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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 22nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 November 2014, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Bhattarai ..... (Nepal)

### Contents

Agenda item 50: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 50: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**

*(continued)* (A/69/13, A/69/345, A/69/349, A/69/351 and A/69/391)

1. **Mr. Forés Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that his Government was a staunch defender of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, who had long been the victims of Israeli aggression. The United Nations had a significant role to play in protecting those rights, including the right to return and the right of self-determination. Cuba vigorously condemned the recent massacre committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in mass casualties, injuries, displacement and destruction, thereby exacerbating an already severe humanitarian crisis. It was also deeply concerned at the progressive deterioration of the situation in East Jerusalem, where the existing sharp tensions had been stoked by Israel's announcement of new settlement expansion plans, as well as its constant demolitions of buildings and expropriation of Palestinian land. The Israeli Government continued to act in flagrant violation of international law, not only by restricting the freedom of movement of goods and people, including UNRWA staff and materials, but also by violating the immunity of UNRWA staff and premises; it had directly targeted UNRWA schools on three occasions during its recent military assault on Gaza. Israel must end its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, lift the blockade on Gaza immediately and unconditionally, and allow unrestricted movement of goods, people and humanitarian assistance across Gaza's borders.

2. Given that the Agency's perpetual budget shortfall was hampering its capacity to carry out emergency response and other essential programmes, his Government urged the donor community to fulfil its pledges to UNRWA. Cuba would maintain its unwavering support for the Palestinian people's struggle to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination and establish their own independent, sovereign State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

3. **Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria) said that his delegation was appalled by the steadily deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza resulting from the Israeli military aggression in July and August 2014. It therefore welcomed the pledging of \$5.4 billion at the

Cairo Conference on Palestine — Reconstructing Gaza and hoped that the donations would be rapidly disbursed. For its part, his Government had pledged \$25 million, which would supplement its overall aid of over \$50 million provided to the Palestinians since the latest Israeli attacks, in addition to humanitarian aid in the form of food and medical equipment valued at nearly \$10 million delivered at the end of October 2014. Further caravans of humanitarian aid worth \$12 million were being provided by Algerian charity associations. His Government fully supported the Palestinian government of national consensus, which would carry out the reconstruction plan in coordination with the United Nations, and called for the immediate and unconditional opening of crossings to allow the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and people to and from Gaza.

4. Following many years of financial difficulties, the Agency was now in urgent and dire need of additional financial resources, without which many Palestinians would be deprived of essential education and health-care services. His Government, itself a consistent and reliable donor to UNRWA, urged all current and potential donors to contribute as much and as regularly as possible. A broadened donor base would guarantee a stable organization that could meet the needs of the Palestine refugees and contribute to stability in the region until a political solution was reached.

5. A long-term solution to the refugee and humanitarian situation facing the people of Palestine and the neighbouring Arab States could be reached only if the political issues in the region were resolved. In that regard, his Government strongly condemned Israel's continuing and escalating illegal settlement activities and its recent announcements regarding the construction of Israeli housing units in occupied East Jerusalem. It called on Israel to lift the illegal blockade and facilitate the free movement of UNRWA staff. His delegation remained concerned by Israel's violations of its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the destruction of UNRWA facilities, numerous restrictions placed on the freedom of movement of UNRWA personnel and materials and the targeting of UNRWA buildings and schools during its military aggression in August 2014 and called on the Government of Israel, as the occupying Power, to comply fully with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the

Protection of Civilian Persons in time of war, as well as the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

6. He called on the international community to intensify efforts to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to strive to achieve a settlement to the Palestinian question that would guarantee an end to the Israeli occupation and the independence of a sovereign, viable State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as a just solution for the Palestine refugee problem in line with the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

7. **Mr. Mashabane** (South Africa) said that given the dire situation in Palestine and particularly in Gaza, it was important for the international community to provide much-needed financial support to UNRWA. The pledges made at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine — Reconstructing Gaza must be disbursed; his Government had pledged US\$ 1 million towards humanitarian assistance in Gaza and would be transferring those funds to UNRWA shortly. In addition, through the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Fund, and in cooperation with the Palestinian authorities and other international organizations, it was supporting projects in Ramallah, Nablus and Gaza. In Nablus, IBSA was engaged in the construction of a centre for adults with disabilities, and in Gaza, it had supported the rehabilitation of the Al Quds hospital and would also be supporting the rebuilding of the Atta Habib medical centre; both those buildings had been severely damaged during the latest Israeli offensive.

8. South Africa welcomed the establishment of the United Nations-supervised Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism and the announcement by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process that reconstruction material was finally being released by Israel into Gaza. However, it had also noted the admission by the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza that the damage caused by the conflict in Gaza was worse than initially assessed and would require close to 400 trucks per day to cross into Gaza. The vicious cycle of war and reconstruction needed to be broken, as that was the only way to improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians and achieve sustainable stability in both Palestine and Israel. The only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was a

negotiated settlement of a two-State solution within internationally recognized borders based on those that existed on 4 June 1967.

9. The lifting of the Gaza blockade was urgently needed to revive its stricken economy, which was trade-oriented and heavily aid-dependent. His delegation was especially concerned by the effect of the coastal blockade on the fisheries industry, which had the potential for job creation and economic growth. His delegation was appalled by the large number of Palestinian refugees in Syria who needed assistance from UNRWA; it was also concerned about the growing number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, which could put socioeconomic pressure on both countries' ability to deliver basic services to their citizens. His delegation appealed to the international community to assist countries hosting Palestine refugees and displaced persons by sharing their burden.

10. **Mr. Pressman** (United States of America) said that his Government remained the largest bilateral donor to UNRWA, with more than \$398 million provided in the 2014 fiscal year, including over \$135 million to the General Fund, nearly \$102 million to the Syria regional crisis response, \$75 million for the West Bank and Gaza emergency appeal, \$74 million to the Gaza flash appeal and over \$12 million to support other critical assistance for Palestinian refugees in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. His delegation called upon all Member States to consider providing additional funding, especially to the General Fund.

11. The United States was deeply concerned by the Agency's inability to access five of the 12 Palestine refugee camps in Syria due to the ongoing conflict in and around camp areas. The Syrian regime continued to prevent consistent humanitarian access to the Yarmouk camp, leading to starvation; it should immediately allow UNRWA unrestricted access to provide critical assistance to Palestine refugees trapped in Syria. His Government also remained gravely concerned about the unconscionable act of hiding weapons in vacant United Nations schools and other reported abuses of the civilian and humanitarian nature of United Nations facilities committed by militants in Gaza. It strongly condemned the shelling of UNRWA schools and facilities sheltering civilians fleeing the conflict; it was concerned about the neutrality of those facilities and the safety of United Nations personnel

and had called on the Israeli authorities to conduct a full and prompt investigation of those incidents.

12. Throughout the conflict, the United States had called on all parties to take all feasible precautions to prevent civilian casualties, comply with international humanitarian law and respect United Nations facilities in Gaza. His Government welcomed the efforts by the United Nations, including increased capacity and improved procedures, to better protect UNRWA, other United Nations agencies and the civilians they served from such abuses. In the midst of those unrelenting challenges, UNRWA had demonstrated a commitment to promoting the values of peace and tolerance, opposing all forms of violence, and safeguarding the human rights of Palestinian refugees.

13. **Ms. Daher** (Lebanon) said that 2014 had been a particularly difficult year for the Palestinian people in Gaza and for UNRWA, after more than 50 days of Israeli military aggression. It was of paramount importance to ensure the Agency's financial stability. Her delegation was alarmed that UNRWA continued to face financial shortfalls, notwithstanding several flash appeals, and called on donors to fulfil their pledges and increase their contributions to the Agency. Lebanon welcomed the generous financial commitments that had been made at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine — Reconstructing Gaza.

14. UNRWA faced an unjustified defamation campaign led by those responsible for the Palestinian tragedy. Year after year, it was accused of inefficiency and of holding refugees in a state of dependency, when it was Israel which was exacerbating the Agency's financial shortfalls by imposing transit charges on shipments and impeding the movement of personnel and goods in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War; which continued to impose an illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip; and, most importantly, which was occupying the territory of Palestine, undermining efforts to re-launch the peace process and delaying the independence of the State of Palestine.

15. In the face of all the challenges facing Lebanon, her Government remained committed to improving the lives of Palestine refugees during their temporary stay in the 12 Lebanese camps. It expressed gratitude to donors who had assisted in the completion of several phases of the reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous

contribution for that purpose and reiterated its call for the full disbursement of pledges in order to close the \$140 million deficit and allow the camp to operate at full capacity.

16. The Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue committee was endeavouring to ensure better protection of Palestine refugees' rights, including through the adoption of a law in August 2010 regulating the access of Palestinian workers to the Lebanese labour market and the publication of a guide to Palestinian workers' rights and obligations. Her Government had issued a decree on 29 May 2014 allowing Palestinian students who graduated from the UNRWA Sibliin Training Centre to complete their technical or university studies. A campaign jointly organized by UNRWA and the Lebanese Ministry of Health had been held in March and October 2014 to provide measles, tuberculosis and polio vaccines to Palestinians aged from 9 months to 30 years at 27 UNRWA health facilities across Lebanon. All those efforts would improve refugees' living conditions during their temporary stay in Lebanon, pending the exercise of their right to return to their homeland.

17. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, her Government had welcomed more than 1,200,000 refugees from Syria, including 52,000 Palestine refugees. It was now crucial to support UNRWA, those refugees and their host communities. Despite exceeding its capacity and reaching the breaking point, her Government reaffirmed its readiness to continue working closely with the international community while implementing its new policy regarding refugees from Syria.

18. It was the international community's responsibility to end Israeli occupation, celebrate the independence of the State of Palestine and allow the Palestine refugees to exercise their right to return to their homeland.

19. **Mr. Pedersen** (Norway) said that the war in Gaza had caused enormous destruction and suffering; the intense bombardment would have long-term traumatic consequences. The ongoing crisis in Syria had reached catastrophic dimensions, with an impact on the whole region. His Government was gravely concerned about the loss of life among Palestine refugees in Syria and Gaza and the hardships endured and urged that access should be granted for all the Agency's humanitarian and human development activities.

20. UNRWA had played a vital role in preparing for the Cairo International Conference on Palestine — Reconstructing Gaza. For months, it had scaled up activities to provide food, water, shelter and sanitation services to the tens of thousands of displaced persons. Materials must be brought in and economic life revived in both Gaza and the West Bank so that people could work. For that to happen, Israel must lift the blockade. Gaza and the West Bank should be merged into a single economy whose participants could trade freely within Palestine and with the outside world. Furthermore, a responsible authority that favoured a lasting ceasefire and could create sound policy frameworks and ensure security for all civilians was needed across all of Palestine.

21. UNRWA was under both political and financial pressure. The total refugee population was growing and the Agency faced a deficit of approximately \$56 million by the end of 2014. Its financial challenges required changes in funding, operations and partnerships with both host countries and other United Nations organizations. Norway highly appreciated host countries' support for the Agency's operations in the field and the delivery of basic services both in and outside the camps. The international community, including both new and traditional donors, must continue to provide sufficient funding to UNRWA. However, the financial burden must be shared, including among Advisory Commission members; the Agency's increasing funding gap could not be covered by a small group of top contributors.

22. In order to continue delivering services to the refugee population, UNRWA must constantly adapt to changing realities in the region. Priority should be given to the most vulnerable refugee groups. Norway appreciated the ongoing efforts to improve the Agency's performance and urged the continuation of those efforts in the next Medium Term Strategy. It welcomed financial planning aligned with available resources as well as the Agency's commitment to improve its financial procedures, including increased budget transparency. Partnerships with host country Governments were invaluable for providing services such as electricity and water to the refugee camps. It was also important to seek increased cooperation with other United Nations agencies. Donors had a responsibility to ensure that their collective contributions were spent in the most cost-effective way; transparency and accountability would allow

stakeholders to have a say in the Agency's priorities and clarify how resources were spent.

23. **Ms. Alzaabi** (United Arab Emirates) deplored the immense and increasing scale of the humanitarian crisis suffered by thousands of Palestine refugees, and acknowledged the vital role played by UNRWA in easing their suffering. The Agency's budget shortfall was of great concern, particularly in view of the increased demand for humanitarian assistance as a result of recent events in the region, not to mention the destruction of UNRWA schools, hospitals and other facilities. Her delegation underlined the need to establish a sustainable and effective funding mechanism to enable it to meet increasing demand for all of its services.

24. Her Government vigorously condemned the deliberate bombing of refugee camps and UNRWA facilities by the Israeli forces in Gaza, and by the Syrian regime in the Syrian Arab Republic. Investigations must be carried out immediately to ensure that the perpetrators of those attacks were held accountable for their actions. The international community must apply the necessary pressure to ensure the lifting of the humanitarian blockade on the Yarmouk camp in Syria. It must also compel Israel to end its blockade on the Gaza Strip and cease obstructing the Agency's reconstruction efforts.

25. The United Arab Emirates spared no effort to provide assistance and emergency relief to Palestine refugees, both in cooperation with UNRWA and through other channels. It had pledged US\$ 200 million at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine — Reconstructing Gaza, hosted a regional conference on protecting refugee children in the Middle East and North Africa, and cooperated with UNRWA in launching an education programme to help children in Gaza to deal with the psychological effects of war. Her Government stressed the need to bring about a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question, provide Palestinian civilians with international protection and enable Palestine refugees to exercise their legitimate right to return to their homes and receive fair compensation for the hardships that they had endured for so long.

26. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that it had become clear that some States were so busy accusing Israel that they were not interested in addressing the real issue, namely the politicization of the refugee problem. Israel

supported the humanitarian mission of UNRWA and abided by the understandings expressed in the 1967 Comay-Michelmores exchange of letters. It recognized the Agency's important contribution to the welfare of Palestinian refugees and their descendants. However, his Government strongly opposed the Agency's political agenda. While all the rest of the world's refugees were served by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Palestinians fell under the purview of UNRWA; while UNHCR taught independence, UNRWA encouraged lifelong dependency. Under the UNRWA framework, Palestinians could continue to be called refugees long after they acquired citizenship and found permanent housing. The Agency's original mandate had included the task of resettling refugees, but that important function had been removed in 1965. A refugee population could be expected to shrink over time; yet because UNRWA allowed refugee status to be passed down to children and grandchildren, the number of Palestinian refugees had ballooned from a few hundred thousand in 1948 to over 5 million to date. Currently, many of the Agency's beneficiaries did not live in refugee camps, but were still considered refugees and were therefore denied the opportunity for full integration in their place of residence. Moreover, the Agency's education system deliberately perpetuated a refugee mentality amongst Palestinian youth, teaching them from the earliest age that the only possible solution was the so-called claim of return.

27. Although the Middle East was saturated with oil revenue, the funds mysteriously dried up when it came to assisting Palestinians and subsidizing UNRWA. Some Arab States believed that the establishment of UNRWA had released them of any responsibility to assist Palestinians, and had passed discriminatory laws that prevented Palestinian refugees from working in certain professions. Many States which had used the current debate to criticize Israel had done little to support UNRWA or Palestinian refugees: the majority of the Agency's core funding came from Western countries. Moreover, resources pledged for humanitarian assistance were being used for political purposes. For example, the UNRWA spokesperson in Gaza had been quick to demonize Israel, but had ignored the real culprit responsible for the Palestinians' suffering; he had said nothing to condemn Hamas for stockpiling rockets in UNRWA schools and launching them only steps away.

28. Over the summer, Israel had once again been the target of unrelenting terrorist attacks by Hamas; for 50 days, Hamas had indiscriminately rained rockets onto Israeli homes and cities and had sent heavily armed terrorists through underground tunnels into Israeli communities. No country in the world would tolerate such an assault on its citizens, and Israel should not be expected to do so either. In the face of those constant threats, Israel had launched a self-defence operation, during which it had been committed to upholding international law and had done everything in its power to avoid harming innocent civilians. Israel operated only against terrorist targets and genuinely regretted the loss of innocent civilian lives. In contrast, no site was off limits for Hamas, which had exploited the international community's concern for human life by hiding in Palestinian homes, schools and mosques and using a hospital basement in Gaza as its headquarters. Israel and the international community expected UNRWA to conduct a transparent investigation of the stockpiling of weapons in its schools and publicize its findings. For its part, Israel did not shy away from accepting responsibility. It had established a fact-finding mechanism to investigate exceptional incidents in accordance with international law. Some of those incidents had resulted in harm to civilians or damage to civilian or United Nations facilities. As a democracy, Israel upheld and abided by the rule of law and expected the international community to support it in that effort.

29. His delegation had noted the Commissioner-General's pledge to provide the Committee with a detailed breakdown of the casualty, injury and physical and property damage suffered by Palestinian refugees in Syria. It had also noted the Commissioner-General's explanation that the disproportionate attention devoted to the 50-day Gaza conflict in his briefing as opposed to the three-and-a-half-year war in Syria could be attributed to the conflict's coinciding with the start of his term. Accordingly, Israel anticipated a more balanced briefing in 2015 that would more accurately reflect the situation. The time had come for permanent solutions instead of another round of biased resolutions and the perpetuation of double standards and for amending the Agency's politicized mandate to ensure that people came before politics.

30. **Mr. Zehnder** (Switzerland) said that one of the major achievements of the past year had been the development of the Agency's Medium-Term Strategy

for 2016-2021. The strategy reflected the growing vulnerability of Palestine refugees as a result of the occupation of the Palestinian territory, the blockade of the Gaza Strip and recent armed conflicts in Syria and Gaza and emphasized Palestine refugees' rights and the responsibilities of various stakeholders to protect them in that environment. Forced displacements, including the threatened transfers of Bedouin refugee communities in the West Bank, were of particular concern. Switzerland supported the Agency's efforts to make its protection activities more effective. However, UNRWA could not address all the protection needs of Palestine refugees on its own; only a just, global and negotiated solution could address those needs in a sustainable manner. The successful implementation of the new strategy would require strong support by all relevant stakeholders. Switzerland commended the Agency for the consultative process that had accompanied the preparation of the new strategy, which would help mobilize broad support. It also welcomed the Agency's commitment to developing a stronger sense of ownership and participation among Palestine refugees, including UNRWA staff, in decision-making processes affecting its operations. Of equal importance to the new strategy's success was a solid resource mobilization plan that would ensure adequate funding.

31. Switzerland was extremely concerned about the Agency's financial deficit and its potential long-term impact. It noted that the recent austerity measures had affected the Agency's reserves, thus limiting its ability to respond to potential emergencies. Switzerland strongly encouraged other donors to channel contributions through the General Fund and to finance emergency appeals. His Government had increased its 2014-2015 biannual contribution to the General Fund and was considering making an additional contribution to the Syria Crisis Appeal. Switzerland urged donors to rapidly disburse funds pledged at the Cairo Conference before winter set in. In the long term, Switzerland would support the Agency's efforts to develop an even more ambitious resource mobilization strategy; it encouraged the Commissioner-General to maintain his commitment to improving the Agency's internal planning and financial management.

32. **Mr. Ben Sliman** (Tunisia) said that his country commended UNRWA for its exemplary work, which was carried out under extremely difficult conditions. Following the recent Israeli attack against Gaza, the

scale of destruction and devastation inflicted on the population was appalling. That situation placed an additional burden on the Agency and required strengthened support to UNRWA through enlargement of the donor base; it also required the disbursement of pledges so that actual reconstruction could begin. Tunisia had consistently called for the lifting of the blockade, as an essential condition for enabling access to humanitarian assistance, providing for the Palestinian population's urgent needs and rebuilding Gaza.

33. In the West Bank and in Gaza, the Palestinian people were subject to harsh restrictions imposed by Israel and needed the international community's attention and support. Tunisia was deeply concerned about the enduring hardship of Palestinian refugees in refugee camps in Syria, which put an additional burden on UNRWA. The Agency's financial deficit still constituted an enormous challenge because it adversely impacted existing levels of services delivered by the Agency and undermined its efforts to respond to the critical needs of the Palestinian people.

34. Tunisia reiterated its full support for the Palestinian State, as an independent, sovereign, viable and geographically contiguous State on territory occupied since 1967 and a united political entity encompassing the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. It supported the demands of the Palestinian leaders for the adoption of a timeframe for ending Israeli occupation and reaching a comprehensive solution to all final status issues, including that of East Jerusalem.

35. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that the absence of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict contributed to a strong sense of dispossession and injustice among Palestine refugees, fuelling tensions that had been exacerbated by the occupation of Palestinian territory and by recurrent armed conflicts. Intra-Palestinian divisions further aggravated the volatile political climate, creating a challenging operating environment for UNRWA. During the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, the shelling of UNRWA facilities being used as shelters for Palestinians who had fled from their homes, resulting in the deaths of at least 46 civilians and 11 UNRWA staff, was a moral outrage and a war crime on the part of the occupying Power. The right to self-defence envisaged under the Charter of the United Nations did not permit such savagery. Nothing could justify the massacre and maiming of

children, women and men, and the wanton destruction of emergency shelters, homes, schools and civilian infrastructure, inflicting a humanitarian disaster, terror and trauma on an entire population. His delegation remained gravely concerned about the security of UNRWA staff and noted the efforts of UNRWA and host Governments to prevent threats to and attacks on Agency staff.

36. Given the volatile situation in the Middle East, Palestine refugee communities had become more vulnerable and needed more attention from the international community. His Government called on all parties to take all possible steps to protect Palestine refugees and ensure the Agency's unhindered access and supply of essential goods to them. Bangladesh appealed to the international community to make generous contributions, particularly for the rehabilitation and emergency assistance programmes for refugees.

37. **Mr. Takahashi** (Japan) said that his delegation noted with deep concern the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the Palestinian refugees due to the recent crisis in Gaza. It reiterated that the safety and security of humanitarian workers were fundamental and must be fully respected. Japan's commitment to UNRWA dated back to 1953 and preceded its admission to the United Nations. His Government had doubled its assistance to the Agency to \$31 million over the past four years.

38. In the light of the recent Gaza crisis, Japan had announced the provision of \$4.5 million in emergency aid to UNRWA for foodstuffs and emergency and medical supplies. Moreover, it was consulting with the Agency to provide an additional \$6.3 million for food assistance. On the ground, numerous Japanese staff, including the director of the UNRWA health programme, worked around-the-clock to provide much-needed assistance to refugees.

39. His Government emphasized that a peaceful and stable Middle East was indispensable for improving the Palestine refugees' humanitarian situation. To that end, it had pledged more than \$20 million at the Cairo International Conference in October 2014, as part of the \$200 million pledge announced at the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) held in March 2014. Japan was also implementing the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity initiative in order to mobilize

private investment to support the sustainable economic development of Palestinian refugees, and was working with Asian countries through CEAPAD to mobilize support for the development of Palestine and share development experiences.

40. The implementation of international aid commitments required better humanitarian access on the ground. Japan welcomed the recent tripartite agreement between Israel, Palestine and the United Nations to secure the entry of reconstruction materials into Gaza, but noted that more needed to be done. It called on all relevant parties to secure the safety of humanitarian workers on the ground and facilitate the access of humanitarian aid for Palestinian refugees in need.

41. **Mr. Nkoloji** (Botswana), commending the efforts of UNRWA in providing humanitarian assistance to more than 5 million Palestine refugees in the occupied territories despite financial and resource challenges, said that his delegation was appalled by the continued perpetration of violence against innocent civilians and the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Following the recent conflict in Gaza, UNRWA had moved beyond its humanitarian assistance role and was facing the challenge of reconstructing Gaza so that innocent people whose homes had been destroyed could regain their dignity.

42. His delegation remained convinced that there was no alternative to the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine coexisting side by side as two sovereign States, and that dialogue aimed at guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was the only way to resolve the long-standing issue. To that effect, Botswana fully supported stepping up international diplomatic efforts to create an atmosphere conducive to attaining comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

43. **Ms. King** (Australia) said that UNRWA continued to deliver services in the most challenging circumstances, including in Syria, and during the Gaza conflict in July and August 2014. Her delegation commended the Strategic Response to Gaza 2014 and the Agency's commitment to coordinate closely with the Palestinian government of national consensus and United Nations and civil society agencies in response to the conflict. Referring to the Secretary-General's announcement of a forthcoming inquiry into the events in Gaza, including the use of UNRWA schools to store



weapons, she said that her delegation looked forward to a full and transparent investigation and to the introduction of measures to prevent any future violations of the Agency's neutrality.

44. As a long-standing supporter of UNRWA, Australia was on track to exceed its current partnership commitment of \$90 million over the period from 2011-2016, which provided a predictable funding flow to help the Agency plan and deliver its services more efficiently. In response to the UNRWA Flash Appeal for Gaza, her Government had provided \$10 million in additional funding in August 2014 and had promptly paid its \$20 million annual contribution. Australia recognized the quality of the Agency's core education and health programmes and its particular strength in emergency response, even in the face of significant challenges such as a rising refugee population, flatlining global aid budgets and a rising deficit. Her delegation was encouraged by the Agency's progress towards a measurable Medium-Term Strategy and welcomed the Commissioner-General's commitment to tackling the necessary management reforms.

45. A viable future offering a pathway to sustained economic development for Palestinian refugees was possible only through a political solution. Her Government remained committed to Israel and a Palestinian State existing side-by-side in peace and security, within internationally-recognized borders. All parties should resume talks urgently, since a negotiated settlement was the only way to ensure the creation of a future Palestinian State.

46. **Ms. Ismail** (Brunei Darussalam) said that her Government strongly supported the work of UNRWA and was committed to continuing its contribution to the best of its ability. The important humanitarian work carried out by UNRWA in so many areas was continuously undermined by the conflict between Israel and Palestine, in particular by the recent shelling of seven of its shelters in Gaza, which were blatant, gross violations of international humanitarian law. Brunei Darussalam joined others in calling for a thorough investigation into the attacks and the accountability of the occupying Power. Israel's illegal restrictions on the movement of persons and goods in Palestine were impeding emergency relief and humanitarian assistance and continued to obstruct economic growth, exacerbating the suffering of Palestinians and their dependence on aid. The occupying Power must abide by its obligations under

international human rights treaties and international humanitarian law, including the duty to ensure adequate access to food, essential supplies and medical care in the occupied territory and to protect civilians. Her delegation joined the international call for the immediate lifting of the blockade and a halting of the establishment of illegal settlements in the occupied territories.

47. In the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Brunei Darussalam reiterated its continued support of the Palestinians' inalienable right to self-determination, to return to their homeland and to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. Her Government advocated a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the two-State solution, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions.

48. **Mr. AlJarallah** (Kuwait) said that Israel, the occupying Power, bore primary responsibility for the tragic situation of the Palestine refugees. It had systematically destroyed Palestinian infrastructure and continued to violate the Palestinian people's most fundamental human rights. During its military assault on Gaza in July 2014, Israel had killed and injured thousands of Palestinian civilians, most of them women and children, destroyed buildings and infrastructure and forced vast numbers of Palestinians to flee their homes and seek refuge in UNRWA facilities, many of which had also been targeted by Israeli attacks. The international community must take immediate and decisive action to compel Israel to stop obstructing the Agency's vital work and lift its blockade on the Gaza Strip in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

49. Kuwait remained fully committed to UNRWA; it had increased its annual contribution to \$2 million in 2011 and made additional donations amounting to tens of millions of dollars to support the Agency's response to the ongoing humanitarian crises in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic. His Government reaffirmed its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its support for their inalienable rights.

50. **Ms. Arce Echeverría** (Costa Rica) said that UNRWA had played a key role in mitigating the effects on the civilian population of six decades of conflict and displacement and was a stabilizing force in the

region. Its work would not be possible without the active support of the international community, the assistance of host countries, especially Jordan, which received the largest number of Palestine refugees, and the support of the donor community. In the light of the Agency's dire financial situation, her delegation drew attention to the need for UNRWA to be provided with the resources needed to fulfil its mandate. The suspension of the school feeding programme in Gaza in June 2014 was highly regrettable, as it had ensured that children received at least one meal a day. Her delegation supported the ongoing reform of UNRWA under the Medium-Term Strategy, which would increase the efficiency of delivery of services, particularly in the fields of health, education and emergency services. Costa Rica would contribute to the Flash Appeal to support urgent humanitarian action.

51. Her Government supported the mandate of UNRWA not only in the humanitarian and human development areas, but also in promoting a culture of peace and tolerance in the Middle East. The international community should step up its commitment to improving the situation of Palestine refugees by supporting the Agency's programmes, pending a lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict which would entail both States living side-by-side, in peace and security within pre-1967 borders. The benefits would be reaped not only by the civilian populations of both parties, but by the region as a whole.

52. **Mr. Park** (Republic of Korea) said that the programmes of UNRWA were all the more essential in the current difficult environment. His delegation remained very concerned about the continued instability and conflict impeding much of the Agency's activity. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the ongoing conflict was straining the humanitarian resources of not only neighbouring countries that hosted millions of refugees, but also the entire international community. The painful scars from 50 days of intense fighting, which had reduced much of Gaza to rubble, were not yet healed. Undeterred by the damage to its facilities and schools, UNRWA continued to provide shelter for 55,000 displaced persons in some 30 of its schools. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's initiative to set up an independent Board of Inquiry into the shelling of UNRWA schools.

53. Since 1999, the Republic of Korea had been a consistent donor to UNRWA and had made its largest single year contribution in 2013, with a total

contribution reaching nearly \$500,000. Its contribution to the Agency's core budget had risen from \$60,000 in 2013 to \$98,000 in 2014 and was projected to be \$187,000 in 2015. His delegation welcomed the Agency's efforts to improve internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency and effectiveness and to enhance donor relations. Furthermore, it supported continued development of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2016-2021, which would enhance financial stability and thus encourage increased contributions from non-traditional donors and private partners. The Republic of Korea fully supported the Agency's focus on human development goals in that strategy.

54. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said that UNRWA played a vital role in supporting Palestinians' aspirations for a better life. He expressed concern at the political deadlock and deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, where Palestinians, in particular refugees, were subjected to restrictions on freedom of movement, forced evictions, violence by settlers and the disastrous social and economic effects of the separation wall. Israeli violence against Palestinians in refugee camps was increasing and Israel showed no signs of lifting the blockade that was crippling economic activity and development in Gaza. Israel's recent 51-day attack on Gaza had claimed the lives of over 2,000 people, displaced thousands more and caused widespread destruction, including of UNRWA facilities.

55. Although the work of UNRWA was complemented by local and national Government services, and despite a progressive increase in donations, the Agency's budget remained severely overstretched, hampering its capacity to perform its functions in the face of increasing challenges on the ground. He commended the Agency's innovative approach towards solving its financial problems, including through its resource mobilization strategy for 2012-2015. The Agency's current financial difficulties should not eclipse its many remarkable achievements to date; additional funding must be found to allow the Agency to function effectively.

56. The question of Palestine refugees was not only a humanitarian issue, but was intrinsically linked to the political conflict in the region. While the Agency played a vital role in providing assistance to Palestine refugees, it was powerless to reach a solution to their plight while they continued to be denied their

legitimate right to return as recognized by General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

57. **Mr. Sylla** (Senegal) said that nothing in recent history could be compared to the Palestine refugees' long and difficult quest to return to their country of origin, in the course of which they had faced morally unacceptable and legally unjustifiable humiliation and deprivation, generation after generation, without any credible prospect of a solution. The many successes of UNRWA since its establishment, particularly in the field of education, were, paradoxically, a reflection of the international community's collective failure to resolve the political problem underlying the refugee crisis. Until a lasting solution was found to the Israel-Palestine conflict, the question of Palestine refugees would endure, leaving millions to roam between camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

58. Even though the particularly volatile situation in the Middle East hindered the execution of its mandate, UNRWA was continuing its efforts to improve its efficiency through its organizational development reform. That strategy, involving the key sectors of health and education, was further proof of the vital need for the Agency's services. However, the huge financial challenges facing the Agency could jeopardize the delivery of its services. Senegal therefore reiterated its call on the international community and all donors and partners to increase their contributions so as to improve the Agency's financial situation and enable it to continue giving hope to the Palestine refugees.

59. **Mr. Llorenty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the humanitarian crisis in Palestine that had resulted from the Israeli army's genocidal attacks showed that all Member States should be involved in reconstruction efforts with a view to reuniting families displaced and dispersed by the violence and rebuilding the schools, hospitals and homes that had been left in ruins. His Government recognized the terrible situation that thousands of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic endured; the situation of over 400,000 displaced persons living in abject poverty should spur the international community to show solidarity and ensure the delivery of essential building materials.

60. His Government condemned the restrictions imposed by the occupying Power on refugees' access

to Gaza and to fishing zones. The Israeli blockade also prevented thousands of refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic from receiving emergency medical assistance, leaving new generations of refugees with nothing but despair. Israel's policies flagrantly violated international human rights and humanitarian law and its continued establishment of illegal settlements only increased insecurity in the countries to which refugees fled. The time had come to take stock of the damage inflicted by Israel during the latest inhumane attack. Despite its own development challenges, the Plurinational State of Bolivia would announce shortly its contribution to the international humanitarian effort.

61. In line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, Member States must work together to make the aspirations of the Palestinian people a reality. The root causes of the situation of Palestine refugees could all be linked to the illegal occupation by Israel. A lasting solution to the problem would be found only through official recognition of the State of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

62. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See), expressing concern that humanitarian aid workers had fallen victim to violence in the region served by UNRWA, said that after yet another year in which the peace process had stalled it was time to put an end to the vicious cycle of violence, including by restricting the sale and transfer of weapons in the region. The Holy See empathized with those living in very harsh realities described in the Commissioner-General's report and was particularly close to the members of Christian communities in the region, many of whom had been forced to abandon their ancestral homes and had become refugees in their own or neighbouring countries.

63. The Holy See and Catholic organizations, in collaboration with donors from around the world, provided education, health care and social services to the affected populations and operated rehabilitation facilities, all on the basis of need rather than creed. Expressing appreciation to governments in the region and around the world who had assisted refugees and victims of the conflicts in the region, and noting that funding for programmes was falling behind needs, the Holy See called for continued and greater solidarity.

64. The international community should use its influence and economic resources to facilitate the peace process by promoting the engagement of the parties in substantive dialogue leading to meaningful negotiations with the ultimate aim of bringing stability and peace to the Holy Land. Nevertheless, the fundamental responsibility for the peace process lay with the Israelis and Palestinians themselves. Reaffirming that peace could be achieved through the acknowledgment by all of the right of two States to exist and to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders, the Holy See renewed its support for internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [A/RES/ES-10/2](#).

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

65. **Mr. Sharoni** (Israel) said that his country was on the front line, combating extremist ideologies that were spreading like a malignant disease in the Middle East, where radical terror groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant shared a fundamentalist vision which involved persecution of minorities, subjugation of women and repression of freedoms. Casting blame on Israel, convenient as it might be, did not address the underlying issues. During the Gaza conflict, Israel had done everything possible to spare lives, while terror groups like Hamas had deliberately targeted civilians and cynically fired missiles from United Nations premises. Every civilian casualty, regardless of origin, was a tragedy; but the time had come for Member States to be honest about who was really to blame for the conflict: Hamas. The many delegations that had liberally expressed condemnations and accusations during the current debate would do better to improve the human rights situation in their own backyards. It was unfortunate that certain delegations insisted on politicizing and monopolizing the discussions in the Committee.

66. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic seemed to believe that it could distract attention from its own brutal crimes by trampling over the democratic process in the Committee; that Government appeared to be well versed not only in terrorism and chemical weapons, but also in spreading lies and misinformation. Despite Lebanon's welcome interest in

Palestinian rights, the representative of that country would do well to examine the appalling conditions, violence, discrimination and repression in the refugee camps in Lebanon before criticizing Israel. Israel was proud to be unlike Cuba in every respect and to be a country founded on the principles of freedom and equal rights, where people of all faiths were free to pursue their beliefs and minorities coexisted peacefully. The situation in the Middle East was complex enough without representatives from other regions cynically using it as a diversion from humanitarian and economic issues in their own countries. Other countries of the region should take a constructive approach and work with Israel to build peace instead of using rhetoric that served the interest of radical elements. For there to be peace, leaders must be courageous enough to embrace partnership instead of prejudice, tolerance instead of terrorism, and cooperation instead of conflict. Such leaders had enabled Israel to make peace with Egypt and Jordan in the past.

67. Some of the remarks made at the current meeting reflected a reluctance to assign responsibility; instead of condemning Hamas for using civilians as human shields and stealing from its people to buy missiles, some representatives were encouraging destructive unilateral action. If Palestinians truly sought a brighter future, they should reject the dead-end path of unilateralism and make history by making peace. Only through direct negotiations could concrete solutions be found; any other route would hold the region captive by perpetuating resentment and hatred, passing on a legacy of violence and intolerance to future generations.

68. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the international community had witnessed and documented in real time the reality of the Gaza tragedy as the Israeli occupying forces' missiles, artillery and sophisticated weaponry had killed over 2,000 people deliberately and wantonly and wounded over 11,000 innocent civilians of all ages. The occupying Power alone was responsible for those deaths and had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity during the July-August onslaught and the many wars that had preceded it. The Israeli representative's remarks concerning alleged claims of return and refugee status were the epitome of hypocrisy coming from a State that granted return to any Jew from anywhere in the world, while denying

Palestinians their right to return — regardless of whether they were Muslim or Christian — solely because of their nationality. The obstruction of rights, the perpetuation of exile and the dispossession and misery of a people could not be considered legitimate and did not serve the cause of peace.

69. The claim that UNRWA perpetuated refugee status amounted to baseless and harmful rhetoric. The Committee was aware of the Agency's indispensable humanitarian work and its stabilizing role in the region and had overwhelmingly reaffirmed support for its mandate, which, despite Israel's allegations, was not politicized. Moreover, the Israeli representative's claim that refugee status was forced onto children was unacceptable: that status had been prolonged owing to the absence of a just solution based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

70. Responding to the Israeli representative's remarks at the 20th meeting, she said that Israel should be reminded that its cooperation with UNRWA was not a favour to be given or withdrawn, but an obligation that stemmed from its status as a State Member of the United Nations and an occupying Power, in accordance with the relevant international humanitarian law. The Agency was a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, of which Israel was a member despite the fact that it had repeatedly disqualified itself from that privilege owing to its blatant contempt of the Assembly and violation of countless resolutions. Furthermore, with regard to the Israeli representative's complaints regarding the length of the Commissioner-General's remarks on Gaza, no words and no amount of time could convey the depths of the anguish and unquantifiable losses that the Palestinian people had endured, not just over the course of the 50 days of aggression, but through eight years of an inhumane blockade, 47 years of occupation and 66 years since their expulsion from their homeland, during which generations of lives and dreams had been destroyed.

71. Her delegation reiterated its concern for the plight of all Palestinians, but noted that a distinction must be made between the suffering of Palestine refugees as a consequence of instability or crises in neighbouring host countries and the suffering of Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank. The latter was a direct result of Israeli occupation, policies and reprisals that deliberately targeted civilians so as to force Palestinians to submit to the cruel, illegitimate

occupation and forego their national aspirations and inalienable rights, which they would never do.

72. **Mr. Hamed** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was ridiculous for the representative of Israel to comment on human rights, peace or the situation of Palestine refugees when Israel bore sole responsibility for their misery; it had massacred and forcibly displaced vast numbers of Palestinians and continued to terrorize them on a daily basis, denying them even their most basic rights, including the right to return. In addition to maintaining its inhumane blockade, Israel had recently carried out devastating attacks on the Gaza Strip, causing unprecedented destruction and loss of life, particularly among children. Moreover, the representative of Israel had even gone as far as to suggest withdrawing refugee status from Palestine refugees. The representative of Israel, having listened to a torrent of international condemnation of the Israeli Government throughout the debate on the current agenda item, had regrettably resorted to making his usual defamatory accusations against the Syrian Government, as well as against other Member States opposed to the Israeli occupation, in a futile bid to divert attention away from the Israeli Government's heinous crimes in Gaza.

73. The claim of the representative of the United States of America that the Syrian Government had imposed a blockade on Yarmouk camp was false and misleading; his Government had spared no effort in providing assistance to refugees in Yarmouk in cooperation with UNRWA and could provide detailed statistics on the assistance that had entered the camp that year. If the United States truly wished to find a solution to the Palestinian question, it should stop providing Israel with military, political and economic assistance, which enabled Israel to continue to occupy the Palestinian territories and deny Palestine refugees their right to return. The United States and any other State that was concerned about the suffering of Palestine refugees must support the implementation of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the work of UNRWA. Although for many decades the Syrian Arab Republic had been a stable haven where Palestine refugees had been treated with dignity and without discrimination, the refugees were now facing unprecedented hardship as a result of aggression by armed terrorist groups which had stormed refugee camps, attacked refugees and forced them to flee to safety elsewhere.

74. **Mr. Forés Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that it was obvious that Israel had not been built upon the same foundations as Cuba, whose long tradition of solidarity with the peoples of world spanned from the American Revolution to the current Ebola fight. He was unsure whether the Israeli Government knew what solidarity was and hoped that, one day, Israel would assume its responsibilities and cease its aggression against the Palestinian people.

75. **Mr. Krähenbühl** (Commissioner-General, UNRWA) expressing deep appreciation for Member States' support for the Agency and their recognition of the difficulties it faced in implementing its mandate, as well as their expressions of sympathy on the deaths of UNRWA staff in Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the Agency's ability to continue to conduct its activities, in the face of so much loss of life, could not be taken for granted. He welcomed the endorsement of the Agency's humanitarian role and its contribution to development and to stability. The fact that, unlike many other humanitarian organizations, UNRWA did not focus only on immediate relief, but combined it with long-term efforts for education and health, was crucial, particularly in the light of comments that had been made on the risk of creating dependency. To avoid that constant risk faced by traditional humanitarian agencies, UNRWA combined emergency response, when needed, with a very strong focus on the development of human capital, in particular through its education efforts.

76. He acknowledged the immense burden placed on Jordan and Lebanon, as host countries, and their important contribution to the well-being of the refugee communities, and noted that, in bilateral discussions, the Agency had urged them to avoid any isolation or stigmatisation of refugees, in particular Palestine refugees arriving from the Syrian Arab Republic. He welcomed the calls for additional financial support for the Agency, particularly in view of the shortfalls in the General Fund, including for reconstruction of the Nahr el-Bared camp, as well as the regular contributions from a growing list of donors and the pledges for new or increased contributions from a number of countries. Some representatives had called for changes in the funding structure of the Agency; it was important to note that since Member States' contributions covered 97 per cent of expenditure, any reduction or change in funding patterns had direct implications on the health and education services provided to refugees. Contributions to the General Fund were what kept

schools and clinics operating and did not go towards the salaries of office staff at headquarters; reductions in funding therefore meant cuts to services in schools and clinics.

77. The new Medium-Term Strategy would offer increased scope for partnerships with other agencies that had expertise in specific fields which could strengthen the Agency's ability to serve the needs of the Palestinian people. It should be clearly understood, however, that while UNRWA would actively seek out such partnerships, it had no intention of relinquishing the mandate given to it by the General Assembly. The Agency would continue to engage openly with existing donors to maintain and expand funding levels where possible; it would reach out to new donors, including private contributions, but would rely predominantly on Member States, in accordance with its mandate. At the same time, UNRWA was fully aware that States were concerned about cost savings and would strive to optimize the way in which financial resources were used, including through outreach to and consultation with Palestine refugee communities themselves. Efforts were being made to improve the way in which the Agency integrated the views of the Palestinian staff of UNRWA.

78. With regard to the comments made by the representative of Israel, he said that UNRWA was particularly careful not to generate dependency; its education services developed refugees' knowledge and skills with a view to enabling them to be self-sufficient. However, because of prevailing circumstances, there were often no jobs available to refugees — that was the case both in Lebanon and in Gaza, where many refugees were unable to engage in self-sufficient activity because of the blockade. Concerning the transfer of refugee status to subsequent generations, his extensive experience in conflict environments had shown that UNRWA operated no differently from other agencies. A similar situation prevailed in the Afghan context, since family members of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan or the Islamic Republic of Iran were also entitled to refugee status; the only difference was that, unlike Palestinians, they had a country to which they could return.

79. Turning to the Israeli representative's comments regarding politicization of the Agency's mandate, he said that the inescapable reality of working in deeply polarized conflict environments was the high political sensitivity about anything the Agency said and did —

or did not say and do. That situation was particularly evidenced by the first instance of fatal shelling at the Beit Hanoun school in July 2014: professional credibility had dictated that UNRWA would condemn the perpetrators of that act only when it had all the facts concerning the case and could identify those responsible beyond any doubt, but its refusal to publicly condemn any party had met with heavy criticism from some Member States. The Agency went to great lengths to avoid falling into the trap of knee-jerk reactions and double standards.

80. With regard to the Israeli representative's assertion that UNRWA had been quick to demonize Israel but had refused to condemn Hamas' stockpiling of weapons in UNRWA schools, he said that it was UNRWA inspections that had led to the discovery of weapons components at three of its schools. The Agency had proactively informed the Israeli authorities and the Israel Defence Forces of the find within a few hours; moreover, it had publicly and explicitly condemned the Palestinian groups responsible for those unacceptable violations of international law. The fact that anyone could raise the issue was a result of that condemnation by the Agency, which was a matter of public record. UNRWA would follow up on the find through internal investigations, as would the Secretary-General's Board of Inquiry.

81. He was always ready and willing to have frank exchanges with anyone who deemed that UNRWA had failed to meet the standards expected by Member States in the execution of its mandate and would be happy to conduct a critical review of any shortcomings in the Agency's work. At the same time, he would highlight any issues of concern on how the Agency's work was being represented.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*