



## **BRAZIL**

**United Nations General Assembly  
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**Agenda Item 52 – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine  
Refugees in the Near East**

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**Statement delivered by**

**Ms. Maria Teresa Mesquita Pessôa, Minister Plenipotentiary, Permanent  
Mission of Brazil to the United Nations**

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil recognizes the importance of UNRWA and supports its activities, which contribute to providing minimum conditions of living to a long-suffering population.

The Agency continues to play a vital role in addressing the needs of Palestinian refugees due to its presence on the ground and specific mandate within the UN system. The international recognition and the respect from local populations it has earned is proof of the instrumental role played by UNRWA in this regard. Its complex mandate to deliver a wide range of basic services requires sustained support, both financially and politically.

In a manner coherent with our support to the Palestinian people and mindful of the manifold challenges faced by the refugee population, Brazil has been seeking to increase its financial support to the Agency in recent years. In 2010, Brazil had contributed five hundred thousand dollars to the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared camp, in Lebanon, as

well as two hundred thousand to UNRWA for the development of projects aiming at ensuring food security for students, children, pregnant women, the elderly as well as persons with chronic diseases. In 2011, Brazil has already contributed more than US\$ 1.4 million in support of the Agency's education and social safety-net programmes in Gaza.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to stress that the humanitarian situation of in Gaza is unacceptable and unsustainable. As we welcome the exchange of prisoners of last October and the orderly manner in which the agreement that made it possible was implemented, we reiterate our hope that this positive development can be translated into further cooperation, in particular concerning the humanitarian situation in the Strip.

In particular, an immediate and sustained opening of crossings is imperative. The resumption of regular exports from Gaza is urgently needed as a way to revive an economy that has been crippled by four years of blockade. The flow of persons in and out of Gaza must be fully restored. The population of Gaza must not survive only on international charity. The blockade is a violation of international law and should be immediately lifted.

We are also concerned and the extremely vulnerable situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Having contributed to the reconstruction of Nahr el-Bared in 2010, we regret that the progress in reconstruction and in the return of residents is being limited due to insufficient funding for the reconstruction project. We commend UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities on the progress achieved so far.

We welcome measures taken by the Lebanese Government to address the issue of access to the labor market by the refugee population and look forward to their implementation. However, much more support is needed. Improving the dire living conditions of the refugees in Lebanon is an integral part of the overall efforts to foster stability and peace in the Middle East.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

We would like to express once again our concern over the alarming financial situation of UNRWA, as reflected in the report of Commissioner General Filippo Grandi and in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA.

The worrying shortfall in resources anticipated not only in 2011 but also for the next biennium may affect the provision of services that are at the core of the Agency's mandate, such as health, education and assistance to the most vulnerable.

We join others in welcoming the Agency's financial reforms and increased transparency. In this context, we urge Member States, in line with the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report on the strengthening of UNRWA's management capacity, to support its recommendation to increase the funding to UNRWA from the UN Regular Budget.

The international community must reaffirm, in these times of change, its shared commitment to the well-being, human development and human rights of Palestinian refugees. We thus call on all in a position to do so, especially developed countries, to increase their contributions to UNRWA in order to enable it to adequately and effectively fulfill its crucial mandate.

Social and economic development is essential for the unity and cohesion of the Palestinian State, as the Palestinian institution-building efforts correctly reflect. For this same reason, strengthening UNRWA is a key aspect of our solidary effort to help Palestinians attain those goals.

Thank you.

