



Conclusions of the Special Meeting of a Group of Supporters of UNRWA New York, 26 September 2013

نتائج الاجتماع الخاص لمجموعة داعمي الأونروا، نيويورك، 26 أيلول

We, members of the League of Arab States and other supporters* of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), met today in New York under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to reassert our support for UNRWA's mandate in providing assistance and protection to Palestine refugees and to identify practical ways to strengthen that support.

We recalled that Palestine refugees represent the world's largest and most protracted refugee situation and that nearly sixty four years have passed since the UN General Assembly established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to assist Palestine refugees, until a just and lasting resolution is reached in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions (General Assembly Resolutions 194(III) and 302(IV)).

We welcomed UNRWA's achievements in providing health, education, social safety-net, infrastructure, microfinance, emergency assistance, protection and other humanitarian and human development services to the 5 million Palestine refugees currently registered with the Agency and in helping to alleviate their plight, to achieve sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance and to cope in times of crisis and upheaval.

We expressed awareness of the continuing needs of the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation and reiterated that the effective functioning of the Agency remains essential in all these fields.

We underlined that UNRWA's work has been made possible by the active engagement, and generous support and assistance from the international community, notably the members and observers of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, and in particular those hosting Palestine refugees.

However, we expressed our serious concern about the critical situation of UNRWA caused by increasing demands for services being placed on the Agency, by the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian conditions in the region requiring UNRWA to manage crises of varying intensity in all its five fields of operation, and by escalating financial pressures arising from the structural underfunding of the Agency leading to recurring and increasing deficits on its core budget. In this context we emphasised the importance of maintaining a strong, financially sound UNRWA as a contributor to stability in the Middle East.

To address these concerns and consistent with relevant UN and League of Arab States resolutions, we reaffirmed our collective commitment to provide UNRWA with the necessary, predictable and sustainable resources required to fulfil its mandate in all its fields of operation, in particular its core activities, and we re-dedicated ourselves to make all efforts to this end. In this context, we noted that UNRWA's next Medium Term Strategy offered an opportunity to further address the sustainability of the Agency's core interventions and to ensure that services are concentrated in areas providing the most value for refugees in particular the most disadvantaged. Un-earmarked contributions to UNRWA's core budget (approximately \$650 million in 2013) are particularly important to enable UNRWA to do this.

We welcomed Members of the League of Arab States' engagement to achieve and sustain the 7.8% target for Arab government contributions to UNRWA's core budget as set out in numerous resolutions of the Council of the League of Arab States since 1987. In this regard, we noted and encouraged the positive trend of increasing contributions to UNRWA by Members of the League of Arab States in recent years, notably for the Agency's projects and emergency appeals.

We also welcomed the intention of other supporters of UNRWA to sustain and, wherever possible, enhance their support to UNRWA and its work. We also encourage new donors to contribute to UNRWA.

We emphasised the shared international responsibility towards the Palestine refugee issue, and we committed to keep the situation of UNRWA's finances under close review. We look forward to working with all of UNRWA's friends and partners, notably through the UN General Assembly and in particular its Fourth Committee, the UNRWA Advisory Commission, the UN Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, and other existing mechanisms of coordination and support, to strengthen the Agency and support its valuable work on behalf of the Palestine refugees as a stabilizing factor in the region.

*The five biggest donors (the US, EU, UK, Sweden, and Norway), regional representatives (Japan and Brazil) and the Chair of the Fourth Committee Group on the Financing of UNRWA (Turkey)

