and relief which enable a large proportion of the Palestine refugees to be socially productive, and have also helped in maintaining a Palestinian identity. In this process, UNRWA has acquired specific institutional functions and has given training to thousands of Palestinian staff members. This is the strongest asset of the Agency and it must be maintained until a just settlement of the Palestinian question is reached.

168. Despite the satisfactory nature of UNRWA's operations, some things done by the Agency could no doubt be done better. There are basic problems such as the deplorable state of many UNRWA installations and buildings, which can be solved only through adequate funding. Improvements in policies and procedures, especially in programming and budgeting, in staffing and in the organization of services are required. Specific recommendations aimed at making a more rational use of the funds available are set out below. The uncertainty of sufficient and stable financing in recent years has become a major constraint on UNRWA operations. The result has been the repeated fear of interruption of certain services or discontinuance of entire programmes. This, together with the prolonged displacement of the Agency's headquarters from the area of operations, has led to a weakening of confidence in UNRWA's ability to meet minimum requirements in the future. The need to redress these weaknesses is urgent.

B. Recommendations

1. Programme and operations

(a) General

Biennial work plans

Because of its temporary nature and the uncertainties concerning its funding and its future, UNRWA has been less concerned than other United Nations system organizations with the development of detailed planning and programming mechanisms. The need for more effective management tools for programme implementation has recently started to be felt at least in the education programme where since 1980 a Biennial Education Work Plan has been prepared and has given positive results (paragraphs 21-22 and paragraphs 70 and 92).

Recommendation 1 - Biennial work plans similar to the one prepared for education should be drawn up for the health and relief programmes. The priority areas of attention - especially concerning the construction, repair and maintenance of UNRWA premises in each of the Fields - should be clearly identified. The work plans should be prepared in conjunction with the improved programme budget process recommended below.

Funding for specific projects

In many cases, supplementary contributions earmarked for specific projects could substantially improve the quantity and quality of UNRWA-assisted services and ease distressing situations caused by the lack of sufficient or stable funding. Such auxiliary funding need not be restricted to contributions from member States; opportunities to tap local and non-local voluntary sources should be pursued actively (paragraphs 51, 69, 96 and 117).

Recommendation 2 - Supplementary funding for specific projects should be encouraged whenever appropriate. The potential of small-scale income-generating development projects sponsored by UNRWA (such as co-operatives) should be more fully explored. UNRWA should therefore undertake a feasibility study and submit its findings to the Thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. If the results of the feasibility study prove to be sound, the organizations of the United Nations system could contribute funds, technical and other support to such projects until they become self-supporting.

Self-help projects

Small self-help projects initiated by refugees and supported by UNRWA have proved to be a valuable means, in some Fields more than in others, for improving the condition of shelters, school-buildings, installations and environmental sanitation in refugee camps when UNRWA funds are insufficient. Generally, UNRWA furnishes supplies and building materials and the refugees do the required work themselves (paragraphs 31, 56, 69, 82-83 and 94-95).

Recommendation 3 - In view of the valuable contribution which the use of self-help projects in the areas mentioned in the preceding paragraph continues to make towards improving the condition of life among the refugees, the use of these projects should be encouraged in all Fields when UNRWA funds are insufficient, so as to maximize the availability of scarce resources.

(b) Education and training

The UNRWA/UNESCO organization for the provision of education to Palestine refugees is satisfactory and the quality of the education is good. In general, the educational services compare favourably with those of countries at similar levels of development. However, if quality of education is to be maintained, urgent measures must be taken to solve the following serious problems, many of which are caused by the lack of financial resources.

Recommendation 4

(i) School buildings. Whenever possible unsatisfactory rented schools should be replaced by schools constructed by UNRWA. The possibility should be considered of establishing a revolving fund for school construction to replace rented schools, to be financed from savings in operating costs (paragraph 33). In order to reduce delays in school and other construction and repair, two of the six posts of senior architectural technicians now stationed in Vienna should be transferred to Field Offices and delegated increased authority (paragraph 34). A study should be made by UNRWA, with the participation of medical staff, on how best to solve the problem of the lack or inadequacy of heating in many classrooms (paragraph 35).

(ii) UNRWA school libraries are generally poorly equipped particularly in the occupied territories. UNESCO should launch a campaign to obtain gifts of books and periodicals in Arabic and other languages. United Nations system organizations should be asked to make available surplus publications and periodicals (such as the UNESCO Courier) suitable for students and teachers. In Gaza and the West Bank, the occupation authorities should allow the import of such books without question. (paragraph 37).

(iii) Textbooks used in UNRWA schools are cleared by UNESCO. Among these, those cleared for use in Gaza and the West Bank have been subjected to scrutiny by the Israeli occupation authorities leading to a refusal of import permits in some cases. All books cleared for use by UNESCO should be admitted without question by the occupation authorities. UNESCO should speed up its clearance process (paragraph 38).

(iv) UNRWA vocational training should be greatly expanded as a first priority. UNRWA, together with UNESCO, should induce governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, private firms and individuals to contribute funds and equipment. Decisions on the expansion of existing courses should be based on employment surveys conducted with ILO (paragraphs 40 to 45).

(v) Only a very small number of university scholarships are available to refugees. UNESCO, UNRWA and the other organizations of the United Nations system should renew their efforts for better implementation of the General Assembly resolutions appealing for grants and scholarships from governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations (paragraphs 46-47).

(c) Role of UNESCO

UNESCO has been instrumental in setting up a viable school system of good quality under difficult circumstances. A measure of UNESCO's success is the gradual constitution of a group of highly qualified local Palestinian officials who manage the education programme. Less supervision from UNESCO is now needed than in the past (paragraphs 48-52).

Recommendation 5 - In the framework of discussions between UNRWA and UNESCO a partial reorientation of UNESCO's role should be considered, whereby the latter organization would strengthen those aspects of the education programme which have high priority, in particular vocational training.

(d) Relief

UNRWA's relief programme has been efficiently administered in often difficult conditions. However much regretted, the Commissioner-General's decision to suspend the basic ration distribution following the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon, provides a long-needed opportunity for a reappraisal of the programme (paragraphs 89 to 97).

Recommendation 6 - The following new approaches to the relief programme should be given priority consideration:

- (i) The merging of the present special hardship assistance and of basic ration distribution into one relief and welfare programme of assistance to refugees in need, e.g., by extending special hardship assistance to all refugees who are considered to be in real need of assistance. The Commissioner-General in co-operation with host governments should draw up new criteria for eligibility for such assistance, to be submitted for approval to the Advisory Commission. Through the application of these new criteria a priority assistance category of refugees should be established.
- (ii) The gradual introduction of food coupons to replace distribution in kind. For the time being, available food would continue to be distributed according to established procedures, and coupons would eventually be made available to eligible refugees for the purchase of food in designated shops.
- (iii) The annual ceiling on the number of refugees eligible to receive rations would be abolished; the amount of rations - either in kind or in food coupons - would be determined according to budgetary possibilities. Increases and reductions should be treated equally in all Fields.
- (iv) A more balanced planning and a redistribution of resources in favour of the shelter component of the relief programme is urgently required.
- (v) Responsibility for maintenance of UNRWA premises should be placed on education and health field officers.

2. Management problems

(a) Budget and finance

UNRWA budget presentation and processing

Unlike most other organizations of the United Nations system, UNRWA does not present to member States a budgetary document giving detailed information on planned expenditures. The figures provided in a chapter of the Commissioner-General's report in September of each year are not precise enough and not accompanied by sufficient explanations to constitute a real budget. Moreover, the reasons for the substantial differences between estimated and actual expendi-

tures are never fully explained (budget status reports, which are in fact supplementary budget documents, are reserved for in-house use). This situation should be urgently corrected and the budget should be fully discussed by the competent intergovernmental bodies (paragraphs 98 to 117).

Recommendation 7 - A clearer and more precise system of budget presentation should be introduced which would enable member States to discuss the budget and understand exactly the consequences of the level of contributions they set for the Agency. Such a system might include the following steps:

(i) A document distinct from the annual report and entitled UNRWA Programme Budget should be established;

(ii) It should be prepared for two calendar years, if necessary with adjustments towards the end of the first year;

(iii) The general structure of the current UNRWA budget presentation would be maintained but the explanations provided to member States should be considerably expanded; the degree of detail should correspond to that described in paragraphs 108 and 109.

(iv) In order to facilitate the examination of this document by the Advisory Commission and the Special Political Committee, it is recommended that it first be submitted for advice to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ);

(v) A document, distinct from the budget, should present a list of "Noted Projects" which could substantially improve the quantity and quality of the services extended to refugees and offered for auxiliary funding, governmental or private. (See also recommendation 2).

Reserve for separation benefits

The annual additions to the provisions for separation benefits represent a serious burden on the UNRWA budget and correspond to what seems an unlikely eventuality. Attempts to place the liability for separation benefits on the United Nations regular budget have so far been resisted by the General Assembly (paragraph 115).

Recommendation 8 - The question of separation benefits should be reviewed by the General Assembly. If it decided that in the event of mass separations the United Nations would defray the cost of the related indemnities, the Organization would incur only a small risk and the UNRWA budget could be reduced by some US\$ 5 to 8 million a year.

(b) Personnel questions

International professional staff

The rules concerning geographical distribution of international professional staff have not been applied to UNRWA and the distribution of nationalities is anomalous. Furthermore, the present level of academic and professional qualifications of international professional staff and its knowledge of Arabic are insufficient (paragraphs 142-146).

Recommendation 9 - The following measures should be taken for international professionals:

(i) The geographical distribution of international professionals should be improved as a matter of urgency and to the extent possible follow the principles of the United Nations. A recruitment plan to that effect needs to be established;

(ii) Strict conditions for recruitment should be developed with a view to gradual adjustments of the situation regarding academic and professional qualifications, as well as to developing knowledge of Arabic among international professional staff.

Area staff

Some career prospects exist for specific occupational groups, e.g., teachers and nurses. However, career paths do not seem to exist for the substantial number of other occupations, and such a system is particularly necessary for administrative staff, especially at the professional level (paragraphs 129 to 141).

Recommendation 10 - A comprehensive career planning system should be formulated for area staff; it should be based on the definition of occupational groups and, for each of these groups, conditions of entry and advancement, redefinition of job classifications, and the establishment of a system of internal training; This effort should commence with high-level local administrative staff.

Staff management

The establishment of an improved classification system seems to be underway. But the existing information system on staff files is still incomplete (paragraph 123).

Recommendation 11 - The conditions for analysing and recording individual personnel files ("fact sheets") should be modernized, with the ultimate objective of setting up an adequate computerized personnel information and management system.

(c) Structure and delegation of authority

The implementation of the reforms in budget, finance and personnel matters recommended above requires a reorganization of the administrative structures and a greater delegation of authority from Headquarters to the Field offices (paragraphs 147 to 154).

Recommendation 12

(i) The current effort to improve the organization of Headquarters departments should be pursued on the basis of the organizational chart proposed in paragraph 153.

(ii) The Management Division should be entrusted with the function of ensuring the coherence of the indispensable measures for the administrative modernization of the Agency. It should also be entrusted with the monitoring and evaluation of programme implementation; in order to facilitate this task, the Audit Division should be attached to it.

(iii) In budgetary, administrative and personnel matters, there is a need for much greater delegation which would place responsibility where it belongs - with the Field line managers. If a programme-budget approach, as suggested above, is adopted it would be possible to delegate much more authority to Field Directors while maintaining essential controls. Specific proposals appear in paragraph 154.

(d) Location of UNRWA Headquarters and transfer of various posts to the Field offices

The General Assembly has requested UNRWA to relocate its Headquarters from Vienna to its former site as soon as practicable. Both financial and operational considerations indicate the high desirability of transferring the Headquarters to the region of operations immediately. Present conditions in Lebanon, however, do not allow such a transfer. The Commissioner-General has informed JIU that he does not consider that operational facilities in other Fields are such as to justify the transfer of Headquarters to any of these areas at present (paragraphs 155-156).

Recommendation 13 - While awaiting conditions which would allow a complete transfer of Headquarters, some functions should already be moved to the Amman section of Headquarters or to Field offices. Some of these are indicated in paragraphs 34, 52 and 152. Others should be identified by the Commissioner-General in the process of streamlining Headquarters offices in line with JIU recommendations, if they are approved.

3. Institutional questions

(a) Protection of refugees

UNRWA's mandate does not extend to the protection of refugees. The General Assembly has, however, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with UNRWA, to take "effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories" (resolution 37/120 J) (paragraphs 157-159).

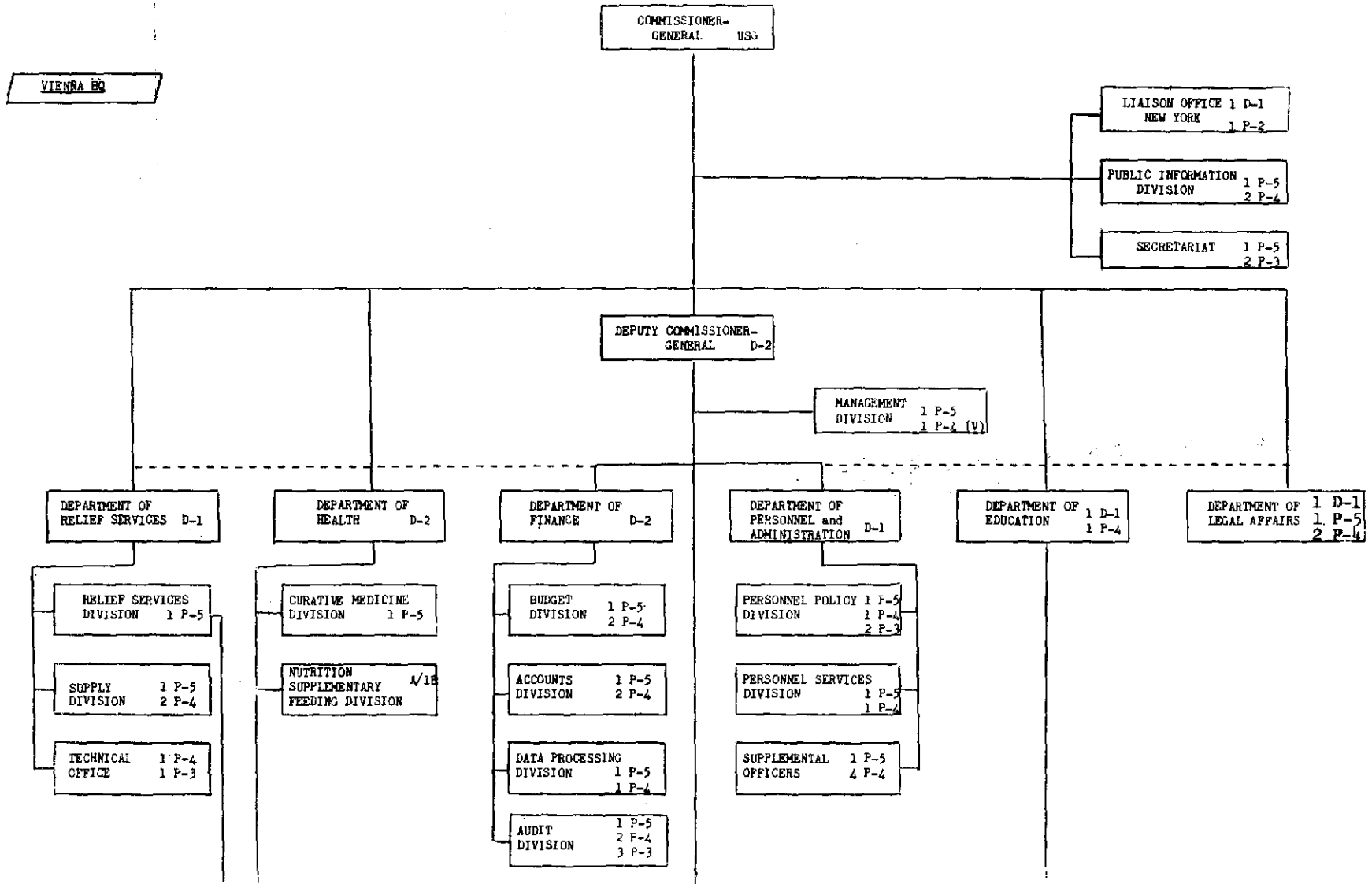
Recommendation 14 - In studying the measures to be taken for the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution, the Secretary-General should also consult with the High Commissioner for Refugees to determine what possibilities exist for co-operation between HCR and UNRWA in the implementation of this resolution.

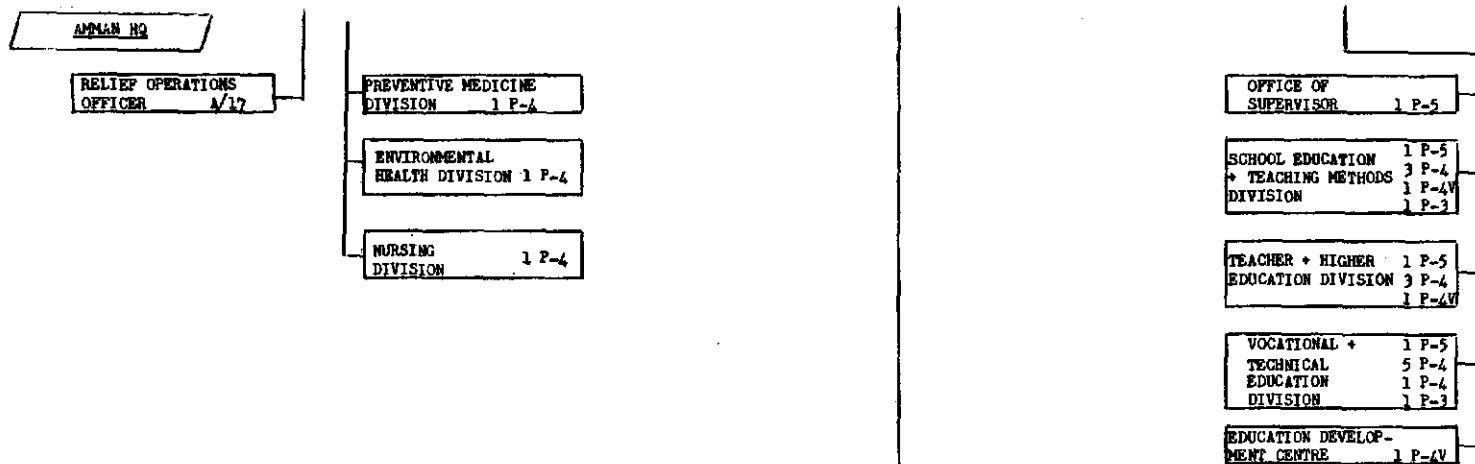
(b) Role of the Advisory Commission

As the Advisory Commission does not seem to play a substantive role in UNRWA affairs, the JIU is concerned with the lack of intergovernmental guidance under which UNRWA operates and with the exceptionally high responsibilities - in comparison with other United Nations organizations - given to the Commissioner-General (paragraphs 160-163).

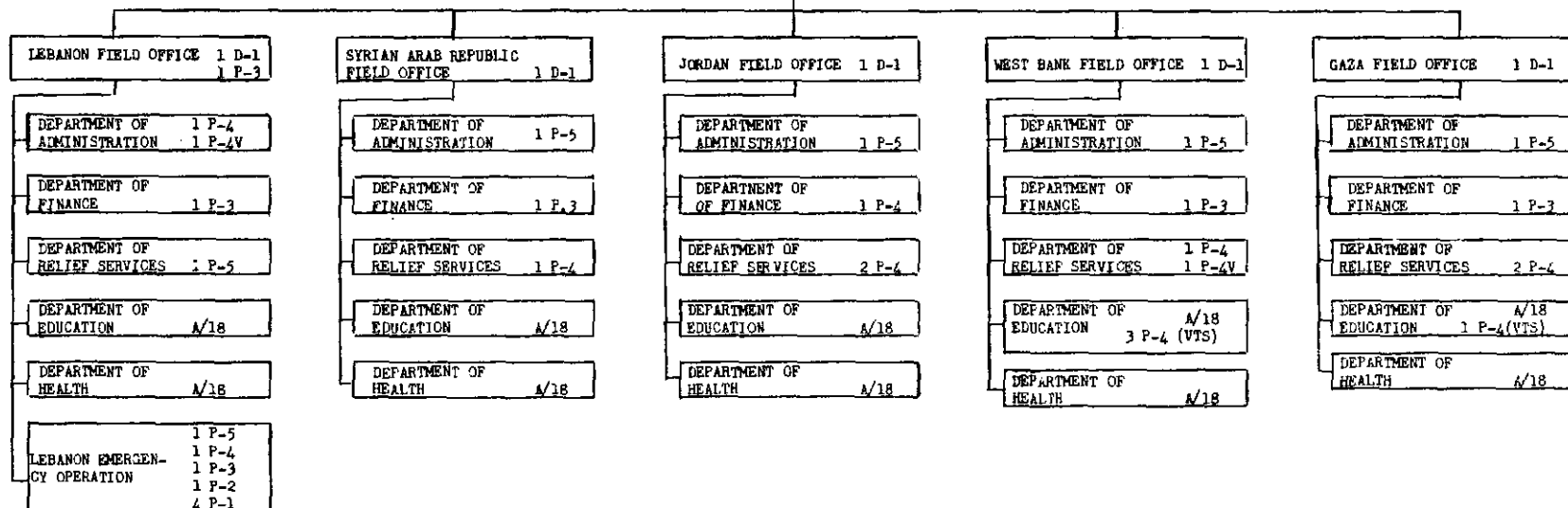
Recommendation 15 - The General Assembly should consider what steps should be taken to strengthen and reactivate the role of the Advisory Commission, including the following: the Commission should meet mainly in New York on a regular basis twice a year or on an emergency basis when necessary; it would consider, in addition to the Commissioner-General's draft report to the General Assembly, periodic progress reports from him on the administration, operations, budget and finances of UNRWA.

ANNEX I: UNRWA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
(as at 1 May 1983)





FIELD OFFICES



International Professional staffing of each unit is shown.
Area staff indicated only when an Area Staff member is head of a unit.

V = Vacant post (situation as at 1 May 1983)

VTS = Vocational training specialist