

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

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at 10.50 a.m.

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Chairman: Mr. Mihai MAGHERU (Romania).

AGENDA ITEM 26

Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/3931, A/3948, A/SPC/29, A/SPC/31) (*continued*)

1. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said that the refugee problem, arising out of the war between the Arab countries and Israel, a war which Israel had never wanted, still weighed upon the conscience of mankind after many years. No one, in fact, had ever wanted the war between the Arab States and Israel. No one had ever wanted anything but peace and harmony between the Arab States and Israel. Everyone had hoped, not for their destruction, but for their co-operation in that great work of peace and progress to which the future generations of the Arab and Jewish communities were called, in that magnificent part of the world which was their rightful home.

2. He recalled the eight centuries of coexistence of the Arab and Jewish communities, under the banner of Islam, on the soil of Spain. Out of that peaceful coexistence had been born the contribution of the Arab and Jewish communities to the civilization of the peoples of Latin America.

3. He welcomed Israel's changed attitude towards the question of compensation as giving grounds for new hope.

4. With regard to repatriation, he believed that the formula should in no case be regarded as a revenge against Israel, as though that country had something to expiate as far as the United Nations was concerned. He recalled that the obligation of repatriation did not apply to Israel alone, since it was only one of the two States envisaged in the plan for the partition of Palestine.

5. The Uruguayan delegation was prepared to support any draft resolution which would contribute to peace and co-operation between the Arab States and the State of Israel. It advocated a solution which could convert the armistice into a truce and the truce into peace. It would be a mistake to regard the return to Israel of a million persons who considered themselves as its enemies as a solution to the problem. That would not be genuine repatriation, because true repatriation implied the return to their homeland of citizens who were willing to serve it loyally. No State would accept the risks inherent in a measure of that kind. Moreover, the more or less distant possibility of repatriation should not be an excuse for neglecting concrete solutions upon which the present fate and the immediate future of the refugees and their children depended.

6. The Uruguayan delegation would vote in favour of any resolution which would help to hasten a definitive solution of the problem of the Palestine refugees. Such a solution could only be peace between Israel and the Arab States.

Organization of work

7. The CHAIRMAN noted that the Committee had not yet been seized of any draft resolution on the question under consideration. It would therefore have to decide whether to pass on to the examination of another item, and return to the first at a later date. In preparation for such an eventuality, he called upon the members of the Committee to be ready to take part in the discussion of the next item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.