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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

Economic and Social Council  
Commission on the Status of Women

## **Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/120 of 9 December 1998, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to it, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Similar mandates were also contained in General Assembly resolutions 50/203, 51/69 and 52/100. The present report emphasizes efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective and follow-up activities, including activities undertaken by non-governmental organizations, since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General on the subject (E/CN.6/1998/2 and Add.1 and 2). It contains a joint work plan for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The present report has one addendum, which contains an analysis of additional national action plans and strategies submitted to the Secretariat during the reporting period.

#### **I. Introduction**

1. In its resolution 1996/6 on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Economic and Social Council established the work programme of the Commission on the Status of Women and decided, *inter alia*, that under item 3 (a) of the Commission's agenda, a report of the Secretary-General on the measures taken and progress achieved in mainstreaming a gender perspective within the United Nations system should be prepared on an annual basis.

2. In its resolution 53/120, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to it, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council on follow-up to and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Similar mandates were contained in General Assembly resolutions 50/203, 51/69 and 52/100.

3. In each of the three reports submitted in the course of a year, the information that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body is provided. The report to the Commission on the Status of Women emphasizes efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in support of gender mainstreaming, and follow-up activities by non-governmental organizations and others. The report to the Economic and Social Council focuses on facilitating the coordination function of the Council. The report to the General Assembly contains information from all entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies and international financial institutions, and an analysis of activities undertaken at the national level and by non-governmental organizations and civil society.

4. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 53/120. Section III contains a joint work plan for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, as called for in Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5. Section IV has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/10 on Palestinian women and Commission on the Status of Women resolution 42/2 on the release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts, including those

subsequently imprisoned.

5. The addendum (E/CN.6/1999/2/Add.1) to the present report contains an analysis of an additional 20 national action plans and strategies submitted to the Secretariat in response to a note verbale dated 2 July 1998, which was sent to Member States. This updates the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session, in March 1998, entitled A Synthesized report on national action plans and strategies for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>6</sup> (E/CN.6/1998/6).

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#### **D. Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society**

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48. Efforts to expand and promote the well-being and the rights of young women have been gaining worldwide support. Emphasis was placed on educating and training adolescent girls as future leaders and equal participants in decision-making at a regional summer camp organized by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Cyprus in August 1998. Participants were young women from Egypt, Greece, Jordan and Lebanon, as well as young Palestinian women. The goal of this camp was to prepare young women for responsible participation at decision-making levels. The YWCA also conducted a workshop in Kenya from 9 to 13 March 1998, bringing together 30 young women from all over the country. The workshop was aimed at enhancing the awareness among young women of their human rights and the impact of violence against women.

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#### **A. Situation of Palestinian women and assistance provided by organizations of the United Nations system**

74. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1998/10, requested a report on the situation of Palestinian women and assistance provided by organizations of the United Nations system. The present report covers the period from September 1997 to September 1998 and is based on information from United Nations bodies monitoring the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as in refugee camps. Such bodies include the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967. Information on assistance to Palestinian women was requested from the United Nations system and replies from 15 entities have been included in the present report.<sup>3</sup>

##### **1. Situation of Palestinian women**

75. According to the 1997 Palestinian Population, Housing and Establishment Census,<sup>4</sup> women constitute 49.2 per cent of the total Palestinian population of 2,895,683. The census classifies 64 per cent of the labour force as being economically inactive and women, as housewives, constitute 43.7 per cent of the economically inactive. This means that women constitute 28 per cent of the total labour force which is engaged in unpaid work. This might explain why women constitute only 16.3 per cent of the total number of people engaged in the private sector. The census also shows that 20.1 per cent of women are illiterate, compared with 7.7 per cent of men, and that the fertility rate is 6.1 per cent.

76. In his report on economic and social conditions in the West Bank and Gaza, the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO) stated that in comparison with 1996, there was an overall improvement in economic performance in the West Bank and Gaza during 1997. This was due, in part, to the fact that 1997 had fewer closure days than 1996, which was reflected in enhanced labour and trade flow between the West Bank and Gaza and Israel. However, this relative improvement must be seen in the context of the continuation of the general, comprehensive and internal closure policies which have caused a decline in incomes in the past several years. Lost income as a result of closures has been estimated at about US\$ 4 million per effective closure day, amounting to about US\$ 228 million in 1997 which is about half the value of donor disbursements for the year.<sup>5</sup>

77. The daily life of women continues to be adversely affected by the Israeli occupation, particularly by the imposition of security-related measures such as closures, which have a detrimental impact on their socio-economic condition. As in the past, Palestinian women are experiencing the gender-specific impact of these measures, which is reinforced by existing inequalities in society between women and men. Frequent Israeli closures have been a major factor behind the 18 per cent drop in the gross national product (GNP) of the West Bank and Gaza and the 35 per cent drop in per capita GNP between 1992 and 1996. The gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated by the Palestinian Authority and the International Monetary Fund to have grown by 1.2 per cent in 1997, down from 5.5 per cent in 1996.<sup>6</sup>

78. This socio-economic situation is reflected in household expenditures. There was an overall real decline of 2.3 per cent in average household consumption expenditures between the first and fourth quarters of 1997.<sup>7</sup> Given existing gender inequality, resulting in women's weaker negotiating capacity, any cut in household expenditure tends to hurt women and girls disproportionately. Furthermore, women's average labour force participation rate declined from 13 per cent in 1996 to 12.3 per cent in 1997, which is a relative decline of 5.8 per cent for women compared with a relative decline of 1.5 per cent for men. Further, women's full employment rates and the total number of fully employed women also fell in 1997, while those for men rose considerably. Also in 1997, women's average unemployment rate increased from 20.6 to 21.4 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

79. In his report to the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Hannu Halinen (Finland), the Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967, stated that the lack of income and inability to buy food during closures of the occupied territories have reportedly led many families to eat only one meal a day and to significantly reduce their intake of protein.<sup>9</sup> An increase in malnutrition has been registered among pregnant women and pre-school age children who are suffering from iron and iodine deficiencies.<sup>10</sup> The phenomenon of malnourishment among children in the Gaza Strip was also reported by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.<sup>11</sup>

80. The Special Rapporteur also noted that approximately 3,500 Palestinian prisoners, seven of whom were women, were held in Israeli prisons and detention centres in violation of articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This remains a persistent source of concern and tension in the occupied territories.<sup>12</sup>

81. In Gaza, the Special Rapporteur met with some former detainees and with the mothers and relatives of Palestinian prisoners. He was informed about the economic and social hardships suffered by the prisoners' families, particularly if the prisoners were the main breadwinners. The families also complained of the frequent transfer of prisoners in Israel, which made family visits difficult. Family visits to prisoners were also hindered by difficulties in obtaining security clearance by relatives and the humiliating searches they undergo merely to spend 45 minutes with the prisoners in groups of 10.<sup>13</sup>

82. The Special Rapporteur also mentioned the situation of former prisoners who have undergone torture while in detention. They suffer from psychological consequences, such as chronic post-traumatic stress and depression. Many, as a result, behave violently towards their wives and children.<sup>14</sup> The wives and children of workers who are unable to go to Israel or find employment locally also tend to be victims of domestic violence. This phenomenon of domestic violence, due to the above factors, was also reported by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.<sup>15</sup>

83. In its report, the Special Committee noted reports on "arbitrariness" in obtaining travel permits to enter Israel. There are no written rules issued by the Israeli authorities that govern the granting to Palestinians of permits and authorizations to enter Israel. Moreover, travel by Palestinians is accompanied by humiliation, especially of women, at checkpoints and border crossings, physical violence and the likelihood of being stranded in another part of the occupied territories in case of closure.<sup>16</sup>

84. The Special Committee also reported that a newborn baby died on 26 August 1998 because of delays at an Israeli Army roadblock near Hebron, in the West Bank. The mother gave birth in her car after soldiers at an Israeli military checkpoint forced her to take a longer route to a Hebron hospital.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. United Nations assistance to Palestinian women**

85. Information provided by the United Nations system shows continuing support for Palestinian women by the United Nations, as well as increasing efforts of gender mainstreaming by the programmes and funds. However, the information available is not fully differentiated in terms of the extent of support to the different groups of Palestinian women, namely, women in Palestinian self-rule areas, women in occupied areas, and women in refugee camps.

86. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued its four-year, \$7.2 million Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People which commenced in 1996. The programme focused on three areas of assistance: reproductive health including family planning, population and development strategies, and advocacy. As part of this programme in the West Bank town of Jenin, UNFPA trained a team of 20 female and 10 male educators, to reach out to rural women and men in order to inform them about reproductive health issues, distribute oral contraceptives among them and refer them to clinics to obtain services. This was part of a project serving some 18,000 married women and their husbands and helped to upgrade the capacity of 20 clinics to provide quality reproductive health services and counselling.

87. UNFPA is currently supporting the establishment of a multidisciplinary women's centre at the Jabalia refugee camp, which is due to become operational in December 1998. The centre will provide a comprehensive package of reproductive health information and services covering the life cycle of women, as well as social assistance, legal counselling and community education on various issues such as domestic violence and women's rights, including reproductive rights. A similar UNFPA-funded centre at the Al Burej refugee camp was visited by 13,000 clients during 1997.

88. The World Health Organization (WHO) is assisting with the consolidation of the Women's Health Development Department at the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian Authority as well as with the implementation of two reproductive health projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These projects, funded by UNFPA, aim at reducing maternal mortality by 50 per cent, introducing family planning counselling and screening in 50 per cent of all health facilities, increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate to 25 per cent, and providing post-natal care to all women by the year 2000.

89. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided assistance to Palestinian women through the following three programme areas: advocacy and capacity-building; health and nutrition; and basic education. During 1997, the UNICEF office for Gaza and the West Bank conducted a Gender Audit of four projects with a view to assessing the extent to which UNICEF's global commitment to addressing gender concerns was reflected in local level project activities. Following the audit, two workshops were held to share the findings with 100 key policy makers and professionals in order to raise awareness of gender mainstreaming in programming. The

report of the audit as well as the workshops was issued by UNICEF's Gender and Partnership Section.

90. The UNICEF Women's Health Project involves the development of policies and procedures on key women's health issues and upgrading of services and human resources at the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian Authority. During the period 1997/98, 60 health professionals at the Ministry of Health were trained in the management of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS prevention, as well as in cervical cancer and breast cancer screening. During April 1998, a one-day campaign on Safe Motherhood, as part of the Safe Motherhood Day celebrations, was carried out involving all health providers in the West Bank and Gaza.

91. As part of the Basic Education programme, UNICEF is at present conducting operational research on early marriage and school drop-outs. The results will be discussed with top policy makers in the education sector. In addition, there is an ongoing project - the Better Parenting Initiative C on parenting skills, covering such issues as early marriage, gender equality and child labour. This project now targets both mothers and fathers through male and female social workers.

92. The United Nations Volunteers are implementing the Community-based Youth Participation and Development Project, which aims at promoting the human development of young people, in particular young women, to be full participants in and contributors to the development of the Palestinian society. So far 21 United Nations Volunteers (2 international and 19 national volunteers) have worked directly or indirectly towards improving the situation of Palestinian women as women's health specialists, community health workers, coordinators of community activity centres.

93. As part of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) International Programme for More and Better Jobs for Women, a draft Action Plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been formulated on the basis of a series of consultations between ILO, representatives of various ministries of the Palestinian Authority and employers and workers organizations, as well as other social partners. The draft Action Plan will include the development of a gender-sensitive labour market information system, which will improve gender disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination.

94. The draft Action Plan includes vocational training of about 100 women in the tourist sector and of about 200 women engaged in the informal handicrafts sector in the Bethlehem district. In the Gaza Strip, the programme targets about 300 women in poor rural areas to ensure their remunerative and viable employment. This involves the organization of the women in local support facilities and networks, training and the setting up of a viable savings and credit scheme.

95. Other ILO activities include the promotion of the socio-economic status of Palestinian women and the promotion and development of Palestinian women's entrepreneurship. For example, a two-week course was organized at the ILO Training Centre in Turin for 14 Palestinian women representing non-governmental organizations and women's associations active in the promotion of human and women's rights during the period of 24 November to 5 December 1997. From 15 June to 3 July 1998 another training course was implemented at the centre for 13 women and men representing the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. At the end of the course, participants formulated a national strategy for the promotion of women workers' rights. In addition, two training activities on costing and pricing were implemented for 20 women entrepreneurs in the territories under the Palestinian Authority, from 25 August to 5 September 1998.

96. The International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO conducted a project on export development and the promotion of high-value floricultural products from the Gaza and West Bank, which included a survey on the role of Palestinian women in the floriculture industry. The survey, which was completed in June 1998, assessed the extent to which certain gender-specific factors determine how Palestinian women perceive and articulate their development needs and how they participate in contemporary development activities (particularly those related to the floriculture industry).

97. As part of its ongoing development assistance to the occupied Palestinian territories, the World Bank invited the Director of the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, which represents a number of Palestinian women's organizations in the occupied territories, to a Gender Training Workshop for Bank staff. The discussion revolved around how the Bank and women's organizations active on the ground can learn from each other and work together to promote the socio-economic, political and legal status of Palestinian women.

98. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme, is implementing a project designed to give policy and institutional support to the recently established General Directorate for Policies, Planning and Development of the Ministry of Agriculture. This directorate has a newly established Gender in Development Unit. This unit will assist rural women through awareness campaigns and gender-oriented training.

99. As part of its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP supported the establishment of a Gender Statistics Unit within the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Training for staff within the unit and the Bureau itself focused on assisting staff in selecting gender-significant indicators, formulating gender-sensitive surveys and questionnaires and evaluating statistics for accuracy in reflecting the actual situation of women within society.

100. Furthermore, UNDP in conjunction with the Inter-Ministerial Committee of the Palestinian Authority, created a Rural Girls Development Centre. The Centre provides general education and comprehensive training in the areas of health and agriculture. During 1997, training was offered for 27 young rural women. A second phase of this project aims at creating a mechanism by which the Rural Girls Development Centre will be able to sustain itself, further develop the curriculum and initiate small projects for the graduates to create long-term income-generating activities.

101. In addition, UNDP has engaged a local Palestinian non-governmental organization to carry out a

comprehensive study on the status of women in the occupied Palestinian territories in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

102. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has supported the establishment of a Women and Group Rights Unit within the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza to work with the local community in support of the development of a favourable women's rights policy environment. The Women and Group Rights Unit's legal aid programme has provided direct legal counselling to individuals and intervened on behalf of women in the *Sharia* courts in Gaza in cases of separation, divorce, child visitation and *nafaqa* (alimony). It has also provided legal advice to women prisoners and other women's organizations and their constituents. In addition, the Unit has produced a series of guides on such issues as marriage law, divorce and inheritance.

103. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights also supports non-governmental contributions to the legal reform process through a grant to a Gaza-based organization, Mashraqiyyat, to enable it to contribute to the development of an equitable Personal Status Law. The focus is on the discourse and interpretations that deal with *Sharia*-based concerns.

104. The United Nations Development Fund for Women implements its empowerment agenda for women through three programme areas: strengthening women's economic capacity, engendering governance and leadership, and promoting women's human rights. As part of the celebrations marking both the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fifth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, UNIFEM is launching a Global Campaign for the Eradication of Violence Against Women. For Palestinian women, this will involve a public march in the West Bank, film shows and plays, radio campaigns, high school lectures, and round-table discussions with the Palestinian Working Women's Centre, the Women's Studies Centre, the Women's Legal and Social Counselling Centre as well as the Women's Affairs Technical Committee.

105. As part of its activities to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNIFEM has assisted the Inter-Ministerial Committee of the Palestinian Authority and the General Union of Palestinian Women in preparing a national strategy for the advancement of women. UNIFEM is now assisting these two Palestinian entities in the implementation of the strategy.

106. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has invited Palestinian women to participate in the World Conference on Education. However, the UNESCO strategy is geared towards integrating Palestinian women's concerns in its assistance work, which includes granting scholarships through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

107. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in conjunction with UNFPA, executed the first population and housing census project of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and provided technical support during all the preparatory activities and the field operations. Data from the census will, as far as possible, be disaggregated by gender.

108. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia seeks to mainstream a gender perspective in its activities focused on supporting the economic and social situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to provide advisory services and technical assistance services. ESCWA organized an Expert Group meeting on the role of women's non-governmental organizations in the economy of the occupied territories in December 1997 at Bir Zeit University.

109. UNRWA continues to provide assistance to Palestinian refugees in keeping with its mandate. That assistance includes the programme areas of education, health, relief and social services, income generation, peace implementation, and the Lebanon Appeal (which targets the refugees in Lebanon who are hardest hit). Women refugees are direct or indirect beneficiaries of these programmes. For example, in the education programme, which accounted for 50 per cent of the total budget of UNRWA in 1998, women accounted for 62 per cent of all trainees enrolled in technical/semi-professional courses in 1997/98. Of the 1,055 scholarships granted during 1997/98 by UNRWA to refugee students, 46 per cent went to women students. UNRWA, as part of its income-generation programme, granted loans valued at \$2.7 million to 3,296 women who supported some 16,310 dependants. Those women were organized into 525 solidarity groups, which were part of the solidarity group lending programme, serving as a guarantee mechanism. This programme has a repayment rate of 98 per cent.

### 3. Conclusions

110. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action confirmed the human rights of women and of the girl child to be an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. Furthermore it obligates Governments and the international community to seek and ensure the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life, as well as the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex. The eradication of discrimination against women is fully elaborated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which 163 Member States have ratified. The principle of equality is inherent in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The principles enshrined in these documents are relevant to Palestinian women and intensified work is needed to fully implement them.

111. The Palestinian Authority and civil society, with the assistance of the international community, have taken considerable steps to advance the situation of Palestinian women. However, further efforts and assistance are needed, particularly within the context of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes as mandated by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1997/2. A sound information basis is essential for gender mainstreaming, therefore the efforts of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to acquire and disseminate gender-disaggregated statistics wherever possible should be augmented by efforts on the part of United Nations bodies to keep gender disaggregated data on their

operations. This will aid the reporting process considerably and enhance the effectiveness of support to Palestinian women.

112. A significant proportion of Palestinian women are refugees with acute basic needs. Yet there is insufficient information on their status and the kind of assistance they are receiving. The efforts of UNRWA, in keeping with its mandate in this area, are commendable, but they are also constrained by the debilitating financial crisis which the agency is facing. As reflected in previous reports, the status and situation of Palestinian women are inextricably linked to developments on the peace front. Progress in the peace process should be translated in tangible benefits for the people of the occupied territories and the refugee camps.

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## **B. Release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts and imprisoned**

113. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-second session, adopted resolution 42/2 on the release of women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts, including those subsequently imprisoned. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to prepare, taking into account the information provided by Member States and relevant international organizations, a report on the implementation of resolution 42/2 for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-third session. A note verbale was sent to all Member States on 29 September 1998. As of 7 December 1998, the Secretariat had received five replies.

114. The Governments of Barbados and El Salvador reported that the situation described in Commission resolution 42/2 did not exist in their respective countries. The Government of Colombia confirmed its commitment to the resolution. However, it indicated that in the ongoing civil war, the armed groups opposed to the Government routinely detained civilians, including women, as part of their struggle. On 15 July 1998, one of the armed groups, the Army of National Liberation, signed an agreement with the National Committee for Peace and members of civil society, committing itself to stopping the practice of detaining civilians.

115. The Government of Croatia reported that the Governmental Commission for Imprisoned and Missing Persons has been conducting a search for 367 women who constitute 20.12 per cent of the total population of missing persons and persons forcibly taken away in the area of the Republic of Croatia during the war of 1991-1995.

116. The Government of Lebanon reported that three Lebanese women have been arrested by Israeli Intelligence and are currently in detention. One of the women is being held in Nablus prison in the occupied Palestinian territories. She has reportedly been tortured and suffers from severe head pains. The Government of Lebanon also reported that there are eight child prisoners in Israeli detention.

117. The Secretariat also requested information from relevant entities of the United Nations system. As of 7 December 1998, it had received five replies. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations provided information from three of its field missions. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon indicated that, in accordance with publicly available reports, there were three women prisoners in the Khiam prison. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been dealing with the issue. The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone reported that the rebels hold several thousands of civilian captives, women, men and children, who were used as porters, human shields and for forced sexual activity. The United Nations Liaison Office in Belgrade reported that, according to ICRC, nine women and four children under the age of 18 were missing in Kosovo. However it is not clear whether they were prisoners, abductees or just missing. ICRC was still seeking clarification of their fate. Furthermore, an estimated 521 Serbian women and 12 children have been missing since the 1991-1995 war in Croatia. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations stated, however, that the accuracy of these estimates could not be ascertained.

118. In their replies, the Department of Public Information and three regional commissions (ESCWA, ESCAP and ECA) did not provide any specific information on women and children taken hostage.

## **Notes**

1 Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/53/455-S/1998/913); interim report on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, prepared by Mr. Choong-Hyun Paik, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (A/53/539); and report of the Secretary-General on emergency assistance for peace, normalcy and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Afghanistan (A/53/346).

2 That is, the period since the preparation of the previous report (E/CN.6/1998/2/Add.2).

3 The 15 entities that replied are: the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Bank, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Volunteers programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

4 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Final Report (August, 1997).

5 UNSCO, A Report on economic and social conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (Spring, 1998), p. ii.

6 Note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/53/163-**E/1998/79**), para. 43.

7 UNSCO, A Report on the economic and social conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" (Spring, 1998), p. 29.

8 Ibid., p. 23.

9 Report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, submitted by Mr. Hannu Halinen, Special Rapporteur pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/2 A (E/CN.4/1998/17), para. 37.

10 Ibid., para. 35.

11 Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/53/661), para. 128.

12 Report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 ..., para. 21.

13 Ibid., para. 30.

14 Ibid., para. 27

15 Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report to the Special Committee ..., para. 108.

16 Ibid., paras. 70 and 83.

17 Ibid., para. 90.