



# Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. HUSSEIN HANIFF, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 52: "THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST" AT THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, 1 NOVEMBER 2011**

Madam Chair,

I would like to first thank the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for his report to the General Assembly and the briefing to the Committee on UNRWA's activities for 2010. Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Madam Chair,

2. UNRWA must be commended for its outstanding contributions since its inception in 1950 pursuant to GA resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. Despite trying conditions, UNRWA's dedication in providing essential services to approximately five million registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory, namely the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is testimony to its commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people.

Madam Chair,

3. The root cause of the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees is the unlawful occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel. For more than half a century, Israel has constantly violated international laws, including humanitarian and human rights laws. It has no qualms in using indiscriminate violence and has initiated collective punishment against Palestinian civilians. What is more tragic is that it does this with impunity. We also wish to highlight that the Palestinian civilians are not the only victims of these deplorable acts by Israel. UNRWA's personnel and facilities in the occupied Palestinian territory continue to be badly affected by Israel's malicious acts.

Madam Chair,

4. The negative effects of Israel's military action in Gaza between the end of 2008 and early 2009 continue to exacerbate the livelihood of the inhabitants in this area. With a large population of refugees cramped into a tiny strip of land with no natural resources, the prospects of the people of Gaza were never bright to begin with. Despite the so-called easing announced by the government of Israel in June last year, the illegal blockade imposed by Israel continue to choke the livelihood of the Palestinians in Gaza but has also seriously impaired the UNRWA's reconstruction projects by restricting the movement of persons, essential goods, and construction materials.

5. It is sad to note that although three years had passed since Israel launched its operation “Cast Lead” on Gaza, that the situation in the territory remains unchanged. In this regard, we urge that immediate steps to be taken in accordance with the Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009) and the invocation of relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in order to ensure the free flow of essential and commercial supplies, particularly construction materials, into Gaza, which will alleviate the suffering of the people there and the complete lifting of the blockade on Gaza.

Madam Chair,

6. Given the present dire situation, my delegation is concerned that the UNRWA continues to be under financed as stipulated in the reports of the Commissioner-General and Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the UNRWA. This situation requires international attention in order to prevent further undermining of the Agency’s ability to discharge its mandate.

7. Bearing in mind the importance of the works of UNRWA to the Palestinian people, we wish to reiterate the call contained in the relevant reports, for States that are in a position to do so, to consider contributing or increasing the contribution to UNRWA’s General Fund, to enable the Agency to continue its invaluable works which are essential, until a just and lasting solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees is achieved, including their right to return and to fair compensation, on the basis of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly resolution sixty three years ago, through resolution 194 (III).

8. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the support of the Government and the people of Malaysia to UNRWA and its work. The prevailing status quo is untenable, thus we call on all parties to act honestly in the search of a just and lasting peace, which simultaneously would address the issue of Palestine refugees that the world has been facing for more than six decades.

I thank you, Madam Chair.