



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOUASSI (Togo)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/41/SR.13
29 October 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

- (a) REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL (A/41/13 and Add.1)
- (b) REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/41/702)
- (c) REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR PALESTINE (A/41/555)
- (d) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (457, 543, 563-568)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that, in addition to the basic documentation relating to the item, the Committee had before it letters pertaining to the item from the representatives of Democratic Yemen (A/41/394), Tunisia (A/41/475) and Iraq (A/41/603).

2. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), introducing his annual report (A/41/13 and Add.1) said that, thanks to additional special contributions from several States received late in the year, UNRWA had ended 1985 having spent only about \$1 million more than it had received.

3. The estimate of contributions for 1986 had fallen some \$9 million short of total requirements; of that amount, some \$2 million was needed to continue basic services to refugees and the remaining \$7 million was the additional amount needed to fund the Agency's small, but very important, construction programme. He was pleased to report that several Governments had indicated that they might be able to make additional contributions before the end of the year and he appealed to others to join the traditional supporters of UNRWA.

4. The improvement in the Agency's finances had come about in part through continued rigorous implementation of the severe austerity measures adopted the preceding year which had placed a heavy burden upon area staff. Those staff members were mostly Palestine refugees themselves; they numbered more than 17,000 teachers, doctors, nurses, welfare workers, sanitation labourers and others. They could not and should not be called upon to make financial sacrifices indefinitely and at some point their conditions of service must be improved.

5. Contributions had increased, in part as a result of more favourable exchange rates and in part because of the generosity of certain traditional supporters. Efforts to broaden the base of the Agency's support had regrettably been disappointing.

6. The budget for the following year was the first to have been put together on the basis of a medium-term plan. It forecast an estimated budget requirement for 1987 of \$200.3 million, an increase of \$9.1 million, or just under 5 per cent over the 1986 budget. The increase was due mainly to the need to take account of the increase in the refugee population, particularly those of school age.

(Mr. Giacomelli)

7. UNRWA should do much more to assist the refugees but its resources were limited and it must be guided by a realistic estimate of available funding. Even at its current level, the 1987 budget would require increased support from contributors.
8. The informal meeting of Governments to discuss UNRWA's serious financial problem convened pursuant to his suggestion the previous year had met in Vienna in May 1986 and had been attended by representatives of some 25 Governments and the Commission of the European Community. In addition to considering the content of UNRWA's first medium-term plan, working groups had reviewed in some depth the Agency's health, welfare and education programmes. A number of useful ideas had been developed and participants clearly considered that the meeting had represented the beginning of a new and closer process of consultation between UNRWA and interested Governments. A similar meeting would be held in 1987.
9. The human dimension of the problem was reflected in the plight of the refugees, particularly those in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. As a consequence of air raids and the fighting in the area, refugees were often prevented from availing themselves of Agency services and UNRWA's staff from reaching their posts. UNRWA was determined to continue to provide services to the refugees as long as it remained physically possible to do so and so long as it retained the freedom of movement necessary to carry out its tasks. He regretted to report that, since his last report, six staff members had been killed, three seriously wounded and many detained or kidnapped, of whom eight were still missing.
10. The situation in Tyre was of immediate great concern; because of sniping and shelling in the past few days, three nearby camps were currently inaccessible. He hoped that an early cease-fire would be agreed on in the area.
11. The situation in the Gaza Strip was less dramatic than that in Lebanon, but developments there were building towards a serious crisis. The area was one of the most densely populated in the world; the pressures on the human and physical resources of the area were mounting; local employment opportunities were diminishing and fresh water supplies were being consumed at nearly twice the replenishment rate. Residents were evincing a growing sense of desperation and despair and there had been increasing demands upon the Agency for additional services which limited resources had made impossible to meet. The time had come for the General Assembly to look carefully at the situation emerging in the Gaza Strip and to give attention to the need for co-ordinated action to ease the situation there.
12. The fact that the refugee problem remained unsolved might be sufficient reason in itself for the General Assembly to extend the Agency's mandate further. Other compelling considerations included the stabilizing role that UNRWA fulfilled in one of the most turbulent regions of the world and the humanitarian aspect which was exemplified by the 350,000 children in the UNRWA schools, the 4,500 young men and women in the training institutes, the thousands of mothers and children who attended the health clinics every day and the more than 100,000 refugees who were

(Mr. Giacomelli)

unable to provide for themselves. All of those people must rely on the Agency for the services they received. He therefore expressed the hope that the General Assembly would extend the Agency's mandate for a further period and, having done so, would ensure that it received the resources it required to continue its work.

13. Mr. BERGH JOHANSEN (Norway), speaking in his capacity as 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 report of the Group (A/41/702).

14. Chapter II gave a brief summary of the activities of the Working Group during 1986. Throughout the year the Working Group had followed with concern the difficulties experienced by the Agency and, in particular, the serious financial situation it continued to face. On 17 September 1986, the Working Group had heard an up-to-date report on the financial situation by the comptroller of UNRWA.

15. Chapter III described the current financial situation of UNRWA as presented by the comptroller. It provided details about budgetary conditions for 1985, which UNRWA had managed to finish with only a small gap between income and expenditure, and for 1986, when a minor shortfall in income was indicated. Projections for 1987 showed the need for an increase in income of about 5 per cent, due to the anticipated rise in the school population under UNRWA's auspices. Increased contributions from donor Governments would therefore be required.

16. Chapter IV contained the concluding remarks of the Working Group on the Agency's financial situation. It was pleased to note that the Agency had been able to finish 1985 with only a small shortfall between income and expenditure and expressed its appreciation to those Governments whose additional contributions had made that favourable outcome possible. It was encouraged to note that the financial situation in 1986 was less critical than it had been in 1985 and that the Commissioner-General expected to be able to maintain the services to refugees without interruption. It noted with satisfaction the action taken by the Commissioner-General to achieve closer co-operation between the Agency and the Governments which supported it, particularly the successful meeting held in Vienna in May 1986; it looked forward to further such meetings. It expressed its appreciation to donors, especially those which had increased their contributions in 1986.

17. The Working Group recognized that the Commissioner-General must give priority to maintaining services and that funds could only be allocated to construction when services were assured. Nevertheless, adequate school buildings and health centres were essential to proper delivery of services, and replacement of those facilities could not be postponed indefinitely. The Working Group therefore endorsed the Commissioner-General's efforts to seek construction funding from non-governmental sources as well as his efforts to persuade Governments to make special contributions for construction over and above their contributions to the General Fund.

18. The Working Group welcomed the introduction of the three-year medium-term plan which would assist donor countries by giving them advance guidance on future financial needs and would provide opportunities for enhanced programme evaluation.

(Mr. Bergh Johansen, Norway)

19. The Working Group also noted that expenditure in 1987 was expected to rise about 5 per cent, that the level of income would therefore have to be increased and that special efforts would once again be necessary. In that connection, the Working Group drew attention to the influence of changes in currency exchange rates which, in 1986, had worked in favour of the Agency but which might work against it in 1987. The Working Group therefore strongly urged all Governments to recognize that UNRWA would need additional financial support in 1987, that Governments which had not contributed to UNRWA should start to contribute, that Governments which had so far made only relatively small contributions should contribute more generously, that Governments which, in the past, had generously made special contributions to UNRWA should do so again in 1986 and 1987, that Governments which in the past had made generous contributions to UNRWA should continue to do so and, if possible, increase them and that Governments should pay their contributions as early as possible in the calendar year.

20. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said that, although his delegation had already submitted its views on the questions covered by documents A/41/13 and Add.1 and A/41/702, and by the reports prepared by the Secretary-General under item 75, the continuation of the problem posed by the Palestine refugees together with the exacerbation of the financial difficulties confronting UNRWA called for the reaffirmation of its views. Basically, the problem was that the Palestine refugees were being prevented from returning to their homeland in violation of section 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 of 1949, and that Israel was continuing to occupy the Arab lands. Third and fourth generations of Palestinians had been born outside their homeland. However, that long exile was not the only hardship being endured by the Palestine refugees. They were also subjected to constant persecution by Israel, as was illustrated in the Commissioner-General's report (A/41/13 and Add.1), which mentioned the destruction of houses by way of collective punishment, house arrests and attacks against Palestinian camps in Lebanon. Moreover, the Israeli practices mentioned in earlier reports of the Commissioner-General were still a matter of concern because it was unclear whether any remedial action had been taken in that connection. Another source of concern was Israel's intentions regarding the Palestine refugees. Indeed, Israel had not stated that it had finally given up its former plans to liquidate the Palestinian camps. The Jordanian delegation had already warned of the unpredictable consequences that such a course of action would have. The deterioration of the economic situation of the refugees living under occupation in Gaza and the West Bank was yet another source of concern. The plight of the refugees living in the Gaza Strip was accurately described in paragraphs 13 to 16 of the Commissioner General's report, in terms of over-population, bad housing, unemployment and water pollution and salinity, not to mention the establishment of Israeli settlements in the area, which made living conditions for the Palestine refugees even more difficult.

21. The educational services provided by UNRWA fell far short of the actual requirements of the refugees. The Agency's educational programme covered only about 50 per cent of the children at the elementary and preparatory stages of education. The Arab host countries therefore had to provide not only for the remainder of the children at those stages of education but also for the secondary

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

education of all the children of the refugees. Moreover, even those covered by the Agency's programme were not receiving a proper education. There had been 4,000 new pupils at the beginning of academic year 1985/86, but the number of teachers and classrooms had remained the same as in the previous year. There were no proper school buildings; most of them were rented and contained no basic facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc. Only 4 per cent of the young refugees were undergoing vocational training, as opposed to 30 per cent of young people in Jordan and 50 per cent in Israel. In view of the desperate need for construction and the shortage of financial resources for that purpose, the Jordanian Government, together with the local community, had undertaken to contribute to the restoration of more than 500 classrooms.

22. The standard of the health services provided by the Agency was no better than that of its educational programme. According to a detailed statistical survey that had been conducted among the refugees, the Agency's clinics received four to six times more patients than similar medical centres in Jordan; many of the communities of refugees had no health clinics at all; many aspects of medical treatment were not covered by the Agency; there were shortages of certain medicaments and the equipment of the clinics was not being properly maintained.

23. The Agency's nutrition programme also left much to be desired. Since 1982 it no longer covered Palestine refugees registered in its areas of operation outside Lebanon. Food rations were provided to only a limited number of refugees, and for several months at the beginning of 1986 the Agency had suspended its assistance to approximately 100,000 people, including many pregnant women and infants. Moreover, the criteria governing eligibility to assistance no longer reflected real conditions, such as widespread unemployment. Consequently, only a fraction of those who were completely destitute were actually receiving assistance.

24. His delegation did not wish to blame the administration of UNRWA for shortcomings in the services provided, because it was well aware that the main reasons for that state of affairs were its reliance on voluntary contributions and the failure of those contributions to keep pace with the growing needs of the Palestine refugees. In fact, the standard of the services provided by the Agency was actually declining, and the scale of the requirements of the Palestine refugees tended to be deliberately understated in the Agency's reports. That was a major problem for all the host countries because they relied on the Agency to produce an accurate assessment of the requirements of the refugees so that they could meet requirements not covered by the Agency, to keep the international community informed on the situation of the Palestine refugees and to make participants aware of the heavy burden borne by the host countries. Not only had Jordan provided services to the Palestine refugees, but it had also supported the efforts made by the Commissioner-General to secure the additional financial resources needed to carry out the Agency's programmes. In 1980, the direct services provided by the Jordanian Government to refugees had been equivalent to 15 per cent of the Agency's total expenditure, and that share had increased to approximately 40 per cent by 1985, not to mention the indirect expenses incurred by Jordan on account of the presence of almost half a million Palestine refugees in its territory.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

25. At the meeting of host countries and donors held on 22 and 23 May 1986, it had been proposed that the level of services provided by the Agency should be brought into line with the real requirements of the refugees, as a basis for the Commissioner-General's plan to restructure the budget of the Agency. In that connection, his delegation wished to thank the donor States, especially those which had increased their contributions, and the Canadian, Japanese and other agencies that had provided education grants and centres for social, health and vocational training services. The Commissioner-General's efforts to secure funds for the Agency were also commendable. However, it was hoped that the Agency would be able to provide better services to the Palestine refugees and that its task could be successfully completed by the return of the refugees to their homes and property.

26. Attempts to place the host countries and Israel - the occupying Power - on an equal footing in certain matters pertaining to the activities of local UNRWA staff were incomprehensible and unacceptable. The situation of the host countries could not be compared to that of Israel. The host countries were also victims of the Israeli aggression because they were having to cope with about 1 million Palestine refugees. Moreover, Israel even opposed the Agency as a matter of principle and pursued a policy of oppression against the Palestine refugees with a view to liquidating the refugee problem in its own way, whereas the host countries offered protection to the refugees. It was therefore unjustifiable and meaningless even to compare the situation of the Agency and Palestine refugees in the Arab host countries and in the territories occupied by Israel. Israel must observe the principles of international law governing foreign occupation. For example, it must refrain from expelling the indigenous population and allow the international agencies to carry out their work. It was unacceptable to praise Israel for isolated acts which were most probably propaganda ploys and which diverted attention from its real policy towards the Palestine refugees and the Agency and from the firm and constructive policy pursued by the Arab host States. For example, although the events in Lebanon caused much suffering to the refugees and impeded the work of the Agency, the report failed to mention the impact of the Israeli occupation and Israel's denial of the right of the refugees to return to their homeland, i.e. the main cause of their plight.

27. The Agency must continue its work until the problem of the Palestine refugees was solved; its budget must cover the needs of the refugees, and a stable and permanent source of financing should be sought if voluntary contributions proved to be insufficient.

28. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization) expressed his delegation's deepest condolences to the people and Government of Mozambique in connection with the death of President Samora Machel.

29. It was crystal clear that the problems of the Palestine refugees had resulted from the Zionist aggression conducted against the people of Palestine with the support of Israel's imperialist allies. The United Nations had been attempting to solve the problem of the Palestine refugees since 1948. The Zionist rulers of Israel, however, had consistently refused to comply with the relevant resolutions

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

and had been following a policy aimed at the annihilation of the Palestine refugees or their forced integration in the host countries. The destruction of the Palestinian refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territories and Lebanon and the demolition of hundreds of shelters and camps in the occupied Palestinian Gaza Strip were proof of that. The situation in occupied Gaza was identical to that in Soweto in South Africa. In Lebanon every refugee camp had been repeatedly destroyed by Israel and its agents. Israel together with Amal was continuing to attack Palestinian refugee camps in south Lebanon. The international community, however, supported the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and establish an independent Palestinian State on Palestinian national soil under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole and legitimate representative. The solution to the Palestinian problem should be brought about through the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

30. The United Nations must take further steps to remove the obstacles placed by the United States and Israel to efforts to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The Palestinian people would continue to struggle until it successfully achieved the total implementation of its inalienable national rights, under the leadership of PLO.

31. The report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA (A/41/13 and Add.1) gave less emphasis than previous reports to the need to bring about a just solution to the Palestine refugee problem, and the information provided on the role of Israel in the occupied territories was vague. He commended the efforts of the Commissioner-General in drawing attention to the deteriorating conditions in the Gaza Strip. The international community should be given more information about that situation and the continuous attacks by Israel and its agents against the refugee camps in south Lebanon.

32. With regard to the introduction of a three-year medium-term plan, he inquired what the current status of the commitment by donors was. Furthermore, the PLO and the Palestinian people had reason to be alarmed about the possible political implications of that plan, which might be used to delay their return to their homeland. He reiterated his delegation's position against the demolition of refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territories. In 1986 alone, two camps and hundreds of houses had been destroyed and thousands of Palestinians had been relocated. The naive acceptance of the so-called "voluntary moves" by Palestinians was nonsense. The Israeli occupiers were forcing families to move through pressure and intimidation. Israel's objective was to eliminate the refugee camps in order to remove any reminder of the Palestinian question. It was surprising that the report of the Secretary-General on Palestine refugees in the West Bank (A/41/568) made no reference to the demolition of two camps in the West Bank in 1986.

33. He condemned Israel's continued obstruction of the Agency's work. There were numerous examples of that in the report of the Commissioner-General. In view of the increased suffering of the Palestine refugees in the occupied territories and in Lebanon, he urged UNRWA to provide all its services in those areas. In that

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, PLO)

regard, it was encouraging to note that the Vocational Training Centre at Sibliin would be re-opened in 1987. He hoped that in future Israel would be identified more frequently as the occupying Power in the reports of the Commissioner-General and that the Agency would continue issuing individual cards to Palestinians eligible to receive them. It was regrettable that some host Governments were not co-operating with UNRWA in that regard.

34. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on the University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" for Palestine refugees (A/41/457), his delegation reiterated its condemnation of Israel, whose position had made it impossible to complete the functional feasibility study on the proposed university at Jerusalem.

35. The PLO would continue to support of the Secretary-General, the Commissioner-General and the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to secure a stable financial basis for the Agency. Although those who had created the problem of the refugees in the first place should bear the responsibility for that situation, he appealed to all parties concerned to ensure the continuation and improvement of UNRWA services until the Palestine refugees could return to their homes and properties in Palestine.

36. Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, expressed profound sympathy for the civilian population caught up in the violence in Lebanon. The Twelve had consistently called for efforts to end the bloodshed and ensure the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon. It was totally unacceptable that the civilian population in the camps served by UNRWA should be attacked or that armed elements should expose them to attack by establishing in those camps bases for their activities. The Twelve also took a serious view of the unjustified destruction of refugee shelters by the occupying Power in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They fully shared the grave concern expressed by the Commissioner-General at the deteriorating conditions in the Gaza Strip.

37. The marked increase in the number of arrests and detentions of UNRWA staff without charge or trial was cause for growing alarm. The Twelve expressed deep sympathy to the families of UNRWA employees who had been killed, wounded or abducted. The case of Mr. Alec Collett, a British subject working for UNRWA, was of special concern. The Twelve appealed once again for news of his whereabouts and for his release without further delay.

38. The funding base for UNRWA remained dangerously narrow. The European community, the United States and seven other Western countries provided over 90 per cent of the Agency's budget. Those donors, which had long made generous payments to UNRWA, could not be expected to meet on their own the projected small growth year by year in the Agency's funding requirements. The Twelve were aware of the burden already carried by the host countries and of the economic difficulties facing many developing countries, some of which already contributed to UNRWA. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that all those who voted in favour of the

(Mr. Birch, United Kingdom)

relevant General Assembly resolutions assumed a commitment to provide the financial support to the Agency. The failure of those countries which proclaimed their support for the Palestinian people and their desire to work towards a settlement to the Middle East conflict to carry out that commitment was, at the very least, difficult to explain.

39. He expressed satisfaction at the comprehensive review carried out by the Commissioner-General on the future needs of the Agency. The Twelve welcomed the preparation of a comprehensive three-year medium-term financial plan and endorsed the concept of multi-year planning for the management of the Agency's operations. Nevertheless, those measures could be implemented effectively only on the basis of adequate funding and regular contributions. In addition to their contributions to the Agency's budget, the Twelve were providing an increased number of scholarships to Palestine refugees. The European community was committed to the search for peace and urged all of those who shared that objective to support the continued activities of UNRWA.

40. Mr. ÖRN (Sweden) said that his country, which was one of the major contributors to UNRWA, had found the informal meeting of concerned Governments in Vienna in May 1986 very useful and noted with satisfaction that a similar meeting was planned for 1987. He shared the concern expressed in the report of the Commissioner-General at the deteriorating conditions in the occupied Gaza Strip, which warranted urgent attention. Sweden was also deeply alarmed at the tragic situation in Lebanon and the dangerous working conditions for UNRWA staff in that country.

41. His delegation fully supported the appeal of the Commissioner-General for increased contributions to UNRWA. Support for the Agency must be broadened further by increasing the number of contributing countries. The world community must show greater solidarity with the Palestine refugees. His Government, which had repeatedly called for efforts to provide the Agency's budget with a more assured and predictable financial basis, welcomed the new budgetary system at the Agency. Lastly, he stressed the need to renew the mandate of UNRWA for another period in order to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees pending a political solution.

42. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Palestine refugees had not been able to return to their homes because Israel, whose admission to the United Nations had been contingent upon its acceptance of the United Nations resolutions concerning the return of the Palestine refugees to their homes, had decided to ignore those resolutions and to proceed with its plans of expansion and aggression. Many persons had become refugees several times because of Israel's policy of clearing Palestine of its native inhabitants in order to claim that the territory had been empty. Israel thought it had the self-appointed right to strike at and exterminate refugees wherever they were. The tragedy of the Palestinian people shook the conscience of the world, and above all that of the United Nations, which was responsible for that tragedy to a great extent. By allowing Israel to base its existence on a permanent violation of the Charter and international law

(Mr. Glaiel, Syrian Arab Republic)

and by being powerless to put an end to that anomaly, the United Nations was demonstrating its inability to meet the aspirations of peoples that looked to it for their protection. The phenomenon of Israel and South Africa explained the ineffectiveness of the United Nations. Those two régimes were supported by countries that purportedly believed in human and religious values. The Syrian delegation wondered what kind of a religion it was that instigated the extermination of an entire people.

43. With reference to the report of the Commissioner-General, his delegation was pleased that UNRWA had survived the serious financial crisis threatening its existence.

44. His delegation was surprised and displeased that the Commissioner-General had stressed continuing the tradition of his predecessors. The letter of transmittal notwithstanding, the views expressed by the Syrian delegation at Vienna had not been taken into consideration, except for several remarks of secondary importance. The established practice of showing the draft of the report to representatives of the Government of Israel and giving consideration also to their comments was a preventive action to escape criticism from Israel. The remarks made by the Arab representatives apparently were regarded as idle talk. Such an attitude could have adverse consequences on the good relations and excellent co-operation that had always existed with UNRWA.

45. His delegation hoped that UNRWA did not want to drop, one after the other, the services provided to the Palestine refugees, as might be inferred from the allusion in paragraph 3.

46. Paragraph 21 was inexact. The programmes had failed because of the continued Israeli occupation and the inhuman practices aimed at evacuating the territories and settling Zionists there. Placing the responsibility on the refugees did them an injustice and excused aggression and occupation.

47. His delegation was concerned that UNRWA's education and health programmes would one day be considered very expensive and that the Arab Governments would be asked to pay for them. That was a manoeuvre his Government would never approve, because it was part of the conspiracy to do away with UNRWA. The Agency should do more for the refugees and should resume the programme of general ration distribution in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/83 F.

48. With reference to paragraphs 40, 41, 42, 113, 114 and 115, his Government wondered whether it was fair to the refugees to justify the curfew, arrests, administrative detention and the entering of Agency premises by simply speaking of the willingness on the part of Israel to co-operate and citing increased restraint. It was Israel's duty to facilitate the working conditions of UNRWA. The above-mentioned paragraphs should give a better account of the causes of the economic crisis and the plight of the refugees.

(Mr. Glaiel, Syrian Arab Republic)

49. The Syrian delegation wondered why UNRWA did not regard the demolition of camp shelters in the 1971 road widening for security purposes, referred to in paragraph 98, as an extension of the Israeli plan to demolish refugee camps and evict young families. The Agency had not protested vigorously enough. Security had become the magic word with which Israel sought to justify any act of aggression.

50. His Government believed that it might have been useful to mention that the decision by the Syrian Arab Republic to grant UNRWA a more favourable exchange rate had enabled the Agency to save more than \$13 million annually, which could be used to improve educational or other services or to raise the salaries of UNRWA officials in the Syrian Arab Republic.

51. With regard to paragraph 100, his delegation had repeatedly pointed out that the urban plan in question had been drafted in 1965, before the persons displaced by the Israeli aggression in 1967 had arrived to occupy that camp. The construction of that highway had meant the destruction of several old and new quarters in Damascus, and Palestine refugees affected by the project had been treated in the same fashion as Syrian citizens. It was unfair to place that minor administrative question on an equal footing with the Israeli actions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. His delegation wondered whether that paragraph was meant to counterbalance paragraph 99.

52. With regard to paragraph 108, the Syrian authorities had declared that their forces in Lebanon were not detaining anyone. His Government wondered whether the repeated reference to that question was not another effort to offset what had been said under paragraphs 110 and 111.

53. With regard to paragraph 118, each country was sovereign to levy taxes as it saw fit. Damages should be paid by the aggressor that had usurped Palestine; it should not be rewarded for its aggression.

54. Having regard to paragraph 32, UNRWA headquarters and offices should be placed on the site of operations, which would give it more liberty and flexibility, and General Assembly resolution 36/146 should be implemented.

55. In addition to the Syrian citizens displaced from the Golan Heights following the Syrian aggression in 1967, more than 250,000 Palestine refugees lived in the Syrian Arab Republic. His country guaranteed them the same quality of life as its own citizens. UNRWA was assuming only minimal responsibility for them.

56. Contributions were not enough to guarantee UNRWA's operations.

57. Mr. DOWEK (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, for the first time, the Syrian representative had made a direct and abusive reference to the Jewish religion. His delegation regretted that no reaction had come from the Chairman.

(Mr. Dowek, Israel)

58. The Syrian Arab Republic was treating the Palestinians harshly and had killed many while pretending to support them. He referred to the bombings of refugee camps. The bombings in Tripoli had not been carried out by Israelis, but by Syrians. The Syrian Arab Republic had no moral right to pose as the champion of the Palestinians. Even Abu Iyad, the PLO official second in command to Yasser Arafat, had recently said that the Syrian acts against the Palestinian people were more criminal than those committed by any other régime, and that the Syrian Arab Republic was attempting to destroy the PLO politically and militarily so as to have a free hand in Lebanon.

59. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Zionist entity had failed to mention the massacres of Palestinians carried out by the Zionists at Deir Yassin and Qibya. The world knew the facts about the massacres at Sabra and Shatila and the history of Israel, which was replete with such acts. It was ironic to hear the representative of the Zionist entity, which had created the problem of the Palestine refugees, speak in defence of the Palestine Liberation Organization. If Israel was concerned about the Palestinian people, it should recognize its right to return and establish its own State in Palestine.

60. Mr. DOWEK (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic had missed his point. He had only said that the Syrian Arab Republic had no right whatsoever to speak about the plight of the Palestinian people because that country, more than any other State in the world, was attacking the Palestinians militarily and politically.

61. Mr. GLAIEL (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reaffirmed what he had said in his previous statement.

62. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer, Palestine Liberation Organization), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the level of hypocrisy demonstrated by the representative of the Zionist entity made it necessary to respond to his statement. The representative of the Zionist entity had no moral basis whatsoever to speak of the question of the Palestinian people and what had happened to them. Everyone knew the suffering caused to the Palestinian people by the Zionist terrorist gangs and the Israeli policy of State terrorism.

63. With regard to Sabra and Shatila, he said that the representative of the Zionist entity should recall that 400,000 Israelis had demonstrated in Tel Aviv soon after the massacre and had accused the Zionist Government of responsibility for the bloodshed. Lastly, he said that he would take the floor again at a later date to address the question of Israeli activities directed against the Palestinian people and the Palestine refugees.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.