

PALESTINE REFUGEES TODAY



UNRWA AT THE UNITED NATIONS-NEWSLETTER No. 83



Commissioner-General, handing his Annual Report to the President of the General Assembly.

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FOREWORD

Each year an issue of the Newsletter covers the proceedings of the General Assembly session relating to the work of UNRWA. This year Newsletter No. 83 reproduces the relevant documentation of the General Assembly's thirty-first session, including an article summarizing the Commissioner-General's Annual Report for the 12 months ending 30 June 1976, and excerpts from statements of the Commissioner-General.

Introducing his Report on 25 October to the General Assembly's Special Political Committee, the Commissioner-General expressed the Agency's deep sympathy with "the many citizens of Lebanon who, like so many of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon, have been the victims of forces over which they had little or no control." He also brought up to date the account given in his report of operations in Beirut, adding that "the events in Lebanon (were) a shocking reminder of the urgency of reaching a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East, which will take account of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people." (See Excerpts from the Statement of the Commissioner-General, page 9.)

At the 24 November "Pledging Conference", during which 43 governments announced their contributions in support of the 1977 activities of UNRWA, the Commissioner-General expressed appreciation of the support given to UNRWA, but he again warned Member States of the Agency's precarious financial situation, particularly in view of the need to replace supplies and equipment and provide for repairs and reconstruction in Lebanon. (See Summary of Pledging Conference, page 17.)

The complete texts of five General Assembly resolutions also appear in this Newsletter (page 18). Resolutions A/31/333 A, B, C, D and E (XXXI) took note of the Annual Report of the Commissioner-General and called upon all Governments to make the most generous efforts possible to meet UNRWA's forecast needs; endorsed the continuation of assistance by UNRWA to persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 hostilities; called once more upon Israel to take immediate steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants of territories occupied since 1967; called once more upon Israel to take effective steps for the return of the refugees concerned to the camps in the Gaza Strip; and requested the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA to continue its efforts for a further year.

NEW COMMISSIONER-GENERAL FOR UNRWA

The retirement of Sir John Rennie, G.C.M.G., O.B.E., as Commissioner-General of UNRWA, and the appointment as his successor of Mr. Thomas W. McElhiney, the present Deputy Commissioner-General, with effect from 1 April 1977, was announced by the Secretary-General at the end of February.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 302 (IV), Mr. McElhiney's appointment has been made by the Secretary-General in consultation with the Governments represented on the UNRWA Advisory Commission. These are Belgium, Egypt, France, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mr. McElhiney has served in his present post since April 1974. Before joining the United Nations, he was in the Foreign Service of the United States for nearly 30 years. He served in a number of consular and political posts and from 1961 to 1964 as Deputy Chief of Mission in Khartoum. After an assignment with the Bureau of African Affairs in the Department of State, he was appointed in 1968 as the Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. In 1971 Mr. McElhiney became the Inspector General of the United States Foreign Service. At the time of his appointment to UNRWA, he was also the Ambassador-designate to Ethiopia.

Mr. McElhiney was born in 1919 in West Virginia. He attended the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 1941 with a degree in History. He also studied at Cornell and Harvard Universities. Mr. McElhiney is married and has a daughter and two sons.

The Secretary-General paid a warm tribute to Sir John Rennie, who retired from United Nations service at his own request after more than eight years with UNRWA, six of them as Commissioner-General. Dr. Waldheim said that Sir John had discharged his important responsibilities with great distinction and dedication in extraordinary difficult circumstances, which had included periods of serious disturbance in the Middle East and almost continuous financial crisis for UNRWA. Owing in great part to Sir John's skilful leadership and devotion, the Secretary-General said, UNRWA had continued to carry out effectively its indispensable programme of assistance and services to the Palestine refugees.



Thomas W. McElhiney

SUMMARY OF COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT

(Report covers the period 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976)

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was brought to the brink of suspension of services by the 1976 budgetary crisis, according to Sir John Rennie, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, in his annual report issued on 22 October 1976.

The cause for concern about the Agency's ability to maintain its regular programme "in conditions of chronic financial instability and in a turbulent operating environment", expressed in his last two annual reports, has been even greater in 1975/76, Sir John said. As feared, the budgetary crises of 1975 and 1976 had been more acute, particularly the latter, occurring earlier in the year.

The incompatibility of the Agency's system of voluntary financing with the obligations it was expected to assume had again been demonstrated and no solution to the chronic problem was in sight. Indeed, the ability of the Agency to remain financially and administratively viable until the end of the current extension of its mandate on 30 June 1978 could not be taken for granted, the Commissioner-General warned.

On 30 June 1975, there were 1,668,205 persons registered with the Agency. Over one million of these were eligible for UNRWA's health and education services and 828,000 among them were also in receipt of food rations. There were some 289,000 children - an increase of 13,500 since 1974/75 - in 592 UNRWA/Unesco schools at the end of the 1975/76 school year.

UNRWA, which began operations in May 1950, provides relief, health and education services for refugees (and their descendants) who fled in 1948 from that part of Palestine which became Israel, who are in need and who reside in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, east Jordan and the Israeli-occupied West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip. UNRWA also provides limited assistance for many non-refugee Palestinians displaced as a result of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli hostilities; the burden of aid for these displaced persons is otherwise borne exclusively by the governments of Egypt, Jordan and Syria.

General Operations

The dominant feature in the Agency's area of operations during the year under review was the situation in Lebanon. There, what the previous annual report had termed civil disturbances degenerated into an "anarchic civil war of appalling violence", said the Commissioner-General. In that conflict the Palestine refugees were inextricably involved, since whatever its causes, one factor was the dimensions of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

Because of the deterioration in both internal and external communications in Lebanon from September 1975 onwards, the Agency headquarters in Beirut could no longer discharge effectively its responsibility for the direction, supervision and support of its programmes elsewhere in the Agency's area of operations. Moreover, the larger-scale military activity and the general breakdown in law and order threatened the personal safety of staff and their

dependants. In December 1975, and after consulting the Secretary-General, the Commissioner-General decided to relocate headquarters temporarily in Amman and Vienna (due to limitations on office space available in Amman).

The Agency's Lebanon Field Office continued to operate as effectively as it could, the report said. Rations were distributed to the refugees when it was possible to supply the distribution centres and the refugees were able to reach them - and both were possible "to a surprising extent". Health services were continued to the best of the Agency's ability, but progressively during the reporting period the Agency was forced to suspend much of its general education, teacher training and vocational training in Lebanon, since in many parts of the country neither teaching staff nor students could safely reach the UNRWA/Unesco schools and training centres.

In addition to the problems created by internal conflict in Lebanon, Israeli air raids and attacks from the sea during July, August, September and December of 1975, caused serious loss of life among refugees and damage to Agency installations and refugee shelters, the report said. In total, 42 refugees were reported killed and 101 injured during those attacks.

Elsewhere than in Lebanon, the Agency's education/training, relief and health programmes continued as normally as possible, given the disruption at headquarters in Beirut and the adverse effect of the Agency's financial difficulties on the supply of flour -- the most important ration component.

In 1975, expenditure on education and training amounted to \$50.8 million and accounted for 45.4% of the Agency's budget; expenditure in 1976 is estimated at \$59.4 million. The health services cost \$12.4 million in 1975; for 1976 the figure is estimated at \$14.2 million. Relief services expenditure in 1975 was \$45 million and is expected to increase to 47.5 million in 1976.

Finance and Management

During 1975/76 UNRWA experienced the most serious financial crisis of its history: in the final quarter of 1975 it was on the brink of suspension of services and on 30 June 1976 it was again in this same situation. Fortunately, as regards this, by 15 November additional contributions had been received and by deferring some non-recurrent capital expenditure and forgoing the make up of short issues of rations that had occurred earlier in the year for logistical reasons, the Agency was able to maintain its programmes until the end of the year. On 30 June 1976 the revised budget to maintain services in full in 1976 was \$127.7 million; there was thus a deficit of \$29.5 million. The position subsequently improved, with some additional contributions and more favourable exchange rates. Nevertheless, the Commissioner-General said, at the time the report was being completed, the threatened date for the suspension of operations, if sufficient contributions had not been received, had been postponed only until 30 November.

UNRWA's financial situation comprised three distinct but related aspects, the report stated. First there was the primary budgetary problem of insufficiency of income to meet expenditure during the current fiscal year; second, the problem of insufficiency of cash at any particular time to meet cash expenditures which are then due; third, the problem of an insufficiency of assets to cover liabilities, including any contingent liabilities that might become due should the Agency suspend operations.

The first two problems were straightforward, Sir John said. The third was more complex and was perhaps the most important because, in effect, it set the limit beyond which the Agency could not continue to incur expenditure. The complexity of the third problem arose from the Agency's contractual obligations to pay separation benefits to its large local staff if alternative employment could not be found for them.

The report stated the Agency had assumed that, under conditions of orderly liquid-

ation after a decision of the General Assembly that the Agency's task had been completed, slightly less than half of the Agency's staff would be found alternative employment and no separation benefits would be payable to them. Consequently, in calculating the liabilities which it must have sufficient assets to cover, the Agency's practice had been to take into account separation benefits for only slightly more than half of its staff. If, however, there were an abrupt cessation of operations in circumstances of financial breakdown, full funding of separation benefits would be required, thereby doubling the cost to the Agency of providing for separation benefits.

After a certain point in the year, which was decided by the size of the budget deficit, the Agency, the report said, having maintained services during the initial months, found itself in a position in which its financial collapse was precipitated by the potential strain on its assets imposed by the liability for separation benefits. If, however, sufficient funds could be obtained to maintain services until the end of the year there was no need to

provide for additional separation benefits. A new cycle then began with the new year: during the first months pledged income for the new year was sufficient to cover expenditure on services for that period and to provide for normal liabilities.

The Agency's unfunded liability for separation benefits was thus a serious aggravation of its financial difficulties. The amount required, if circumstances necessitated payment of separation benefits to all staff, numbering about 15,900, was of the order of \$24 million.

The risk of premature suspension of all services and termination of staff because of the unfunded liability for separation benefits could only be avoided, according to the Commissioner-General, if the General Assembly were prepared to ease the burden on UNRWA's assets, either by approving a special allocation of funds from the UN budget to increase UNRWA's working capital or by agreeing in advance to accept a contingent liability against the UN budget for separation benefits for UNRWA's local staff in the event of liquidation of the Agency.



Tal Zaatar after the siege (Beirut skyline)

COMMISSIONER-GENERAL'S 25 OCTOBER STATEMENT

(Excerpts from the Statement to the General Assembly's Special Political Committee)

This is the sixth report that I have the honour of presenting to the General Assembly in your Committee, Mr. Chairman. The period it covers (from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976) has been the most difficult in my experience of UNRWA, which covers in all eight years; indeed, I believe it has been one of the most difficult periods in the whole history of UNRWA. What that implies, of course, is not simply that the Agency has had financial or operating difficulties, but that many of the Palestine refugees whom the Agency serves, and of those among whom they live, have once again experienced violence and deprivation, anguish and suffering, and despair about their future.

Foremost in our minds at this time must be the situation in Lebanon, the host country in which UNRWA's Headquarters has been situated since the Agency was established twenty-six years ago, and whose official and unofficial hospitality my Headquarters colleagues and I enjoyed until circumstances forced our temporary departure last January. My report is concerned with the Palestine refugees, but I should like to express, on behalf of UNRWA, our deep sympathy with the many citizens of Lebanon who, like so many of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon, have been the victims of forces over which they had little or no control.

In introducing my report last year I said that more radical measures than redeployment of staff might be necessary to enable Headquarters to carry out its work and continue to provide guidance and support to operations in all fields.

In the report I have described the action that had to be taken on my return from the General Assembly. I should like to express here my warm appreciation of the ready assistance UNRWA received from the Governments of Jordan and of Austria in facilitating the establishment of Temporary Headquarters in Amman and in Vienna. We owe a special debt of gratitude to our sister United Nations Organization UNIDO for placing at our disposal in Vienna facilities without which we should not have been able to operate from there so quickly and effectively or so economically.

There has, of course, been some loss of operating efficiency in the enforced splitting of Headquarters, and Headquarters should be reunited as soon as possible in the Area of Operations. Nevertheless, we have been able to discharge effectively our responsibilities for the support and supervision of field operations. There were direct air connections with all fields and the capitals of all host Governments until the Beirut airport was closed in June and communications by radio, telex, telephone and post have been good. Indeed, the Headquarters office in Vienna can still communicate directly by telephone with Beirut when it is impossible from Amman or Damascus. This has been of inestimable benefit during the recent difficult months in Beirut.

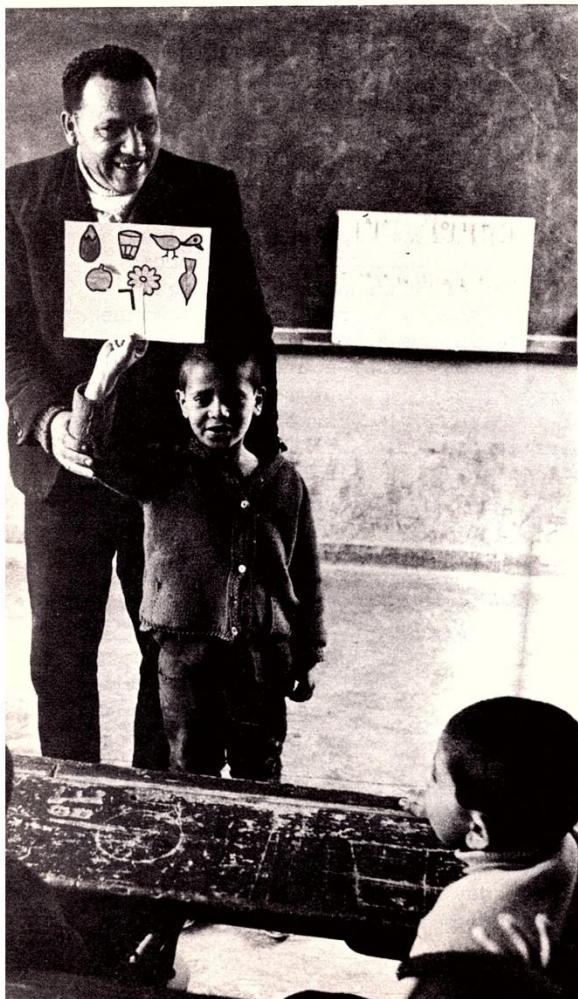
I have given an account in my report of operations in Beirut to the end of June, and I think the Committee would wish me to bring that account up to date. What I shall say is based on the most recent reports from the UNRWA Field Office in

Beirut and on a meeting our Director of Health and I held with senior staff at Chtaura in Lebanon last month. I should like at this point to pay a tribute to the sense of responsibility, the loyalty and the concern for the integrity of the Agency's work that has been shown by senior local staff in Lebanon in appallingly difficult conditions.

The port of Beirut has been out of operation for most of 1976 and supplies of foodstuffs have had to be shipped through the Syrian ports. Road transport into and within Lebanon has been impossible at times but flour, other food commodities and medical and relief supplies have been moved through Syria to the main areas where Palestine refugees live - the Beirut and Tripoli areas, the Bekaa Valley and south

Lebanon. As a result arrears of ration distribution are being overtaken. Clinics in some camps have had to function with only the auxiliary staff living in the camps, because of the impossibility of access during fighting, but professional medical staff have subsequently been redeployed in accordance with the movement of the refugee population, and use is being made of a mobile clinic. UNRWA's health service has always been oriented towards preventive medicine and in Lebanon relied on private hospitals, some of which were forced to close as the fighting became worse. Fortunately a number of medical teams from Arab countries supplemented the work of the Palestine Red Crescent in western Beirut and the ICRC established an emergency hospital there also. To meet the need for immediate relief for refugees from the Dekwaneh camp in the Tal Zaatar area UNRWA brought nearly 20,000 blankets, kitchen kits and medical supplies from Amman and Gaza to Beirut and south Lebanon, purchased clothing and mattresses and made special distributions of foodstuffs. I should like to express my appreciation of generous, immediate donations from voluntary organizations which made some of this relief possible. Schools that were still operating in June were closed for the holidays in July and August and the intention is to re-open as many as possible as soon as conditions permit. Many, however, have been seriously damaged or are occupied by displaced refugee families. Much equipment has been destroyed - there is for instance a need for thousands of desks - as have other school requisites, such as text-books. It has not yet been possible to make a detailed, complete survey of damage and losses but a technical team from Headquarters is being based in the Damascus Field Office to undertake this task. The Siblin Training Centre has been closed throughout the 1975-76 school year and no date can yet be set for re-opening.

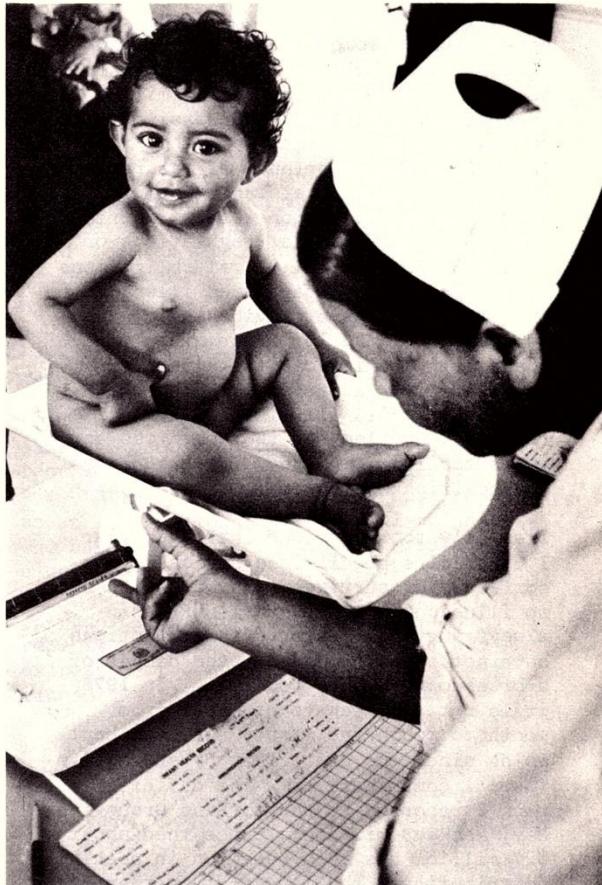
The Agency's Central Warehouse in Beirut, which held supplies for all fields, was preserved intact until last week, when it was hit by four incendiary rockets which set fire to two of the main buildings. A detailed survey has not yet been made



but preliminary reports suggest that hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of supplies have been destroyed. Altogether the cost of repairing damage, replacing equipment and supplies and providing more permanent shelter for displaced refugees or those whose dwellings have been damaged, is likely to be of the order of two to three million dollars, though I must make clear this figure is provisional. The amount of \$521,000 shown in the draft budget for 1977 in chapter II of the report represents only a first estimate of damage up to about April 1976. Clearly this additional burden on UNRWA's finances emphasizes the need for further contributions in 1976 so that commitments can be entered into speedily and before the end of this year, as soon as conditions permit.

I regret that I can give no figure for casualties among refugees in Lebanon. The conditions in Lebanon, especially in Beirut, have been such that normal reporting of deaths has been impossible. I hope that as ration distribution is regularized figures will become available but I should here point out that only about half of the registered refugees receive rations. Once clinics, especially maternal and child care sessions, resume on a regular basis more information will become available. Among UNRWA staff there have been about twenty fatal casualties but this figure may not be complete as schools have been closed since June.

I believe that the Committee is aware of the extent of UNRWA's responsibilities for camps in Lebanon and elsewhere. As some public misunderstanding persists, however, there are two points I should like to make now. UNRWA has, and had, no responsibility for police or other security functions in camps - the Cairo agreement, for instance, was not one to which UNRWA was a party or on which UNRWA was consulted. The second point is that only half of the refugees in Lebanon live or lived in camps. This point should be borne in mind when there is reference to the return of the refugees to their camps, a matter on which I assume UNRWA



will be consulted by the authorities in due course. In the meantime, as I have said in a message I sent to the President of Lebanon earlier this month, I believe the best contribution UNRWA can make to the restoration of stability in Lebanon is to resume its full services as soon as possible, and that is what we are trying to do. We are heartened by the agreement reached in the discussions at Riyadh last week and shall do all we can to cooperate with those responsible for implementing it.

I should now like to turn to UNRWA's financial situation. In my report I have provided some further information on aspects of UNRWA's finances that I hope will be helpful to the Committee in understanding how these successive crises develop and what form they take. In view of the importance of the relationship between assets and liabilities for continued operation without infringement of the financial regulations or breach of contractual, legal obligations I have provided on page 9 an illustrative table. I have provided also, in paragraphs 12 and 13, information on changes in working capital and in expenditure over a period. I hope this information will illuminate UNRWA's financial problem for the Committee and, in particular, will show how precarious the position has become.

I am only too conscious that each year I utter dire predictions and each year so far UNRWA survives. There should be no illusion, however, that UNRWA can always survive. These dire predictions have not been unfounded; the danger of a breakdown is only too real. In 1976 it is not too much to say that from month to month the Agency has been kept going since the end of May by successive special contributions. The deficit, when I reported to the Working Group in May, was \$43 million. Since then about \$27 million has been received in special contributions, the latest, a further \$6 million from the United States, only last week.

As assets have been expended on services, the margin of assets over liabilities has decreased. In September, last month, if a special contribution had not been pledged as the UNRWA Advisory Commission met, I should have been obliged to inform the Commission that services could not be maintained, for lack of funds, beyond 30 November 1976, and would therefore have to be suspended, and that, accordingly, because of the Agency's contractual obligations towards its staff, all staff would have to be given the required one month's notice of termination of their appointments. Suspension of services and termination of staff would have been a calamity, but

one which may again face the refugees and the Agency in 1977 unless earlier assurances of adequate funding are given. Because of UNRWA's chronic financial situation it is the liability for separation benefits to its local staff that assumes the role of precipitating the crisis of imminent suspension of services. I have therefore informed the General Assembly in paragraph 10 of the only means by which, as far as I can see, this precipitation could be avoided. I have pointed out, however, that even if the General Assembly were prepared to accept this contingent liability, UNRWA's budgetary problem would remain.

I believe that in spite of a budget deficit of \$11.2 million UNRWA can now maintain its operations for the remainder of 1976, though all expenditure provided for in the budget cannot be undertaken unless further contributions are received. I believe it is probably too late now to make up short issues of flour earlier in the year which resulted from our inability for lack of funds to purchase flour after March. We already face a problem in obtaining sufficient flour for the first months of 1977, though if supplies cannot arrive in time, I hope we may be able to borrow flour locally against later replacement from flour for which orders will have been placed. I am very concerned about our possible inability once again to commit funds for school construction, as happened last year. Many schools are already on double shift and unless more class-rooms can be built, the UNRWA/Unesco system, with a school population in which natural growth is still taking place, may have to turn children away in 1978. I have also referred to the need for funds for repair and replacement in Lebanon.

I should like again to express my warm appreciation, through their representatives here, to all governments who have contributed to UNRWA this year, and especially to those who have increased their contributions or made special contributions in response to appeals by the Working Group, by the Secretary-General and by me. The result has been to raise income to nearly \$114 million, about the same level as last year. Even if the

same measures are taken to curtail expenditure as were taken last year, UNRWA's slender working capital will be further reduced, and for the reasons I have given, UNRWA's ability to provide education for all registered refugee children and to participate in the restoration of normal life in Lebanon will be impaired.

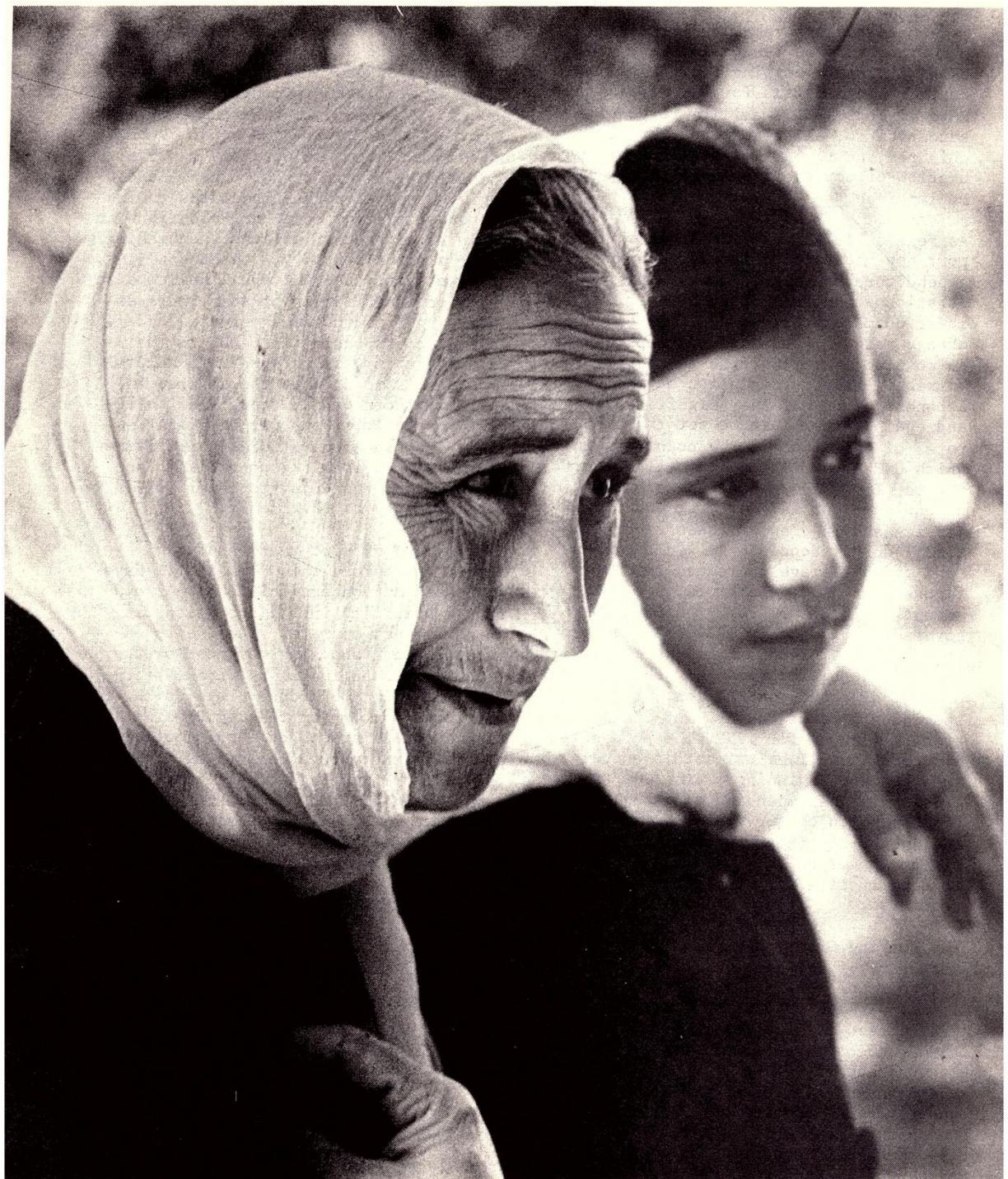
As regards 1977 I have shown in my report how the rate of increase in annual expenditure has slowed down. This declaration is entirely due, however, to lower commodity prices and improved exchange rates. Both these factors cannot be counted on to continue to operate favourably - the depreciation of the Lebanese pound has been significant - and against them must be set the high rates of inflation in the countries in which UNRWA carries on its activities. Chapter II of the report shows estimated expenditure for 1977 at just under \$140 million and in view of these uncertainties I do not consider it would be prudent at this stage to reduce this figure. Even if, therefore, the full amount of income represented by total government pledges in 1976, regular and special, were pledged from the beginning of the new year, UNRWA would face a deficit of about \$25 million. If special contributions are not incorporated in pledges for 1977, the prospective deficit will be twice this amount and from the beginning of the year a crisis will be impending and the threat of suspension of services will hang over the Agency and the refugees. In such circumstances it is impossible to devote to constructive work the attention it requires.

The Working Group has again reviewed the structure of UNRWA's financing and will be reporting separately on its activities. I wish only to say that in 1976 I have been able to report personally to the Group on three occasions, in March, in June and in October, and to thank the Chairman and his colleagues for their understanding and support. Neither the Group nor I can propose a fully effective means of reconciling a voluntary system of financing, as desired by the General Assembly, with an assurance of

sufficient funds to pay for programmes which continue at the same real level. I can only suggest that the uncertainty would be mitigated if contributors would accept the reality that having survived one year as a result of special contributions, UNRWA cannot possibly survive the following year without them. Accordingly, I appeal to Member States to incorporate their special contributions in their regular contributions when making their pledges for 1977. If they will also take into account the likelihood in a period of inflation of some increase in the cost of the same services and make a corresponding increase in their pledges, this will be even more helpful. If UNRWA is to do what the General Assembly expects of it, there must be effective financial support from all Member States who regard UNRWA's programmes as an international responsibility and who have the resources to contribute significantly to their cost.

In conclusion, more than once in my reports or before this Committee I have expressed my concern about UNRWA's continued viability in the conditions in which it must operate. The events in Lebanon are a shocking reminder of the urgency of reaching a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East, which will take account of the legitimate rights and interests of the Palestinian people. To borrow a phrase, at present they float in the sea of politics like an ice-berg on which no man can land but which can sink a ship. Like it or not, - who can deny it? - without such a solution, there will be no solution to the problem of the Palestine refugees. Talk of returning all the refugees to their camps - camps in which more than half of them have never lived and some of which have been destroyed - offers no solution.

* * *



LEBANON: PRESENT NEEDS

The fighting that continued for 19 months in Lebanon claimed many victims, Palestine refugees as well as Lebanese. No precise figures are available because of the nature of the fighting and the conditions in which it took place. The figure for fatal casualties now generally quoted is between 50,000 and 60,000, and many more, of course, were injured.

Many refugee families were displaced, both among those who had been living in camps (about 50 per cent of the total registered) and those who had been living outside in towns and villages. The number is estimated at 30,000. Two camps were razed to the ground after fighting and several others suffered damage in varying degrees during the fighting. Emergency assistance in the form of mattresses, blankets, clothing, shoes, family kits (kitchen utensils, cooking pots, knives and forks, primus stoves), tinned food, skim milk, soap and various food commodities (tea, tomato paste, burghol, olives, etc) has been distributed to the extent that funds, including generous contributions from voluntary agencies, permitted.

Many Agency installations have been damaged or destroyed and there has been serious destruction and loss of supplies. School buildings have to be repaired (although almost all UNRWA/Unesco schools have re-opened) and desks, benches, textbooks and other scholastic supplies replaced.

Apart from schools, other UNRWA installations must be restored, including the Agency's central warehouse in Beirut, which was hit by rockets and seriously damaged by resulting fire. Many of the general supplies stored there were destroyed and will have to be replaced.

The Agency's Lebanon Field Office continued to operate its programmes throughout the period of the fighting so far as conditions permitted. While there were periods of almost total disruption in the worst affected areas, the extent to which operations were maintained and resumed whenever cease-fires permitted appears remarkable in retrospect.

The cost of repairing and reconstructing installations, including schools, and of replacing equipment and supplies is estimated at \$1.1 million. The biggest item, however, is the rehousing of displaced refugees. It is thought that between 15,000 and 20,000 of those displaced will have to be accommodated in an entirely new camp. The cost, including water supply, sanitation works, roads, schools and other Agency installations is likely to be of the order of \$7.5 million to \$10.0 million. No provision for these costs could be included in the Agency's budget for 1977 as presented to the General Assembly and supplementary funds will be required.

New school uniforms for orphan children



SUMMARY OF PLEDGING CONFERENCE

At the annual meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA, held in New York on 24 November, 44 Governments participated and 39 announced pledges totalling some \$63.1 million in cash, goods and services in support of the activities of UNRWA in 1977.

Since the Conference, additional pledges announced, together with estimates based on the 1976 regular contributions of those governments which have not yet made known their intentions, expected non-governmental income, contributions from other United Nations organizations and miscellaneous income total some \$28,577,000, bringing the total expected income for 1977 to \$91,677,000. This figure does not include the 1976 special (one-time) contributions which amounted to \$28,227,000. If these were to be repeated in 1977 there would still be an estimated short-fall in income of nearly \$20 million. Without them, and if no new or additional contributions are received, the deficit will be no less than \$48 million.

Addressing the "Pledging Conference" on 24 November, Sir John Rennie, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, spoke of the present financial situation of UNRWA in the following terms:

"The deficit for 1976 stands at about \$11 million and, in the absence of further contributions, I must reduce expenditure by purchasing no more flour for 1976, as a consequence restricting distribution to what can be supplied from the stock in hand. I must also defer the commitment of funds for school construction. The balance of the deficit will have to be met from working capital.

"It may be necessary, on the other hand, to incur some additional expenditure in Lebanon in order to restore full services there and provide some immediate extra assistance to refugees in special hardship. If so, working capital will be further reduced.

"Non-recurrent expenditure in Lebanon will be an important additional item in 1977. Only preliminary estimates are available at this stage but they indicate, as the most urgent educational need, expenditure of about \$600,000 on repair of schools, replacement of textbooks and other scholastic supplies. For repair of refugee shelters and UNRWA buildings other than schools about \$300,000 may be required, and for repair of the main warehouse and replacement of its supplies about \$500,000. It is estimated that about 30,000 refugees in Lebanon are displaced. While it is impossible at present to give any reliable estimates of the cost of rehousing them, in view of the uncertainties of location, it is likely to be of the order of several million dollars.

"None of this expenditure is provided for in the UNRWA budget presented to the General Assembly in Chapter II of my report; nor is any provision made for it in the Secretary-General's appeal for funds for Lebanon, which does not, I understand, cover UNRWA. I hope therefore that in considering their contributions to the cost of UNRWA's work in 1977 Member States will bear in mind these extraordinary needs."

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO UNRWA

31/15. (XXXI) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
In the Near East

A

Assistance to Palestine refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3419 (XXX) of 8 December 1975 and all previous resolutions referred to therein, including resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948,

Taking note of the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976, 1/

1. Notes with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) has not been effected, that no substantial progress has been made in the programme endorsed by the Assembly in paragraph 2 of resolution 513 (VI) of 26 January 1952 for the reintegration of refugees either by repatriation or resettlement and that, therefore, the situation of the refugees continues to be a matter of serious concern;
2. Expresses its thanks to the Commissioner-General and to the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for their continued dedicated and effective efforts under difficult circumstances to provide essential services for the Palestine refugees, and to the specialized agencies and private organizations for their valuable work in assisting the refugees;
3. Notes with regret that the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine has been unable to find a means of achieving progress in the implementation of paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) 2/ and requests the Commission to exert continued efforts towards the implementation of that paragraph and to report as appropriate, but no later than 1 October 1977;
4. Directs attention to the continuing seriousness of the financial position of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as outlined in the Commissioner-General's report;

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 13
(A/31/13).

2/ For the report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine covering the period from 30 September 1975 to 30 September 1976, see A/31/254, annex.

5. Notes with profound concern that, despite the commendable and successful efforts of the Commissioner-General to collect additional contributions, this increased level of income to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East is still insufficient to cover essential budget requirements in the present year, and that, at presently foreseen levels of giving, deficits will recur each year;

6. Calls upon all Governments as a matter of urgency to make the most generous efforts possible to meet the anticipated needs of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, particularly in the light of the budgetary deficit projected in the Commissioner-General's report, and therefore urges non-contributing Governments to contribute regularly and contributing Governments to consider increasing their regular contributions.

76th plenary meeting
23 November 1976

B

Assistance to persons displaced as a result of the
June 1967 hostilities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, 2341 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967, 2452 C (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, 2535 C (XXIV) of 10 December 1969, 2672 B (XXV) of 8 December 1970, 2792 B (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2963 B (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3089 A (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973, 3331 C (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 and 3419 A (XXX) of 8 December 1975,

Taking note of the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976, 3/

Concerned about the continued human suffering resulting from the June 1967 hostilities in the Middle East,

1. Reaffirms its resolutions 2252 (ES-V), 2341 B (XXII), 2452 C (XXIII), 2535 C (XXIV), 2672 B (XXV), 2792 B (XXVI), 2963 B (XXVII), 3089 A (XXVIII), 3331 C (XXIX) and 3419 A (XXX);

2. Endorses, bearing in mind the objectives of those resolutions, the efforts of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to continue to provide humanitarian assistance, as far as practicable, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure, to other persons in the area who are at present displaced and in serious need of continued assistance as a result of the June 1967 hostilities;

3. Strongly appeals to all Governments and to organizations and individuals to contribute generously for the above purposes to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to the other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned.

76th plenary meeting
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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session,
Supplement No. 13 (A/31/13).

C

Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2656 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, 2728 (XXV) of 15 December 1970, 2791 (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2964 (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3090 (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973, 3330 (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 and 3419 D (XXX) of 8 December 1975,

Having considered the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, 4/

Taking into account the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976, 5/

Gravely concerned at the alarming financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, imminently endangering the essential minimum services being provided to the Palestine refugees,

Emphasizing the urgent need for extraordinary efforts in order to maintain, at least at their present minimum level, the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East,

1. Commends the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for its work;

2. Notes with appreciation the report of the Working Group;

3. Requests the Working Group to continue its efforts, in co-operation with the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General, for the financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for a further period of one year;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the necessary services and assistance to the Working Group for the conduct of its work.

76th plenary meeting
23 November 1976

4/ A/31/279.

5/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session,
Supplement No. 13 (A/31/13).

Population and refugees displaced since 1967

The General Assembly,

Recalling Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967,

Recalling also its resolutions 2252 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968, 2535 B (XXIV) of 10 December 1969, 2672 D (XXV) of 8 December 1970, 2792 E (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2963 C and D (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3089 C (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973, 3331 D (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 and 3419 C (XXX) of 8 December 1975,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976, 6/ and the report of the Secretary-General of 4 October 1976, 7/

1. Reaffirms the right of the displaced inhabitants to return to their homes and camps in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
2. Deplores the continued refusal of the Israeli authorities to take steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants;
3. Calls once more upon Israel:
 - (a) To take immediate steps for the return of the displaced inhabitants;
 - (b) To desist from all measures that obstruct the return of the displaced inhabitants, including measures affecting the physical and demographic structure of the occupied territories;
4. Requests the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to report to the General Assembly by the opening of the thirty-second session on Israel's compliance with paragraph 3 of the present resolution.

76th plenary meeting
23 November 1976

6/ Ibid.

7/ A/31/240.

Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip

The General Assembly,

Recalling Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967,

Recalling also its resolutions 2792 C (XXVI) of 6 December 1971, 2963 C (XXVII) of 13 December 1972, 3089 C (XXVIII) of 7 December 1973, 3331 D (XXIX) of 17 December 1974 and 3419 C (XXX) of 8 December 1975,

Having considered the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering the period from 1 July 1975 to 30 June 1976, 8/ and the report of the Secretary-General of 4 October 1976, 9/

1. Calls once more upon Israel:

(a) To take effective steps immediately for the return of the refugees concerned to the camps from which they were removed in the Gaza Strip and to provide adequate shelters for their accommodation;

(b) To desist from further removal of refugees and destruction of their shelters;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, after consulting with the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, to report to the General Assembly by the opening of the thirty-second session on Israel's compliance with paragraph 1 of the present resolution.

76th plenary meeting
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Note: Another resolution affecting Palestinians was adopted by the General Assembly: Resolution 31/20 (XXXI) endorsed the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/31/35) and reaffirmed "that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, inter alia, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations".

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session,
Supplement No. 13 (A/31/13).

9/ A/31/240.



Miss Gerda Karnstrom, the Chief of UNRWA's Nursing Division (centre) chatting with the matron and nurses of the Christian Medical Centre in Beirut. These nurses, who were sponsored by UNRWA during their training, have been commended for remaining at their posts throughout the civil war in Lebanon.

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