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Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa. (Zimbabwe)

later: Mr. Flisiuk. (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 51: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
(*continued*) (A/65/705 and A/C.4/65/L.17)

1. **Mr. Cook** (Acting Director, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Representative Office, New York), speaking on behalf of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, said that the Agency had faced many challenges in its 62-year history. The recent upsurge in violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel was a disturbing reminder of the relentless challenges that political and humanitarian actors must make every effort to address. Although investment in human development and the provision of humanitarian assistance could never be a substitute for a just and comprehensive resolution of the refugee issue, it was important in the meantime to provide UNRWA with the support it required to carry out its critical mission.

2. More than 95 per cent of the Agency's general fund was financed through extrabudgetary contributions from government donors, with the balance funded largely under the regular budget of the United Nations. Despite efforts to broaden the donor base and be creative in finding new sources of contributions, voluntary donations did not keep pace with the needs of an increasing population, inflation, changing international standards and norms, and the costs of managing an international organization operating in a difficult environment. In 1974, in response to a similar financial crisis, the General Assembly had decided to partially relieve the Agency's critical situation by providing for international staff salaries from the regular budget. Nearly 40 years later, the Agency's finances were in a similar, if not worse, situation.

3. In recent years, UNRWA had been consistently underfunded. Indeed, over the last four bienniums, total programme requirements had been underfunded by an average of 12 per cent, with an average budget deficit of \$50 million at the beginning of each year. In anticipation of similar shortfalls in 2011, it had once again downsized its total programme requirements from \$621.2 million to \$568 million, but it still anticipated a shortfall of \$53 million. Such repeated funding gaps sapped the strength of the organization and its staff, and focused attention on its financial

challenges rather than the impact of its services. In addition, the introduction of an internal justice system, the improvement of the safety and security of staff and the implementation of international public sector accounting standards, meant that the Agency's finances were reaching breaking point.

4. The number of Palestine refugees in the Agency's areas of operation was estimated at 4.8 million, the largest refugee population in the world. The refugees were showing signs of growing frustration and despair, as the peace process stalled and poverty rates soared. They continued to need stable and adequate assistance, and the support of the international community would affect both their well-being and stability in the region.

5. Since the 2004 Geneva Conference, UNRWA had been undergoing major reforms under its Organizational Development process, which would be brought to fruition under its Sustaining Change Plan. Among other things, the Plan would initiate a strategic approach to resource mobilization, which would hopefully lead to increased funding in the longer term, not only through traditional partners but also through partnerships with private and public sectors, including United Nations sister agencies.

6. The Agency also had a serious lack of funding for its other activities. Chief among those were the emergency appeals for the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Barid camp in Lebanon. The Nahr al-Barid project, the largest single project ever undertaken by the United Nations, was currently only 37 per cent funded. In Gaza, tens of thousands of people had been made homeless and dire humanitarian conditions continued to erode the quality of life of the population. The blockade continued to place unacceptable hardship on the population and should be lifted, enabling imports and exports, which were critical to the well-being of the population and the economy. The needs of refugees in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic could not be ignored. Although they were given substantial support by the host governments, living conditions for many were still poor and the continuing services of UNRWA remained essential.

7. The Agency needed more predictable and sustainable funding. Remaining in its current financial situation year after year would endanger the effectiveness of its services and the well-being of the millions of registered refugees and others that the

Agency assisted in times of crisis. The quality of its services had already seriously deteriorated and its infrastructure was outdated. Funding from the regular budget enabled UNRWA to sustain and deepen its management reform, ensure the effective and efficient delivery of its services and enhance their quality and impact, and improve the Agency's ability to respond to evolving needs. The Agency's education, health, relief and social services programmes provided Palestine refugees an opportunity to reach their full potential, but that was all at risk unless the chronic funding shortfall was resolved.

8. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for Palestine) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/705) and stressed that it was important to address the critical funding situation faced by UNRWA, which did invaluable work assisting the Palestine refugee population and served as a stabilizing force in the region. She reaffirmed her delegation's deep appreciation of the Agency's tireless efforts to provide education, health, social, relief and emergency assistance to Palestine refugees for more than six decades. Until such time as a just and lasting solution was found to the plight of the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), the Agency's work would be essential. She also expressed gratitude to the host countries for their valuable contributions to the care of the Palestine refugees; to the members and observers of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA for their important role in supporting the Agency; to the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA for its continuing efforts to ensure the financial health of the Agency; and to all donor countries, whose voluntary contributions helped support the Agency and allowed it to discharge its mandate.

9. The Agency had been an important constant in the lives of the Palestine refugees since 1948, providing them not only with vital assistance but also with protection and guaranteeing human dignity throughout years of crisis, hardship and instability. However, the international community needed to do more. The sobering overview presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the Agency's fragile financial health should spur the General Assembly to action. The Agency must be provided with the necessary funding to enable it to carry out its mandate, continue its reform process, enhance its management capacities and meet demands from stakeholders and from the General

Assembly. It was a matter of serious concern that funds for those tasks continued to be drawn from resources earmarked for refugee assistance.

10. Funding shortfalls adversely affected the Agency's ability to provide quality services to the Palestine refugees. Years of shortfalls had seriously affected the Agency's infrastructure and a growing percentage of refugees lived in substandard, unhealthy conditions. Two facts outlined in the report of the Secretary-General were particularly striking: UNRWA spent much less on its beneficiaries than required by international standards; and as of November 2010, the Agency had only 28,264 posts in the area for a refugee population of 4.76 million, amounting to an astounding total of 168 refugees per staff member. Those facts alone demonstrated the serious structural underfunding of the Agency and the real strain placed on its staff, and highlighted the need for a funding review.

11. While the general fund was financed almost entirely from voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from government donors, the level of funding had rarely met the Agency's needs, a problem even more acute in the light of the growth of the refugee population and a rising demand for services. The budgetary gap had also been affected by ongoing crises and conflict, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as a result of the illegal, aggressive policies of the occupying Power and the crisis at the Nahr al-Barid camp. Attention must also be paid to the negative impact of Israel's continued illegal and unacceptable imposition of taxes, levies and movement restrictions on the Agency.

12. As a result of the global financial crisis, there had been no substantial rise and even some reductions in contributions in recent times. At the same time, the United Nations regular budget share of the Agency's general fund had declined. The Agency had consequently been left with an average budget deficit of approximately \$50 million per year. The report of the Secretary-General laid out a clear path for providing additional resources from the United Nations regular budget and even though the funding proposed fell short of what was needed to truly address the crisis, it was an important first step. Additional, more predictable United Nations funding was crucial, so her delegation hoped that subsequent consideration of the issue in the Fifth Committee would be looked upon favourably by Member States.

13. The Agency's role remained vital, all the more so in the light of the fragile, unstable situation prevailing in the region. She encouraged donor countries to continue their generous support of the Agency, and to increase funding in support of the core programmes, if possible. Continued coordination and partnership with other United Nations agencies on the ground was also important in order to maximize the benefits of the services provided and reduce expenditure. Continued development of the tripartite relationship between the Agency, donors and the host countries was also important, as was the role played by the Advisory Commission in that regard.

14. **Mr. Zimonyi** (Hungary), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, Iceland, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that for more than 60 years, UNRWA had been the leading force in the international community's efforts to improve the living conditions and promote the human development of the more than 4.7 million Palestine refugees. Its steadfast commitment, in sometimes very difficult circumstances, should be saluted. Since his appointment as Commissioner-General, Mr. Grandi had continued to steer the Agency further along the path of reform to ensure that it would be able to cope with the challenges of the future. The courageous and unyielding commitment of the Agency's staff and management was also commendable.

15. The European Union, which remained the Agency's largest donor, had contributed €175 million to its regular budget in 2009. In addition, the European Union and its member States regularly made large contributions to the Agency's special programmes and emergency appeals and had made additional efforts to ease the acute funding shortfalls at the end of 2009 and 2010. That continued commitment reflected the European Union's humanitarian engagement and a recognition of the contribution that UNRWA made to regional security and stability.

16. The Agency's present alarming financial situation had led to a series of austerity measures which would affect the quality of services provided to refugees. It was the shared responsibility of the international community to support the Agency, both politically and financially; the fact that 90 per cent of the Agency's

resources were provided by only 15 donors was not sustainable. Exchange-rate fluctuations also contributed to the financial insecurity. Therefore, the European Union strongly urged new donors to commit financially to the work of UNRWA and existing donors to consider increasing their contributions. A widened donor base would provide much-needed stability and facilitate the Agency's planning of its activities and its reform process.

17. **Mr. Aslov** (Tajikistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, commended the work undertaken by UNRWA and recognized its vital role in providing services, protection, advocacy and assistance to the approximately 5 million Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The situation of the refugees was more dire than ever, since Israeli practices continued to deny the basic human rights of the Palestinian people. In Gaza, the four-year-old blockade prevented humanitarian aid and basic materials from reaching the civilian population and impeded the Agency's efforts to repair and rebuild thousands of destroyed shelters and Agency infrastructure. In the West Bank, the construction of the separation wall, house demolitions, violence, movement restrictions and confiscation orders harmed Palestinians and impeded the work of the Agency and its ability to provide basic emergency services.

18. On top of that dire situation, the Agency was facing critical financial challenges that threatened the quality and quantity of its regular services to Palestine refugees. The international community had a special responsibility to ensure that support for the refugees would continue until an equitable solution was found to their plight. Sufficient financial resources should be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations to overcome the current financial crisis. The Agency should be provided with additional support to cover its budget and enable it to continue to provide basic services. A failure to react would increase the suffering of the Palestine refugees. The resolution on the cause of Palestine, adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference reaffirmed the responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinian cause and the continuous role of UNRWA in that regard, and called upon its Member States to provide the Agency with greater support in order to cover its budget and enable it to continue to render its services.

19. In closing, he reaffirmed the Organization's solidarity with the Palestinian people in their endeavour to reclaim their inalienable rights, including the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

20. **Mr. Farghal** (Egypt), commending the work of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and his staff, said that the Agency's financial situation required increased attention and that the donor community and international financial institutions needed to contribute to the chronically underfunded budget and respond to the emergency appeals. Egypt had doubled its voluntary contributions for 2011 and many other Arab countries would follow suit.

21. The framework proposed in the report of the Secretary-General was a good basis from which to work. The request for increased funding from the regular budget over the following four bienniums on an incremental basis, starting with an increase of \$5 million, was a positive step and would enable the Agency to fulfil its mandate. In order to ensure efficient and predictable funding, an increase of \$15 million over two consecutive bienniums would ensure UNRWA was better able to undertake its tasks. Adopting the draft resolution (A/C.4/65/L.17) by consensus would be a clear signal of support for the Agency.

22. Egypt continued to support the extraordinary efforts of UNRWA to provide services and assistance to the Palestine refugees and its role in addressing their humanitarian situation, pending a just resolution of their plight and the realization of their rights, which was vital to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

23. **Mr. Langeland** (Norway) said that the Secretary-General's report showed the significant financial challenges facing UNRWA. The related draft resolution, which followed up on the recommendations of the report, had been formulated to encourage adoption by consensus, an act that would send a strong political message in support of UNRWA. For over a decade, the major donors of the UNRWA Advisory Commission had been responding to the Agency's ever-increasing funding needs. His Government had been arguing for a more long-term, sustainable solution to the recurring funding shortfalls based on a series of

structural changes to the UNRWA financing architecture. A greater balance in burden-sharing among Advisory Commission members must be found. A seat on the Commission brought with it a responsibility to contribute, yet several current Commission members had pledged less than non-member countries. In addition, the UNRWA donor base must be expanded. Arab States had been the focus of such efforts, and were urged to increase their contributions. In that regard, he welcomed the announcement by Egypt that it had increased its funding. Finally, the proportion of the UNRWA budget funded from the United Nations regular budget should be increased. That figure had declined steadily, from 8 per cent of the UNRWA budget in 1975 to 3.5 per cent in the most recent budget biennium.

24. UNRWA was mandated by the General Assembly and should thus be properly funded by the Assembly. Given that the UNRWA mandate was only nominally temporary, the report of the Secretary-General recommended increases from the regular budget of the United Nations over the next four budget periods. Even if a peace agreement were to be reached in the near future, the Agency's services would still be needed for years to come. Increasing the level of funding from the regular budget would make financing more stable and predictable for UNRWA, allowing it to better focus on fulfilling its mandate. The Agency would also be making more efficient use of its funds as part of the administrative reforms called for by the General Assembly. His Government looked forward to working with Member States to ensure that the proposed increases in contributions would be achieved over the next eight years. The Secretary-General's report and the related draft resolution marked the beginning of a much-needed process to improve the UNRWA financial architecture and better meet its needs.

25. **Mr. Shaanika** (Namibia) said that, in the United Nations Charter, Member States had made a promise to recognize the dignity and worth of the human person. They must act on that promise and provide Palestine refugees with the means to achieve a decent standard of living. Support for UNRWA would provide critical education, health care and emergency relief services to millions of people. The issue was a personal one for him, as he had experienced hardship as a refugee after fleeing brutal apartheid in Namibia as a child. At the same time, Member States must not forget the reason for the refugee situation: the occupation of Palestinian

territory. He commended the Latin American and Caribbean countries that had recognized the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders. The Palestinian people had the right to their own State, in which they could live side by side in peace with the State of Israel. The creation of a Palestinian State was the only path to a durable solution to the situation in the Middle East.

26. **Mr. Rey** (Switzerland) urged all delegations to support the draft resolution on the report of the Secretary-General. Given the critical financial situation facing the Agency, ways must be found to bridge the gap between the mandated tasks and resources. Although the Agency's resources had been increased during the latest budget period, that trend should continue with respect to both its regular and extrabudgetary resources. In that regard, the draft resolution was a good starting point. The debate on financing should also cover the long-standing structural imbalance between incomes and expenditure which had deepened with no prospect for improvement. The time had come for an in-depth discussion. While his delegation was not unmindful of the urgent circumstances under which the report of the Secretary-General had been prepared, it would have preferred a more strategic approach using the modes of financing of other United Nations agencies with similar mandates as a reference, with the rather lengthy narrative being more closely linked with the rather sketchy recommendations. The far-reaching changes that were no doubt necessary, could only be implemented as a result of a strategic discussion of the funding of the Agency, on the basis of clear indicators and a structured cost plan. He urged the Secretary-General to take such considerations into account in future proposals.

27. **Mr. Kodama** (Japan) said that his delegation was grateful to the States that hosted Palestinian refugees and to UNRWA for its efforts to provide essential services under difficult circumstances. Noting that Palestine refugees was one of the core issues of the Middle East peace process, he stressed that until a just and comprehensive solution was found, the international community must provide the necessary assistance to Palestine refugees. His Government, which had been providing such assistance through UNRWA, welcomed the special emphasis the Agency placed on education and vocational training programmes for young people. His Government had provided \$18 million to UNRWA in 2010 and had

recently committed to contributing approximately \$2.5 million for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Barid camp in northern Lebanon. Despite the fiscal difficulties it was facing, his Government would continue to support UNRWA, including by providing an additional \$2.8 million to the Agency's General Funds.

28. Both donors and UNRWA were responsible for ensuring that the Agency received adequate and predictable funding. For its part, UNRWA should strive to enhance the efficiency of its operations, including through management reform; identify possible cost-cutting measures; and secure more voluntary funding by providing donors and potential donors with relevant information. For their part, donors should maintain their funding levels. In that regard, his delegation supported the draft resolution on the Secretary-General's report.

29. **Mr. Golezinski** (Australia) welcomed the work of UNRWA, its emphasis on fiscal responsibility and organizational reform, and its efforts to expand its donor base in the face of significant economic pressures. He commended the refugee host countries for their substantial in kind contributions to UNRWA and called on other countries in the region to increase their support as a tangible demonstration of their commitment to the Palestinian people.

30. Australia was the tenth largest contributor to UNRWA and would continue to be a strong supporter by providing \$18 million to the Agency's core budget over the next three years, as well as potential additional annual contributions. Since 2007, his Government had contributed nearly \$150 million in capacity-building support and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people and would be increasing such support. During a recent visit to the Palestinian territories, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs had announced that Australia would establish a five-year development partnership with the Palestinian Authority to provide scholarships and assist in institution-building. His delegation saw the draft resolution as an important step towards full and proper consideration of the budget proposal for UNRWA in the upcoming main session of the General Assembly.

31. His delegation remained committed to peace and security in the Middle East, condemned the bombing in Jerusalem on 23 March 2011 and the recent rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza into Israel. There was no justification for terrorism of any kind. He also

expressed condolences for the Palestinian civilians killed in Gaza on 22 March 2011, noting that attacks on civilians were unacceptable under any circumstances. All parties were urged to exercise restraint and avoid a further escalation of violence. His delegation supported enduring peace based on a two-State solution. Both sides must negotiate on final status issues and refrain from actions that undermined trust, including the construction of settlements and terrorist attacks. His Government would be increasing its support for the establishment of a viable Palestinian State.

32. **Mr. Nyowani** (Zimbabwe) said that the long-standing work of UNRWA in providing assistance to refugees was commendable. His delegation was concerned about the acute financial problems facing the Agency and supported the call for increased allocation of funds from the regular budget of the United Nations. He urged donors to increase their funding to the Agency and honour their financial pledges in full and on time. The fact that some donors reduced or terminated their assistance to UNRWA on political grounds was deplorable. Assistance to Palestinian refugees should be based on the humanitarian principles of impartiality, respect for human dignity and accountability.

Draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.17: Report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the management capacity of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

33. **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia), introducing the draft resolution, said that it had been prepared in the context of the Committee's consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the management capacity of UNRWA (A/65/705) and pursuant to the recommendation of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA. The draft resolution was aimed at addressing the recurrent financial difficulties plaguing the Agency and providing support for its reform process by requesting the Secretary-General to provide financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations. Recognizing the role of the Fifth Committee in budgetary matters, the text stressed that approval of additional funding was subject to discussion in the context of the proposed programme budget for the relevant biennium. The draft resolution was consistent with the international community's political and moral responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine, including the issue of refugees, and deserved strong consensus support from all

delegations in the Fourth Committee and during future discussions in the Fifth Committee.

34. *Mr. Flisiuk (Poland), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

35. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Committee), speaking in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would continue to support the institutional strengthening of the Agency through the provision of financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations within the context of the programme budgets of the Organization. She recalled that the General Assembly had appropriated a total of \$43,712,400 from the regular budget for the biennium 2010-2011 for the Agency, including 14 additional posts. Provision of resources from the regular budget for the biennium 2012-2013 would be considered when the proposed programme budget for that period was finalized. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.17, no additional requirements would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

36. She drew attention to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, section VI, which had reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee entrusted with administrative and budgetary matters and had reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Furthermore, as noted by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 67 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, efforts should be made to avoid the use of the phrase "within existing resources" or similar language in draft resolutions, as it had a negative impact on the implementation of activities.

37. She announced that Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Moldova, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

38. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands.

39. *Draft resolution A/C.4/65/L.17 was adopted by 134 votes to 2.*

40. **Mr. Weissbrod** (Israel) said that his Government actively cooperated with the humanitarian work of UNRWA. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA had described that close relationship both in the General Assembly and in discussions with Israeli authorities. Recently, his Government had approved plans for construction of many UNRWA facilities in Gaza and was committed to continuing its cooperation.

41. However, his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because the text did not make clear what projects would be funded by an increase to the UNRWA regular budget, nor was it clear whether the possible projects mentioned in the Secretary-General's report fell within the scope of the management reforms required of UNRWA. Furthermore, other funding sources could be used to meet the Agency's needs, particularly in light of the coming reductions to the United Nations budget. The Committee had repeatedly noted a need to diversify donors to UNRWA. Arab countries must assume their responsibility in that regard and offer concrete budget support, not just rhetoric. Their contributions currently made up less than 10 per cent of total contributions. Similarly, as part of its State-building process, the Palestinian Authority should seek to reduce its dependence on assistance from UNRWA and other United Nations agencies. Finally, it was unclear why the draft resolution covered funding for UNRWA beyond the current biennium. Despite the fact that that provision was non-binding, potential projects for the upcoming biennium should not be mentioned before the conditions on the ground were known.

42. **Mr. Shek** (Canada) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution since UNRWA was the Canadian Government's most important partner in its humanitarian relief efforts in the West Bank and Gaza. His Government had recently provided \$15 million to the Agency in response to an emergency appeal. While his delegation supported the strengthening of UNRWA management capacity through predictable funding from the United Nations general budget, it was important to recall that the issue would require additional consideration by the Fifth Committee, including on how the proposed funding would be used. He encouraged UNRWA to continue its management reform process, enhance fund-raising and make more efficient use of funds.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.