



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**STATEMENT BY
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**ON AGENDA ITEM 50: THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR
PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST**

**FOURTH COMMITTEE
69TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 4 NOVEMBER 2014**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the Palestine Refugees in the Near East, for his report submitted to the General Assembly as contained in document A/69/13. Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, on this agenda item.

2. Malaysia commends the unwavering commitment and exceptional work carried out by the Commissioner-General and the staff members of UNRWA, to alleviate the conditions of over 5 million Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. We are encouraged by the Agency's tireless dedication and hard work, in particular given the extreme circumstances and constraints. In this connection, Malaysia expresses its deepest sympathy to their families of UNRWA staff members who were killed in the line of duty.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Following the cessation of the recent hostilities in the Gaza Strip, we had seen the international community standing in solidarity with the Palestinians as they attempted to rebuild from the rubble and destruction caused by the ravages of war. Malaysia, as with many other countries, condemned the shocking and senseless shelling of UNRWA schools in Gaza which had resulted in many fatalities, most of them innocent schoolchildren. At the same time, we remain concerned on allegations that these schools had been used for the storage of weapons.

4. As Gaza begins to recover, we remain concerned on the more vulnerable populations who have no other alternative but to continue seeking shelter under UNRWA camps. My delegation was heartened by the expressions of support for UNRWA in the weeks that followed the ceasefire, including the pledges that were made during last month's conference on reconstruction held in Cairo. Unfortunately, despite this noble and generous support, the blockade on Gaza continues to stifle the livelihoods of those in the Strip, and suppress the much-needed entry of construction materials.

5. In this regard, Malaysia reiterates our long-standing demand for the removal of the blockade on Gaza. My delegation also calls for the lifting of the limitations on movement of UNRWA personnel and goods in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which continue to undermine the Agency's ability to fulfil its responsibilities to the Palestinian refugees. The international community must urge all responsible parties to take urgent measures to remove those limitations placed, in particular on the movement of UNRWA's staff and goods, in keeping with international law and the agreements between UNRWA, the State of Palestine, and Israel.

6. Malaysia is observing closely the developments related to the UN-brokered Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism currently being implemented by the Government of the State of Palestine and the Israeli authorities. We hope that the entry of private construction materials will eventually lead to more progress in advancing the repair of shelters, UN projects and other large scale projects, as well as the emergency stabilization of damaged shelters.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Malaysia continues to be seriously concerned on the humanitarian situation in Syria, including the conditions of the 460,000 Palestinian refugees being assisted by UNRWA. Many of them have been twice displaced, and therefore have twice suffered. The images of distressful scenes in Yarmouk, in photographs released by the Agency earlier this year, continue to resonate in our memories.

8. In this context, the important work of the Agency in Syria deserves the full support of the international community. As the Commissioner-General stated during the Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation last week in Berlin, this illustrates not only what can be achieved for refugees in education and health, but also as a living reminder of what happens when no solution is found to address the underlying political causes of a situation.

Mr. Chairman,

9. In order for UNRWA to undertake its activities effectively, the long-standing shortfall in the regular budget of the Agency must be addressed. Malaysia, as a non-traditional donor, remains firmly committed in providing and facilitating assistance to the Palestinian people through our regular and one-off contributions to UNRWA. As part of

our contribution to the people of Gaza who had suffered during the latest hostilities, the Malaysian Government had pledged RM 330,000 for the most recent UNRWA Gaza Flash Appeal. My delegation reiterates our strong support for the Agency's efforts to mobilize contributions from the international community, and we appeal to member States to continue to support the work of UNRWA by enhancing their contributions to the Agency.

10. The cause of the Palestinian people and the work of the Agency have also received the continued and strong support from the Malaysian private sector and civil society. One recent and noteworthy example of this was the contribution of RM 1 million by CIMB Islamic Bank to the Malaysian Medical Relief Society (MERCY Malaysia) in August this year, following the conflict in Gaza. The donation was channeled to fund MERCY Malaysia's collaborative work with UNRWA, including the provision of immediate medical assistance as well as the assessment of food and nutritional needs of the affected population. The Malaysian charity group Aman Palestin had also managed to collect RM 20 million during a public donation drive carried out in the month of Ramadhan. Thus far, RM 7 million has been disbursed to the Palestinian Government, with the objective of rebuilding homes, hospitals, mosques, and schools.

Mr. Chairman,

11. In conclusion, despite the many challenges in performing its responsibilities, UNRWA has made important contributions towards humanizing the lives of the Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip and the West bank as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria and alleviating their sufferings while they struggle to make it through their daily lives. Malaysia recognizes the vital role of UNRWA in forestalling a more alarming humanitarian disaster, and its work demonstrates in a tangible way the concern and sympathy of the international community. My delegation reiterates that it is the shared responsibility of the international community to assist and provide the vital support required by UNRWA, to effectively fulfill its mandate to the Palestinian refugees.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.