



**Statement by
The Arab Republic of Egypt**

**On behalf
of the Non-Aligned Movement**

**Before
The Special Political and Decolonization Committee
65th Session of the General Assembly**

Agenda item (51)

**“United Nation Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East”**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the pleasure to address the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this important Agenda Item. At the outset, The Movement would like to congratulate Mr. Fillipo Grandi for his appointment as Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and commend his valuable and highly appreciated work since he assumed his responsibilities, I also would like to thank him for his report to the General Assembly and his briefing on UNRWA's activities and appreciated efforts particularly under extremely restrictive and dangerous circumstances in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by the Occupying Power.

Despite many challenges and obstacles, UNRWA continues to undertake an essential role in serving more than 4.8 million Palestine refugees, ameliorating their plight through the provision of education, health, relief and social services, in addition to its work in the areas of camp infrastructure, micro-finance, and emergency assistance. This role is essential until the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestine refugees, including their right to return and to fair compensation, according to General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948.

In this context, we are concerned about the persistence of Israel to deny the Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, their basic rights and to increase their suffering for more than forty-three years of the Israeli Occupation and systematic violations of the International Humanitarian Law, the Human Rights Law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Regrettably, Israel's illegal practices extend to include targeting UNRWA's personnel obstructing their activities and mandate given by the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement is gravely concerned about the extremely difficult living conditions facing Palestine refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in refugee camps in Gaza, as a result of the continuing collective punitive measures and blockade imposed by Israel, and its military aggression, which caused the death and injury to the thousands of Palestinians and widespread damage and destruction to the Palestinian civilian infrastructure and the United Nations facilities.

The ban on the entry of construction materials into Gaza halted practically all reconstruction projects including schools and medical centers, indeed, the complete halt of reconstruction and building of new schools by UNRWA in Gaza,

has damaging effects on the Palestinian children whose right to education, among other human rights, is being seriously and systematically violated. Israel has a legal obligation under the fourth Geneva Convention to open its crossing points with Gaza in order to allow the reconstructions and building of UNRWA's schools.

In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, NAM condemns the Israeli Occupation tight regime of closures, roadblocks, house demolitions, land confiscation, settlement expansion, settlers' violence against Palestinians, curfews and military operations, all of which continue to have a devastating effect on Palestinian population and UNRWA's activities to alleviate the suffering of the Palestine refugees under Occupation. NAM calls for the international community to bear its responsibilities and ensure all those illegal actions are halted immediately.

Mr. Chairman,

The Non-Aligned Movement is alarmed by the extensive damage and the destruction of UNRWA's facilities caused during the Israeli military assault on Gaza. In this regard, the Movement condemns Israel's breach of the inviolability of the United Nations premises and its failure to respect the inviolability of UN facilities and to accord the assets of the Organization immunity from any form of interference.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its call on Israel to end its collective punitive measures and illegal blockade imposed on the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, including by the sustained and permanent opening of its Gaza's boarder crossings in full compliance with the terms and provisions of Security Council resolution 1860, General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 and other relevant United Nations resolutions. The Movement also calls upon Israel to cease its obstruction of the construction materials and supplies for the reconstruction and repair of damaged and destroyed Agency facilities and for the implementation of suspended civilian infrastructure projects in refugee camps in Gaza, which are essential for alleviating the severe humanitarian hardships being endured by the refugees.

NAM also acknowledges that the policies and contributions of UNRWA's donor countries and changes taking place within the refugee population itself affect UNRWA's ability to realize its objectives. It is the Movement's firm belief that the financial situation of the Agency requires increased attention from the Donor Community and international financial institutions to contribute to the

chronically under-funded budget and to respond favorably to the emergency appeals. Serious consideration should be given to continue and to increase contributions to the Agency to ease the ongoing financial shortfalls exacerbated by the situation on the ground; meanwhile NAM stands ready to foresee other options to deal with the very serious problem of under-funded budget of UNRWA. NAM also supports the request by UNRWA to increase its staff to allow it to undertake fully its responsibilities and to respond immediately to increasing challenges on the ground.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, I would like to reiterate the Non-Aligned Movement support for the extraordinary efforts exerted by UNRWA to provide services and assistance to the Palestine refugees for more than sixty years and for its role in addressing the dire humanitarian situation of the Palestine refugees pending a just resolution of their plight and the realization of their rights in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which is vital for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine as well as of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. President,