



HOLY SEE

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**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Francis Chullikatt
Apostolic Nuncio
Permanent Observer of the Holy See**

65th session of the UN General Assembly

**Before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee) on item 51:**

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

New York, 2 November 2010

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the report. I greet the new Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and wish him every success in this new mission. I also take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Commissioner-General Karen Abu Zayd for her many years of dedicated service to UNRWA.

Having carefully reviewed the current report of the Commissioner-General, my Delegation expresses once again its appreciation for the works of the agency during this time of significant political difficulty within the region. The Holy See commends the works of UNRWA in meeting new challenges as it struggles with ever limited resources to face the growing demands of an increasing refugee population, a significant proportion of which exists under the stricture of various embargoes.

UNRWA and the Pontifical Mission for Palestine have been working for over 60 years to assist the Palestine refugees by providing medical, educational and other social services, services which would normally be the responsibility of the local governing authority. Nonetheless, my Delegation is confident that there exist men and women of good will who have the desire and dedication to promote the establishment of such a governing authority. In order to establish such local governances, the international community has made many efforts to bring peace to the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. The Madrid Conference, the Oslo Accords, the Wye River Memorandum, the Camp David Summit, the entire peace process of the Quartet and the road map which ensued, all have tried to establish the Two State Solution envisioned by the November 1947 resolution of the U.N. General Assembly.

It is the view of the Holy See that many of the issues raised in the year's report of the Commissioner-General of UNRWA are in essence the symptoms of larger issues which have festered in the region for far too many years. Each year at this meeting, we are presented with a seemingly endless list of difficulties and differences separating Israelis and Palestinians. But my Delegation knows that good will exists to promote, establish and preserve the mechanisms that will ensure peace, collaboration and good neighborliness.

Mr. Chairman,

It is the hope of my delegation that the renewed peace process can address the root causes of these symptoms and, once and for all, assist the Israelis and the Palestinians in establishing a secure State for the citizens of Israel and a secure State to be the homeland of the Palestine people. Each population has been forced

for over six decades to live under threat of explosive acts of terror or military incursions which result often in the death of innocent civilians, children, adolescents and the elderly. These casualties, together with the senseless destruction of fragile infrastructure, cry to heaven for justice which is the guarantor of peace. All hurdles to negotiations, particularly those of recent origin, which hinder free, mutual communication and the respectful exchange of positions, must be addressed in a responsible fashion without delay.

Mr. Chairman,

The Holy See calls upon the members of the Quartet to use all strategies available to them to assist the peoples of the region to reconcile their substantial differences, to compromise where necessary with fairness and to guarantee peace for generations to come.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains key to resolving so many of the situations that bring chaos to the region of the Middle East. Many of these have serious worldwide implications. It would seem that for six decades there has been a failure on the part of both concerned parties to resolve their differences. But, the time is now to substitute this failure with determination that resorts to negotiation rather than violence. The Holy See exhorts all legitimate interests to engage in significant and substantive dialogue in order to bring stability and peace to the Holy Land. More than ever before, the international community is needed to continue its efforts to facilitate with haste the rapprochement of the two parties which my Delegation knows is in the hearts and minds of so many people of good will.

Mr. Chairman,

In the hope that the many problems of the region will finally be resolved by negotiation, dialogue and good faith, my Delegation further underlines that a lasting solution must include the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In light, too, of the numerous incidents of violence and challenges to free movement posed by the Security Wall, the Holy See renews its support for "internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities" (A/ RES /ES-10/2).

Finally, my Delegation reiterates the call to the international community to facilitate meaningful negotiations between all parties. Only with a just and lasting peace - not imposed but secured through negotiation and reasonable compromise - will the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples of the Holy Land be fulfilled.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.