



**CHAIR OF
THE COORDINATING BUREAU
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**



**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, ON BEHALF OF THE NON-
ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM), ON AGENDA ITEM 54, ENTITLED
“UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE
REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (UNRWA)”, WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

New York, 09 November 2018

Mr. President,

1. It is an honor for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the 120 Member States comprising the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the consideration of such an agenda item to which we attach great importance.
2. At the outset, we seize this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the invaluable work done and the assistance provided by UNRWA to Palestine refugees, especially in light of the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the continued violations by Israel, the occupying Power, and the crises, instability and conflicts affecting other fields of operation in the region, presenting serious challenges for the refugees and the Agency.
3. Moreover, we also reiterate our firm appreciation to the Agency’s staff, including to Mr. Pierre Krahenbuhl, UNRWA’s Commissioner-General, for their tireless efforts and their courage and dedication to serve the Palestine refugees, under adverse conditions, and which in some cases have led, regrettably, to the loss of their lives while in the line of duty.

Mr. President,

4. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) underscores the importance of the work carried out by UNRWA, and reiterates its strong support to the Agency and its General Assembly mandate to provide vital support and emergency assistance, including humanitarian and development assistance and protection for over 5 million Palestine refugees, pending the achievement of a just solution to their plight on the basis of relevant UN resolutions, including resolution 194 (III), which affirmed, inter alia, their right to return and fair compensation.



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5. The Member States of the Movement are of the view that the mandate and operations of UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, since 1949, remain essential and indispensable until the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, including the plight of the Palestine refugees. The continued strong and generous support of the international community, including the host countries, is necessary to ensure the Agency's continuity of services, and is especially needed in light of the recurrent and severe financial shortfalls that continue to affect its vital humanitarian programmes. In this regard, we reaffirm the urgency of providing UNRWA with sustained, predictable and uninterrupted support, as called for by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
6. In this context, we deeply regret the exacerbation of the Agency's severe funding crisis, particularly following the punitive and unjustified decision of the U.S. Government to suddenly terminate its funding to the Agency, which not only targets the most vulnerable segment of Palestinian people by undermining the provision of vital humanitarian and development assistance to them but also threatens the region's stability, as UNRWA has been repeatedly acknowledged as making a significant contribution to regional stability. Similarly, we express our concern over the provocative announcement of Israeli authorities to close the Agency's offices in the Occupied East Jerusalem, and call for the respect of the UN Charter and the privileges and immunities of the Organization.
7. Moreover, the Member States of the Movement also express their grave concern over the current situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is beyond critical and clearly unsustainable. As noted by the Commissioner-General in the annual report to the General Assembly, contained in document A/73/13, 2018 has been a tumultuous and challenging year in which UNRWA has been operating in crisis mode. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that there is hope and a clear horizon, with opportunities, and in stability and peace, for the millions of people UNRWA serves in a daily basis.
8. As a result of prevailing conditions, including the volatility in the region and widespread violence, as well as the marginalization and poverty that continue to affect them, Palestine refugees continue to face serious protection challenges. The ongoing Israeli occupation, which has now been imposed for over 51 years, inflicting armed conflict, collective punishment and forced displacement on the Palestinian people, including refugees, among them thousands of Bedouins, constitutes a daily, constant and severe protection crisis. In many cases, they are facing existential threats and are sinking deeper into poverty and desperation, as is the case for Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the protracted plight of the Palestine refugees has been exacerbated due to a series of crisis in the region, including the conflict in Syria, which has intensified the need for humanitarian assistance, and has resulted in thousands of refugees fleeing to



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other countries, most notably to Lebanon and Jordan, as well as Turkey and beyond.

Mr. President,

9. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) expresses its grave concern regarding ongoing illegal Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continue to gravely affect the well-being and living conditions of Palestine refugees, causing more suffering and more need. This includes, in particular, the unprecedented increase in forced displacement, the widespread settlers violence, and the continuation and escalation of both the demolition of homes and economic assets and the illegal policies and measures by Israel, the occupying Power, aimed at expanding its illegal settlement campaign and further entrenching its half-century occupation of the Palestinian land and encroachment and violation of the rights of the Palestinian people.
10. Moreover, the Gaza Strip has been crippled by the illegal blockade imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, for eleven years; an illegal blockade that continues to impose untold humanitarian, social and economic suffering on the more than 2 million Palestinian children, women and men there, the majority of whom are refugees. This unilateral and inhumane blockade continues to severely affect every aspect of life there, including by obstructing humanitarian aid and basic materials from reaching them, impeding the reconstruction of the thousands of homes and infrastructures that have been destroyed, including refugee shelters and infrastructure in the refugee camps, and obstructing economic and social recovery, deepening need and aid dependency that UNRWA is then compelled to respond as more and more families descend into poverty and become food insecure, which now affects over 80% of the population in Gaza.
11. The Member States of the Movement seize this opportunity to stress that the crisis in Gaza must be comprehensively addressed, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and the relevant UN resolutions, in the context of the overall efforts to bring an end to the illegitimate, belligerent, Israeli foreign occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967. Similarly, we call once again for the full and immediate lifting of the illegal Gaza blockade, which is the only way for the Palestine refugee population in Gaza to decrease its dependency on UNRWA.
12. Moreover, we reiterate our concern over the increased movement and access restrictions faced by Palestine refugees and UNRWA's staff within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, we call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately meet its obligations under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, including relevant UN resolutions, and the Fourth Geneva Convention, to enable UNRWA to discharge its duties freely, without hindrance or



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additional costs. Similarly, we call for the full respect of the immunity of the United Nations and the inviolability of United Nations premises and installations, including of UNRWA, and for an end to all violations in this regard.

Mr. President,

13. As stressed from the outset, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) remains seriously concerned by UNRWA's continuing financial shortfalls, taking into account the fact that the Agency experienced an overall deficit of \$446 million for 2018, a situation that undermines its ability to deliver its core mandate to Palestine refugees. In this regard, we regret the inability of the General Assembly to follow-up in a timely and comprehensive manner the important recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report, contained in document A/71/849, pursuant to resolution 71/93, aimed at ensuring more sufficient, predictable and sustained funding to UNRWA for the duration of its mandate. Nonetheless, we hope that the Member States of the Organization will continue to support the relevant provisions included in this regard in the draft resolution on the "Operations of UNRWA", currently before this Committee, as a clear reaffirmation of the international community's strong and long-standing support for the Agency and for the alleviation of the plight of the Palestine refugees in the absence of a just solution.
14. We appeal to all States and Organizations to redouble their ongoing efforts in this regard, with a view to ensure adequate, sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for the Agency to ensure its continuity and ability to meet refugee needs. Moreover, we, once again, urge all Member States, especially the traditional donors, to increase their contributions to UNRWA, which will help avoid creating uncertainty and precipitating instability among the refugees, and we also urge new donors to come forward with generosity to meet the growing needs, in line with the permanent responsibilities and obligations of the international community, until a just solution is realized.
15. To conclude, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reiterates its support to UNRWA's mandate and to its unwavering efforts and decades-long contribution to the human development and protection of the Palestine refugees and the promotion of their rights and dignity, despite the many prevailing difficulties, while also reiterating the need to continue all efforts to bring an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and to find a just solution for the Palestine refugee problem, on the basis of the principles of international law and the relevant UN resolutions. All of these are central components of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution for finally achieving the inalienable rights and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.



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I thank you, Mr. President.