

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 24 October 1989
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 150: PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES

AGENDA ITEM 76: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/44/SR.5
30 October 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

89-56540 1718S (E)

/...

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 150: PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF SMALL STATES (continued) (A/44/192;
A/SPC/44/L.4)

1. Mr. NOGUEIRA BATISTA (Brazil) said that the question of the security of small States deserved the most serious consideration, and Maldives was to be commended for bringing up the subject. The problem was how best to respond to the question in a manner which would at the same time be faithful to the United Nations Charter and preserve the sovereignty the United Nations had helped Maldives and other small States to conquer. It was clear that Member States largely shared the view that small States could be particularly vulnerable to external aggression and threats of aggression and that the United Nations might have a role to play in meeting their security needs. But the matter was very complex and called for careful reflection on the part of all Member States, including the small States themselves. Among other things, there would be a need to establish not only the degree and kind of protection that could be extended to the small States but to define the conditions under which small States could qualify for requesting United Nations protection.
2. His delegation felt that draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 before the Committee fell far short of what seemed to be required. While purporting to ask essentially for a study of the subject, it prejudged the possible outcome of such a study by, for example, urging the Secretary-General to monitor the security of small States and to make use of Article 99 of the Charter. The Secretary-General would find that task very difficult to carry out in the absence of a prior definition of what States would qualify as small and deserving of United Nations protection.
3. The most critical weakness of the text seemed the inherent contradiction between the appeal for assistance addressed to the regional organizations and the principle of collective security; small States could certainly by-pass the concept of collective security and resort to the military assistance of other Powers in the name of collective self-defence, but in exercising that option they could not normally claim to be placed at the same time under the protection of the United Nations collective security system. In any case it seemed awkward for the United Nations to recommend resort to the exceptional provision in Article 51 of the Charter in direct contradiction to the Organization's responsibilities under the principle of collective security.
4. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution also seemed inappropriate in terms of its political implications for the independence and sovereignty of small States. In seeking from regional military alliances that kind of protection, small countries could open the way for unwarranted interference in their internal affairs and compromise the hard victories they had won in their decolonization process.
5. The security needs of the small States and the role which the United Nations collective security system could play in meeting them appeared at the present stage to be a matter for consultations primarily among Member States and on a very broad basis rather than consultations to be conducted by the Secretary-General among interested States of his own choice, as envisaged in paragraph 6.

(Mr. Nogueira Batista, Brazil)

6. For those reasons, his delegation was unable to support the draft resolution. Given the importance and complexity of the question, it seemed desirable to spend more time in its consideration with a view to preparing an improved text, and his delegation would be ready to co-operate in such an endeavour. The issue was indeed one that in present world conditions offered an opportunity for testing the possibility of specific application of the concept of collective security on which the United Nations had been built.
7. Mr. KOLANE (Lesotho) said that the chief attraction of the United Nations for many small States was that it could act as a countervailing force for those of them whose security was threatened by big and powerful neighbouring States or other external antagonists. It was a basic principle of the United Nations that small countries should be able to state their concerns in it without fear of retaliation; in fact, however, such States were subject to considerable external pressure to conform to the interests of the Powers dominant in their region. Because of its precarious geographical position and its dependence on foreign aid, his country was particularly exposed to such problems. But all the member States of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference were at present engaged in a struggle to protect their sovereignty and to construct development strategies that would ensure sustainable economies under a system of collective security. The outcome of that struggle would have profound consequences for Africa as a whole.
8. In a world characterized by East-West conflict, only concerted international action could provide a more secure environment for all members of the international community. His delegation had therefore considered itself bound not only to support but to co-sponsor the draft resolution before the Committee, and strongly urged that it be adopted by consensus.
9. Mr. OMDORID (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that discussion of the issue of the protection and security of small States was a positive step in keeping with the aspirations of the international community to create a political climate based on the principles of co-operation and peaceful coexistence.
10. Small States, a category which included more than two thirds of the Members of the United Nations, had long suffered from the woes of war, colonialism, exploitation, the plunder and depletion of their natural resources, poverty, ignorance and disease. As a moral even more than a legal duty, the colonialist States therefore had an international responsibility to provide small States with material, technical and scientific assistance in order to enable them to meet their commitment to the progress of their peoples and maintain their independence and territorial integrity.
11. International relations should be based on mutual respect among large and small States and the creation of a world free of all forms of hegemony and subjection. The protection and security of small States was a collective responsibility that depended on the adoption of the measures necessary to eliminate all such phenomena as threatened the security, independence and sovereignty of those States and hindered their economic and social development, including

(Mr. Omdorid, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

invasion, aggression, occupation, the threat of force, interference in internal affairs, the recruitment, use, training and financing of mercenaries and the imposition of economic boycotts. The international community should make the greatest possible effort to free financial resources allocated to the production of weapons of mass destruction and devote them to development purposes in order to ensure the security and stability of all States.

12. Mercenarism had become the greatest source of concern to small States. In recent years, they had become the major target of mercenary activities, which represented a flagrant violation of the principle of the self-determination of peoples. Over the past two years, the Special Rapporteur appointed under Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/16 had provided valuable information on the fact that mercenary activities were not confined to involvement in existing armed conflicts but sought to threaten the security and integrity of small States and undermine their political systems. The international community must take a firm stand against such activities, and those States in whose territories mercenaries were recruited, trained or provided with the facilities required for armed aggression against other States had a special responsibility in that connection.

13. Mr. STANISLAUS (Grenada) said that his delegation considered draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 timely and necessary and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus. The protection and security of small States was a matter which deeply concerned Grenada, one of the smallest States in the United Nations family. Although its experience in October 1983 had been different from that of Maldives in November 1988, there were obvious similarities. Both were small States which were vulnerable to inimical forces, whether internal or external; both had had to appeal for outside help to save the situation, and both had had to suffer the presumption and arrogance of those who had attempted to pass judgement from afar on the decision of those within the affected countries on whom constitutional authority rested.

14. Under the Charter, the international community had a moral responsibility to act when the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of a Member State was under attack. Small States, being more vulnerable, had a greater moral claim to United Nations protection. The draft resolution was timely in that it mirrored the favourable climate prevailing in international affairs. The enhanced prestige of the United Nations gave it the moral authority to seek to settle disputes within nations and among nations before they reached crisis proportions. His delegation was also impressed by paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, which urged the Secretary-General to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States, and attached great importance to paragraph 9 (b) of the explanatory memorandum (A/44/192), in which reference was made to the "Global Watch" facility, a new and innovative concept developed by the Secretary-General for monitoring potentially dangerous international issues and carrying out research into potential security problems.

15. Mr. GHAREKHAN (India), said that his delegation was deeply concerned about the growing incidence of mercenarism, which posed a serious threat to the independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the developing countries, particularly the small and weak States. International action was needed to curb such activities.

16. Most of the developing countries were forced to divert their scarce resources for security purposes at the expense of priority development needs. The small States were even more vulnerable, because of their limited defence resources. The Charter impelled the international community to take effective collective measures for the prevention and elimination of threats to peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression. He hoped that the recent improvement in the international situation would redound to the benefit of all countries. Renewed confidence in multilateralism should enable the Special Political Committee to address outstanding issues, including the security problems of small States.

17. Small States that did not rely entirely on military arrangements to defend their sovereignty exemplified a world order that was less dependent on the threat or use of force. Such States were entitled to a special measure of protection from the international community. The United Nations remained the most suitable forum for considering such matters affecting world peace as the vulnerability of small States. India was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4, as it was aware of the need to contribute to the maintenance of regional peace and stability. It hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

18. Mr. ALEMU (Ethiopia) expressed his delegation's appreciation to Maldives for its initiative regarding the current item. The international political climate had significantly improved recently, and steps had been taken towards dialogue and co-operation. But a number of important international political issues still awaited the concerted efforts of the international community, among which was the security of small States. Only when their security was assured could the international community seriously assert that it had taken a major stride towards the democratization of international relations.

19. The improvement in the international political climate had enabled the United Nations to discharge its responsibilities with greater effectiveness, and greater efforts were being made to create an atmosphere characterized by the primacy of international law. His delegation hoped that the time would soon come when resort to force, such as the use of mercenaries, would have no place in international relations. Full respect for the Charter and for international law would be reflected in a world situation where the territorial integrity and sovereignty of small States were fully protected, and the international community acted to defend them from the danger posed by mercenaries. Ethiopia was associated with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and hoped that the adoption of that convention would help to combat that danger. His delegation fully supported draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4.

20. Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana), referring to a Commonwealth report on the special needs of small States, said that it contained a set of proposals aimed at enhancing the capability of small States to defend themselves from all forms of aggression, and recommended that it receive the widest possible dissemination. His delegation welcomed the initiative of Maldives in raising the question of the protection of small States, to ensure that incidents of aggression such as the one which had recently occurred there would be deterred in the future.

21. Regrettably, past attempts to address the security of small States had been frustrated by questions of definition of terms. The Commonwealth report found that population size was a good yardstick for defining a State as small. He suggested that a useful working definition of security might be "the absence of threat to the exercise of the capacity to govern, protect, preserve and advance the state and its peoples".

22. International drug-trafficking, illegal arms transfers, and environmental degradation were among the proliferating threats to the safety and welfare of small States. With limited human and financial resources, there was little a small State could do to withstand encroachment, and it was invariably reduced to subjection. Bilateral and regional assistance was often uncertain. Thus, a small State must look to the wider international community for protection. Some of the measures proposed in document A/44/192 which his delegation found most useful were the active involvement of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, multilateral assistance in providing required communication, information and surveillance facilities, and the formulation of legal instruments proscribing and punishing intervention. A commendable effort had been made in the draft Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and he urged its rapid completion and implementation.

23. Small States must also be provided with adequate economic resources to bolster their independence and autonomy of action. There was an undeniable link between security and development which must be taken into account.

24. His delegation was ready to support any proposal on the protection of small States that was in full consonance with the principles of independence and sovereignty. It made no sense to exchange one suzerainty for another. The United Nations must have a paramount role in safeguarding the welfare of small States, for despite its many limitations, it still offered mankind the best hope for a régime of international relations based on the rule of law. The international community should ensure that the United Nations had the capacity to guarantee global peace and security for all States, big or small.

25. Mr. RASHDI (Pakistan) said that his delegation was co-sponsoring the draft resolution submitted by Maldives on item 150. The problem of the security of small States was multidimensional, thus requiring a similar response. There was a need to affirm the internationally recognized norms of international law governing inter-State relations, including the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal

(Mr. Rashdi, Pakistan)

affairs. Disregard of those principles would undermine the aspirations of the international community to create and maintain a civilized world order, and was contrary to the aims of the United Nations.

26. The threats to small States were not limited to acts of overt aggression. They They could include economic coercion by powerful States, diplomatic and political pressure, threats of aggression and in some cases covert aggression, the training of saboteurs and acts of subversion. The response must take into account the nature of the threat in each case. His delegation believed that the United Nations was the body ideally suited for that purpose, since its Charter invested it with the authority to act in circumstances threatening international peace and security. Chapter VII of the Charter provided the basic framework for dealing with threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression, with the Security Council playing the primary role in maintaining international peace and security and in protecting the territorial integrity and independence of sovereign States.

27. In his report on the work of the Organization (A/44/1), the Secretary-General had outlined a number of practical suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations mandate as the guardian of world security, including the use of technical surveillance systems which would enable the Secretariat to monitor potential conflict situations from a clearly impartial standpoint, periodic meetings of the Security Council at the ministerial level and the enlisting of the co-operation in averting a crisis of the regional organizations concerned. The regional arrangements provided for under Chapter VII of the Charter would also be useful at times of tension.

28. All countries must not only accept, but also abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Unilateral actions and self-serving interpretations of international law using humanitarian considerations or peace-keeping as justification did not promote international or regional peace and security.

29. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

30. Mr. MAVROMMATIS (Cyprus) said that his country embraced the initiative of Maldives in proposing agenda item 150 because it felt itself to be a prime example of a State "particularly vulnerable to external threats", and would not wish another country to share its plight. United Nations action on the item should be followed up in the Group of Non-Aligned Countries, to which most of the defenceless small States belonged. It was a sad commentary on the world situation that, despite the present climate of détente, a need was felt to introduce an item on the security of small States. Yet the debate thus far had shown how real were their apprehensions.

31. The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States was of the utmost relevance, as was

(Mr. Mavrommatis, Cyprus)

Article 99 of the Charter. Respect for the territorial integrity of States and assistance from regional organizations were also essential. His delegation trusted that the Security Council and interested Governments would co-operate with the Secretary-General in preparing an appropriate report to be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

32. Mr. PINZON (Colombia) observed that several committees were addressing the question of the abhorrent practice of mercenarism, which indicated the dimensions of the problem. His delegation considered that the use, financing, recruitment and training of mercenaries were unacceptable acts, whether committed under the direction of international private interests or with the complicity, co-ordination or lack of co-operation of States.

33. Colombia itself had suffered from the violence of mercenaries, who were linked with organized crime groups and narcotics traffickers and who had trained those who had attacked its people and its constitutional order. Colombia hoped that the international community could prevent traffic in the arms and technology used to commit such crimes. That traffic clearly originated in certain countries which, paradoxically, were continuing to benefit from the international fight against the drug traffic.

34. All States were small when confronted by mercenarism. For that reason, Colombia was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 and supported Maldives in its efforts.

35. Mr. MURDOCH (Antigua and Barbuda) said that the problem of the security of small States was related to defence capabilities, economic matters, terrorism, undue pressure from larger States and a growing tendency among the latter to deal with matters affecting smaller countries through bilateral rather than multilateral channels. Antigua and Barbuda was deeply concerned about the powerful countries' use of the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean for dumping nuclear and other waste. International and regional co-operation was the solution to the security problems of small States. Antigua and Barbuda co-operated closely with its Caribbean Community (CARICOM) neighbours on matters of regional security. However, a data bank was needed for the collection and dissemination of security information.

36. His delegation was concerned about the problems of illegal fishing and drug trafficking. It called upon other countries to provide the necessary intelligence, enforcement and interdiction capabilities. With regard to illegal fishing, Antigua and Barbuda lacked the necessary security capacity to deter foreign intrusion. It must seek assistance from the international community in order to safeguard its interests.

37. His delegation was gravely concerned about the scourge of terrorism, to which small States were particularly vulnerable. Antigua and Barbuda, heavily dependent as it was upon tourism, must safeguard itself against terrorist acts in or near its territory. It recommended the following measures: small States should have flexible and multi-purpose security forces that were able to implement sieges and

(Mr. Murdoch, Antigua
and Barbuda)

carry out complicated rescue missions with minimum risk to hostages; such States should be in a position, owing to improved intelligence services, readily to call for external assistance if faced with major terrorist pressure; and assaults against diplomatic agents and the like should be treated as common crimes, and not as political offences.

38. Large and small countries could not be secure unless their economy was sound. Small States should endeavour to diversify, while paying increased attention to human resources development.

39. The security of small States would best be ensured through the continued effort of all countries to establish a global community of equal States free of violent confrontation and based on multilateralism. His delegation strongly urged the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4.

40. Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam) said that, as a small country, Brunei Darussalam was vulnerable to fluctuations in international relations. It had thus formulated a foreign policy based on the principles of the sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of all States and non-use of force. He expressed the hope that the respect which Brunei Darussalam accorded to other countries would be reciprocated. It valued its membership in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The 1976 Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in South-East Asia strengthened its resolve to promote regional peace and stability.

41. In spite of the improved international situation, grandiose expansionary visions continued to threaten the security of small States. While the small countries desired peace, other countries wished to settle disputes by force. His delegation fully supported draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 and wished to join the list of sponsors. He urged that it should be adopted by consensus.

42. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the broad sponsorship of draft resolution (A/SPC/44/L.4), as well as the discussion of it in the Committee thus far, made clear its timeliness. The positive developments which had taken place recently in international relations called for further dialogue aimed at creating a more stable basis for security. A firm security system could not be built independently of the United Nations. In order to help realize fully the capabilities of the Organization, his delegation had, at the current session, submitted a plan to make fuller use of those capabilities, including those for information collection and processing. It also considered the establishment of multilateral and regional centres for monitoring security threats a useful step.

43. An important component of security was respect for national freedom of choice, yet threats and acts of intervention continued in various regions of the world. Such acts should be unequivocally condemned by the international community.

44. His delegation considered fully justified the provision in the draft resolution urging the Secretary-General to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small States and to consider making use of Article 99 of the

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

Charter. The idea of preventing or settling disputes in situations which might create a threat to international peace and security had been unanimously approved by the General Assembly at its forty-third session, and the United Nations had available to it for that purpose a wide range of ways and means - including those of a preventive nature - open to the Security Council, the Organization as a whole and the Secretary-General. It was important to realize the capabilities and the decisions of the United Nations. That was the thrust of the draft resolution, and his delegation would therefore support it as a first step in tackling the overall problem of the protection of small States.

45. The CHAIRMAN announced that the following countries had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4: Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Djibouti, Lesotho, Mali, Malta, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago and Viet Nam.

46. Mr. SNOOK (United States of America) said that his delegation recognized the security problems of small States and supported the draft resolution. He noted that the subject of mercenaries was being considered by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. The term "mercenaries" in the draft resolution must be construed in keeping with its definition in existing international law.

47. Mr. SOUTELLO ALVES (Brazil) said that Brazil shared the view that small States might be particularly vulnerable to external aggression and threats of aggression. The United Nations, through the Security Council, had a role to play in meeting their security needs. Brazil was prepared to help to define the conditions under which such protection might be requested and granted. While his delegation could not support the draft resolution, in a spirit of co-operation it was prepared not to object to the taking of a decision on that matter without a vote.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 without a vote.

49. Draft resolution A/SPC/44/L.4 was adopted without a vote.

50. Mr. ZAKI (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, said that the numerous sponsors and the many delegations that had participated in the discussion had highlighted the universality and urgency of the issue. The sponsors were confident that all States would fully participate in the consultations that were provided for in the draft resolution. Such consultations were essential for preparing a useful report. He urged the international community not to force small States to make a choice between sovereignty and development. He had been encouraged by the Member States' recognition of the particular vulnerability of small States to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs and of their special needs.

51. Mr. SALAH (Iraq) said that his delegation supported the consensus on the draft resolution and shared the views of the sponsors. The efforts of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security needed further support, particularly from those States with the means to implement the collective security system provided for in the Charter. The General Assembly resolutions concerning non-use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes and non-intervention in internal affairs needed to be implemented. The Soviet initiative regarding the establishment of centres throughout the world to prevent international disputes from developing into armed conflicts was in keeping with the draft resolution. He urged the Committee to co-ordinate its efforts vis-à-vis that initiative and the draft resolution.

52. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of item 150.

AGENDA ITEM 76: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/44/13 and Corr.1 and Add.1, 431, 474 and Corr.1, 497, 505-508, 608 and 641)

53. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the documents listed under item 76, and also to documents A/44/299, 361, 397 and 409, containing letters from Member States pertaining to the item.

54. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)), introducing his report (A/44/13 and Corr.1 and Add.1), said that the year it covered had been an extremely hard one for the refugees and for the Agency. The report described the special emergency activities undertaken in response to the dramatic circumstances prevailing in three of the Agency's five fields, which had at times virtually paralysed its regular programmes in those fields.

55. In Lebanon, UNRWA was trying to meet urgent basic needs while being unable to guarantee a stable and secure environment for its staff, despite the somewhat eased circumstances.

56. In the occupied territory, the uprising (intifadah) continued unabated and had become more violent. The human costs were staggering: the detentions, woundings and killings, the constant interferences with economic and productive cycles and the disruption of traditional family life and values were ripping the social fabric of the entire community. Yet UNRWA found itself dealing with new barriers of red tape imposed by the Israeli Government which were interrupting and delaying a variety of urgent activities. The occupying forces had also become increasingly unco-operative and even hostile, sometimes commandeering or raiding Agency premises, forcibly interfering with humanitarian operations, and even assaulting and detaining Agency personnel, both international and local. UNRWA had protested against those and other breaches of Israel's legal obligations.

57. With respect to refugee education, schools in the occupied West Bank had been allowed to reopen in the summer, and by the end of November 1989 the Agency hoped,

(Mr. Giacomelli)

by introducing a revised and reduced curriculum, to have caught up with the educational backlog, which amounted to virtually the entire 1988/89 school year. Even that scaled-down programme had got off to a shaky start, however, owing to curfews, strikes and selective closures. UNRWA's three vocational training centres in the West Bank remained closed, as did the universities, adding to the general concern for the education of Palestinians. The educational situation had improved, at least temporarily, in Lebanon, where most schools were now functioning normally.

58. Another aspect of the Agency's emergency programmes was the economic and social support it provided in the occupied territory and the general assistance it offered through a number of short-term international refugee-affairs officers and legal officers. Relief requirements were substantial and increasing. As the confrontation escalated in the economic sphere too, the need for food could soon become chronic, particularly in the Gaza Strip. In dealing with the medical emergency, the Agency was morally obliged to provide humanitarian assistance without discrimination as to refugee status, as both its own Advisory Commission and the Secretary-General had requested. Such provision of generalized medical and other assistance had greatly extended the scope of exceptional emergency services, and had serious programme and financial implications. The increasingly political environment and the administrative and financial burden of a broader base of beneficiaries required it to be clear about its goals and programmes.

59. The projected budget, outlined in document A/44/13/Add.1 reflected funding requirements in 1990 for the regular programmes and was based on the assumption that it would be possible to obtain a 5-per-cent increase in cash contributions above those needed to cover the 1989 cash budget. The favourable exchange rates in 1988/89 had helped reduce funding requirements and the cash budget, but could not be assumed to have long-term effects. Provisions were built into the 1990 budget to meet possible cost increases, bringing the current estimates to \$242.3 million, a 3.7 per cent increase over the 1989 budget. In addition to regular programmes, UNRWA was currently operating emergency programmes in three of its five fields. An estimated \$30 million over and above regular contributions for 1990 would be needed to continue those programmes at their present level.

60. The current session of the General Assembly, which coincided with the fortieth anniversary of UNRWA, must make a decision on the Agency's future, as its mandate would expire in June 1990. The Agency had suffered many wounds, casualties and violations of its privileges and immunities in the performance of its mandate over the past 40 years, but at the same time it had introduced programmes and built a partnership with the people it assisted that was practically unique. It had compiled an impressive record in education, health, relief services, emergency assistance and developmental activities. Since 1950, tens of thousands of Palestinians throughout the Middle East had been employed by UNRWA, acquiring technical and professional skills and experience that would make them the logical backbone of any future Palestinian administrative or civil service infrastructure.

61. While there had been and would continue to be differing interpretations of its role, the Agency had been fulfilling its mandate. A political settlement of the

(Mr. Giacomelli)

question of Palestine was needed, and that was beyond the boundaries of UNRWA's activities and ambitions. For the time being its challenge was in the daily realities of all those needing the varied support and skills that the Agency could provide. Through the performance of its humanitarian tasks, UNRWA strove to contribute to a peace process uppermost on the international agenda.

62. Mr. JOHANSEN (Norway), speaking as the Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, introduced the Working Group's report (A/44/641). Noting that it followed the format of past years, he drew attention to section III, which was based on the statement made to the Working Group by the Comptroller of UNRWA on 10 September 1989, and section IV, which contained the views of the Working Group on the major issues mentioned by the Comptroller.

63. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said that, as one of the Arab States that acted as host to Palestine refugees, his country had a particular interest in UNRWA. His delegation had found no cause for optimism on the future of the refugees either in the reports on the item before the Committee or in the developments that had taken place with respect to the question of Palestine as a whole.

64. While the political aspects of the refugee problem were dealt with under other items before the Assembly, it was nevertheless necessary to emphasize Israel's responsibility for the existence of the problem, for the continued absence of a solution and for the constant deterioration of the situation. No progress had been made in the efforts for a peaceful settlement that would automatically ensure a fundamental solution, and UNRWA was, moreover, facing a difficult situation both with regard to the paucity of its resources and its freedom of operation in the occupied territories. It was Israel that was preventing progress towards peace, and it was Israel that was impeding the activities of UNRWA and its staff. The readiness of the Palestinians to engage in peace efforts was evident, particularly in the light of the historic decisions taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the territorial concessions it had offered.

65. As a result of the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories, increased numbers of Palestinians needed UNRWA services, and the Agency had been obliged to divert a large part of its resources into emergency or extraordinary programmes. UNRWA had thus been forced to cut back on some of its basic programmes and to reduce the resources made available to the Arab host countries. Refugees in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic had therefore been deprived of some of the services normally provided by the Agency in order to help alleviate the greater suffering of refugees under Israeli occupation. Many countries, including Arab countries, had contributed large sums in order to meet the emergency in the occupied territories, but the needs of regular programmes were also increasing. His delegation expected the Commissioner-General to respond to the General Assembly's request that the ration distribution should be resumed.

66. In his report (A/44/13 and Add.1), the Commissioner-General had addressed a complex problem that had well-known historical and political dimensions. His delegation was aware of the constraints under which the Commissioner-General was

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

operating, that he could not, perhaps, enter into certain particulars and that he might be of the view that it would be unwise to focus on the obstacles he had encountered. While his delegation had no doubt as to the integrity, objectivity and far-sightedness of the Commissioner-General or of his desire to keep the General Assembly fully informed of the activities of the Agency, it nevertheless felt obliged to highlight a number of aspects of the problem.

67. The Agency addressed only a part of the refugees' needs, while the refugees themselves and the Arab host countries assumed great responsibilities which were not set out in detail in the Commissioner-General's report. For the General Assembly to be more fully informed of the true situation, the report should contain an assessment of the actual needs of Palestine refugees and of the extent to which those needs were met by the host countries. While the health, living and educational standards of the refugees was generally poor, they appeared to be satisfactory in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic in view of the additional costs assumed by those countries. If Jordan did not meet the enormous costs of infrastructure, secondary education, health and social welfare services for Palestine refugees, the Agency would have to double its current budget in order to make up the shortfall.

68. It must always be remembered that Israel was an occupying Power and that it was responsible for creating the refugee problem and for its continued existence. It sought to frustrate the Agency's efforts and regarded it with hostility, while the Arab host countries did a great deal for the refugees and had a co-operative relationship with UNRWA. The measures taken by Israel against Agency staff were part of its negative attitude towards UNRWA and towards the refugees themselves.

69. There were many shortcomings in the educational services provided by the Agency: they were available to less than 50 per cent of refugee children, while the host countries assumed the burden of providing services to the remainder; the health care received by refugee schoolchildren was inadequate; and Agency teachers had presented demands to Jordan which, in its view, must be viewed with sympathy. UNRWA schools remained generally overcrowded and some lacked essential facilities, such as libraries and laboratories. Following a comprehensive assessment of educational experience in Jordan, compulsory education had been extended by one year. The same measure must be implemented by the Agency so that students enrolled in its programmes would be able to enter institutions of higher education in the normal way; two different standards of education could not be tolerated in Jordan.

70. Israel had impeded the work of UNRWA by violating Agency premises and causing deliberate and wide-scale damage to its property. It had closed 90 of the 98 schools in the occupied West Bank for a second year in succession, and most of the school year in the Gaza Strip had been lost because of curfews and closures. Agency staff had been prevented from providing learning kits to first, second and third grade pupils in their homes, and numerous pupils had been killed or wounded. The Israeli authorities had refused to co-operate with the Agency in saving what remained of the school year and had once again demonstrated that they were endeavouring to create a generation of Palestinians in which there was widespread

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

illiteracy. It was a curious fact that Israel had closed the schools in the West Bank on the grounds that they represented a threat to security, while the schools in the Gaza Strip had been kept open, likewise for security reasons. It therefore seemed that Israel's true intentions were to destroy the educational system in the West Bank and, for the first time in history, educational deprivation was being used as a form of collective punishment.

71. Israel's reaction to the United Nations resolutions on the item under consideration was one more indication of its negative policy on the Palestine refugee problem. It did not acknowledge the right of the refugees to return to their homes or to receive compensation, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and refused to co-operate with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine in assessing the income from refugee properties, refused to allow the return of those displaced following its aggression of June 1967, attempted to settle refugees in places far from their homes, and declined to co-operate in the establishment of a University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees.

72. The Agency had begun to base its medium- and long-term plans on self-support projects, representing a shift away from the "public charity" concept of relief services. The Commissioner-General had stated that that new departure would be without prejudice to the right of the refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation for their losses. It was, however, doubtful if the Agency had the capacity to implement such programmes in the light of its difficult financial circumstances and at a time of growing need for emergency assistance. UNRWA must not abandon its commitment to the right of the refugees to return or to receive compensation. That right had been acknowledged by the United Nations and the international community in the linking of the establishment and recognition of the State of Israel with respect for the civil and political rights of the Palestinians.

73. The Palestine refugee problem was an essential part of the Palestine problem in general, and the right of the refugees to return had been seen as the basis of the Palestine problem prior to 1967. Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had, however, added the restoration of the occupied Arab territories to the right of return so that they together formed the core of the Palestine problem.

74. His delegation acknowledged the non-political character of UNRWA and its purely humanitarian role. Israel's continued refusal to acknowledge the inalienable right of the Palestine refugees to return was the sole reason for the continued existence of the Agency, and it had become a vital institution providing refugees with services essential for their survival. There could be no substitute for a political solution to the Palestine refugee problem, but the conditions in which the refugees lived attested to the continuing need for the Agency's services, just as they underscored to an even greater extent the need for a peaceful, comprehensive, lasting and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

75. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer for Palestine), noted that there were now more than 2.3 million Palestinian refugees, and that Israeli leaders had continued their practice of mass expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied land of the State of Palestine, combining that with a policy of annexation.

76. The intifadah was about to enter its third year without losing momentum. It was superlatively organized and took a civilized, democratic approach towards ending Israeli occupation and oppression. There was ample testimony to the brutality of that occupation in the report of the Secretary-General (S/19443) and the report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/44/13). The latter in particular gave a staggering picture of the situation since the beginning of the intifadah. Seven hundred and fifty-nine Palestinians had been killed, some 75,000 wounded, over 60,000 arrested, 10,000 displaced and more than 300,000 deprived of education. All those crimes were acts of State terrorism and genocide, and the valiant intifadah was the highest form of popular resistance. It would continue until its goals were achieved, and the international community must respond to the call of the Palestinian people and prevail upon Israel.

77. While the State of Palestine had in June 1989 acceded to the various Geneva Conventions and Protocols, it was noteworthy that Israel had since 1967 been violating the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and had refused to comply with recent Security Council resolutions seeking to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation. Moreover, Israel had not only never complied with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948, calling inter alia for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes: it had been following a course of action aimed at the destruction of the refugee camps and the forced integration of the refugees into other Arab countries and, ultimately, the annihilation of the Palestinian people, in pursuit of a Zionist myth that negated their existence and their recognized national rights.

78. The situation had forced the Palestine National Council to meet at its nineteenth Extraordinary Session, held in November 1988, and to adopt its Political Communiqué and Declaration of Independence, in which it laid down the principles for the formation of the provisional Government of the State of Palestine and declared its readiness to participate in the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of international law. The Council had also reaffirmed the necessity of placing all occupied Palestinian territory under temporary United Nations supervision until peace was established.

79. Palestine now declared once again that it accepted the establishment of peace on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on the basis of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The means to a just and comprehensive solution would be the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing. Now was the time to begin preparations for that Conference. While the

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, Palestine)

Palestinian people continued their uprising, the State of Palestine would continue to co-operate with United Nations efforts to reverse Israeli policies and to bring about a solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

80. The recognition of the State of Palestine by 117 States had major implications for the political, legal and administrative status of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single Palestinian territory, a reality reflected in the treatment of the occupied territory as one unit in the report of the UNRWA Commissioner-General. Palestine and UNRWA should work together to strengthen that unity - forged through 22 years of occupation and resistance to occupation - and it was time for Palestine to be included in the Advisory Commission of UNRWA in order to facilitate the development of the new reality.

81. With regard to the documents before the Committee, his delegation noted the slow pace of reconstruction of the Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon and intended to work with UNRWA to help speed the process. It reiterated its condemnation of Israel's obstruction of the Agency's work. It called on UNRWA to provide its full range of services in the occupied territory and Lebanon, despite the brutality of the occupying Power, and asked the Agency to continue issuing special individual identification cards to all Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/120 I. It condemned Israel for not paying compensation to UNRWA for the damage resulting from its invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and from its practices in the occupied territory, and for failing to complete a functional feasibility study for the proposed university for Palestine refugees in Jerusalem, as indicated in document A/44/474.

82. Although the only solution to the refugee problem lay in the return of the Palestine refugees, Palestine supported all efforts in the mean time to secure stable financing for UNRWA, so that it could maintain its services until then.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.