



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee for Programme and Coordination

Sixty-fifth session

New York, 12 May–13 June 2025

### Draft report

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### Addendum

## Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2026

(Item 3 (a))

### Programme 22 Palestine refugees

1. At its 17th meeting, on 22 May 2025, the Committee considered programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme plan for 2026 and programme performance in 2024 ([A/80/6 \(Sect. 26\)](#)).

### Discussion

2. Several delegations expressed their gratitude for the detailed presentation of the programme plan and the work carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) despite the extremely challenging conditions. The scale and the geographic scope of the work of UNRWA beyond Gaza and its continued commitment to meet the needs of Palestine refugees were appreciated. Delegations believed that aid should flow without impediment in an environment ensuring the safety and security of civilians, including humanitarian workers. The view was expressed that the provision of basic services, including emergency food, water, shelter, primary healthcare, sanitation, non-formal education and psychosocial support, for Palestine refugees must continue and that the humanitarian aid system must not collapse. A delegation condemned the latest attempts to dismantle the operations of UNRWA and expressed concern at the decision taken by some countries to suspend funding. The same delegation urged those countries to reconsider and asked the donor community for continued financing of UNRWA, as the lives of the people in Gaza remained contingent upon the provision of essential support.



3. Another delegation reaffirmed its continued support as UNRWA served as a humanitarian lifeline in extreme situations, such as those affecting Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The call for greater support was needed more than ever, not only because the needs of Palestine refugees on the ground had reached extreme levels, but also because UNRWA had faced unprecedented threats and challenges that were unacceptable. Delegations noted that Agency premises and other facilities had also been the target of military attacks, along with other civilian infrastructure. Given the restrictions on the entry of aid into Gaza, it was emphasized that the United Nations humanitarian entities remained the only ones capable of processing, moving and distributing the material aid to Gaza in strict adherence with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. With regard to gender mainstreaming, the integration of a gender perspective throughout the programme of work and its activities, especially in combating gender-based violence, was welcomed.

4. Delegations also expressed their commitment and full support for the Agency's contribution to the region's stability and the essential services provided to more than 6 million Palestine refugees. UNRWA remained entirely relevant until a political solution for Palestine refugees prevailed. The Agency's focus on developing partnerships with other United Nations agencies, including the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration and others in Gaza to improve efficiencies, including through shared services, was noted. In order for those partnerships to materialize, a full resumption of aid into Gaza should be implemented in order to enable the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to work independently and impartially to save lives, reduce suffering and maintain dignity in line with humanitarian principles. In the context of the Independent Review of Mechanisms and Procedures to Ensure Adherence by UNRWA to the Humanitarian Principle of Neutrality (the Colonna report), delegations commended the Agency's efforts to strengthen neutrality measures by implementing the recommendations set out in the report, and welcomed the publication of an action plan to implement those recommendations. In recognition of UNRWA staff members who had fallen since the beginning of the conflict, delegations expressed their condolences to families and colleagues of honourable staff who had lost their lives during the attacks.

5. While several delegations expressed their unconditional and unwavering support for UNRWA, the importance of political and financial support to help UNRWA discharge its mandate was underscored. Delegations also expressed deep concerns regarding the blockade of the Gaza Strip, which harmed the efforts under way and threatened to cause a complete collapse of the humanitarian situation in the region. A call to lift the humanitarian blockade was made, as the latter was considered a gross violation of the provisions concerning civilians in occupied territories set out in the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. It was noted that, in October 2024, the Knesset had adopted a bill to prohibit the Agency's work and to revoke immunities and privileges from the United Nations structure. The delegations pointed out that those decisions ran counter to the norms of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and the relevant decisions of the General Assembly. They therefore urged the parties to uphold international humanitarian law by protecting civilians and providing UNRWA with the opportunity to carry out its unique work in assisting the Palestine refugees. As there was also the issue of the physical security and safety of staff members, delegations appealed for a swift and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all forcibly detained persons, the provision of safe and unhindered humanitarian access, the protection of humanitarian staff and the relaunch of a peace process on the broadly recognized international legal basis that would guarantee the enjoyment of

the legitimate aspirations and rights of Palestine refugees. Regarding the destruction of United Nations facilities in Gaza, an update concerning the damage inflicted on the Agency's assets and facilities was requested. Clarification was also sought as to whether UNRWA would be able to achieve the proposed programme plan, including the expected goals for 2026.

6. A delegation spoke on a different note and asked the Committee for Programme and Coordination to listen, despite the absence of support from the Committee. The delegation believed that it was not the Agency's mandate to promote hatred and be involved in terrorism. The delegation was also of the view that the problem of the systematic infiltration of terrorist organization into the ranks of UNRWA was fundamental, and yet no substantial steps had been taken to address that matter. The same delegation expressed disappointment that the United Nations had decided not to investigate. It was emphasized that efforts must no longer be made to sustain an organization plugged as dysfunctional and infiltrated by terror. The focus must shift to supporting organizations that were accountable and generally committed to productive development. It was pointed out that the international community must ensure that its support reached those who generally sought to build a better future for Palestine refugees, rather than empowering those who exploited humanitarian efforts for violence. To that end, the delegation expressed its willingness to work with agencies that had a proven track record of efficiency and accountability.

#### **Conclusions and recommendations**

**7. The Committee recommended that the plenary or the relevant Main Committee or Main Committees of the General Assembly, in line with Assembly resolution 79/247, consider the programme plan for programme 22, Palestine refugees, of the proposed programme budget for 2026 under the agenda item entitled "Programme planning" at the eightieth session of the Assembly.**

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