

General Assembly
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Fourth Committee

Agenda item 54:

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East

Statement by Ambassador Tore Hattrem,
Permanent Representative of Norway

Chair,

This has been a year of unprecedented financial crisis for UNRWA, as well as heightened tensions in the region.

The humanitarian situation for 2 million Palestinians in Gaza is critical. The Palestinian economy is under great pressure and faces a possible collapse. Palestine refugees are still displaced by the Syria crisis.

In this situation, absent a political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, UNRWA is indispensable. As a service provider, as an employer, as a vehicle for economic activity and as a regional stabilizer. There is no alternative to UNRWA in terms of providing basic services to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees.

(Check against delivery)

Chair,

The financial situation for the organization is of great concern. The coming months will be more difficult than ever before. In light of the US withdrawal, we, as long-term donors to UNRWA, must do what we can to achieve a more sustainable financial situation for the organization.

We welcome UNRWA's strong efforts on cost efficiency and reform of the organization. These are painful, but necessary steps, in order to maintain the ability to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable populations.

We also welcome the extent to which old and new donors have come forward in their support to UNRWA.

Chair,

Norway remains a consistent partner to UNRWA, both in terms of political and financial support. We have allocated additional resources this year in light of the situation.

We regret the unprecedented lack of consensus in this year's report of the Working Group of the Financing of UNRWA.

In this challenging time for UNRWA and for the people served and employed by the organization, let me finish by paying tribute to the highly dedicated UNRWA staff.

Thank you.