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Secretary-General's bulletin

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

The Secretary-General, pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations", and for the purpose of establishing the organizational structure of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 1/ promulgates the following:

Section 1 General provision

The present bulletin shall apply in conjunction with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5, entitled "Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations".

Section 2 Functions and organization

2.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East:

- (a) Provides relief and works programmes to more than 3.6 million registered refugees through its headquarters in Gaza and Amman and its field offices located in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria;
- (b) Provides educational services, including general and higher education as well as vocational, technical and teacher education to meet the basic educational needs of Palestine refugees and to enhance their educational and employment opportunities, with professional and technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- (c) Provides a wide range of health services, including disease prevention and treatment, health protection and promotion and environmental and family health programmes to meet the basic health needs of Palestine refugees and to improve their overall state of health, with professional and technical assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO);
- (d) Provides basic relief and social services to assist the refugees in meeting their needs and to improve their capacity to become more self-reliant. In this context an important objective is poverty alleviation. In addition, UNRWA seeks to ensure that the basic requirements for survival are made available to the most needy Palestine refugees classified as special hardship cases;
- (e) Works towards reducing Palestine refugees' dependence on material assistance by providing skills training, income generation projects and other community services;
- (f) Develops initiatives in the field of social and economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

2.2 UNRWA is divided into organizational units as described in the present bulletin.

2.3 UNRWA is headed by a Commissioner-General. 2/ The Commissioner-General, the Deputy Commissioner-General and the officials in charge of each organizational unit, in addition to the specific functions set out in the present bulletin, perform the general functions applicable to their positions as set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

2.4 UNRWA is governed by its own financial regulations, established pursuant to paragraph 9 (c) of General Assembly resolution 302 (IV), 3/ and is governed by its own staff regulations and rules, established pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) of the same resolution. 4/

Section 3 Commissioner-General

3.1 The Commissioner-General of UNRWA is accountable to the General Assembly and is authorized to report directly and independently to it, pursuant to Assembly resolution 302 (IV), as indicated in section 3.4 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5.

3.2 The Commissioner-General, who is at the level of Under-Secretary-General, is responsible for all activities of UNRWA as well as its administration; establishes general policy guidelines and priorities for the work of UNRWA; establishes fund-raising strategies and maintains liaison with donors and potential donors to UNRWA funds; directs the activities and operations of the various organizational units at headquarters and in the field responsible for the delivery of services to refugees; plans and coordinates interaction between headquarters and the field offices in respect of the Agency's programmes of assistance and support services; and represents UNRWA in relations with international and local press and other public information channels.

Section 4 Deputy Commissioner-General

4.1 The Commissioner-General, in the performance of his or her activities, is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner-General who carries out specific substantive and administrative assignments as may be decided by the Commissioner-General.

4.2 The Deputy Commissioner-General is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

Section 5 Office of the Commissioner-General

5.1 The Office of the Commissioner-General, located at the Gaza headquarters of UNRWA, provides support to the Commissioner-General and the Deputy Commissioner-General. The Office is headed by the Chef de Cabinet (Director), who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

5.2 The core functions of the Office of the Commissioner-General are as follows:

- (a) Acting as a coordinating office to ensure, in collaboration with other organizational units, that all substantive actions and activities of UNRWA are in conformity with the objectives, directives, policies, procedures and rules governing the Agency;
- (b) Acting as the focal point for coordination between UNRWA and host authorities, donor Governments, other United Nations organs and organizations and inter-governmental bodies;
- (c) Ensuring that matters requiring action by the Commissioner-General are addressed in a timely manner;
- (d) Supporting the Commissioner-General and the Deputy Commissioner-General in the fulfilment of their duties and functions, including any follow-up required on decisions of the Commissioner-General;
- (e) Providing secretariat services to various UNRWA committees and meetings chaired by the Commissioner-General.

Section 6

Liaison Office, New York

6.1 The UNRWA Liaison Office, located at United Nations Headquarters in New York, is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

6.2 The functions of the UNRWA Liaison Office are as follows:

- (a) Representing the Agency's interests and promoting its objectives at United Nations Headquarters with United Nations organs, organizations and related agencies based in New York, including attending meetings and sessions of the above-mentioned bodies;
- (b) Informing UNRWA headquarters of developments that are of concern to the Agency within United Nations organs, organizations and related agencies and within the diplomatic community in New York; providing advice and making recommendations to the Commissioner-General, as appropriate, in the light of those developments;
- (c) Facilitating, as required, the Agency's contacts with the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations funds and programmes based in New York;
- (d) Responding to public information queries relating to UNRWA.

Section 7

Department of Administration and Human Resources

7.1 The Department of Administration and Human Resources, located at the Gaza headquarters of UNRWA, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

7.2 The Department consists of the Human Resources Division, the Compensation and Management Division and the Administration and General Services Division.

7.3 The core functions of the Department are as follows:

- (a) Providing electronic data-processing and communication services, building design and construction services, general office support and general services, including building management, mail, pouch and courier services, travel services, registry and document services and communications at the Gaza and Amman headquarters and at the five field offices;
- (b) Formulating and implementing personnel policies and procedures for international staff Agency-wide and for local staff at headquarters offices, as well as for local staff in the five fields of operation.

Section 8

Department of Finance

8.1 The Department of Finance, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by the Comptroller (Director), who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

8.2 The Department consists of the Accounts Division, the Budget Division, the Treasury Division, the Provident Fund Secretariat and the Supply Division, the latter two located at the Amman headquarters.

8.3 The core functions of the Department are as follows:

- (a) Preparing and controlling the budget;
- (b) Maintaining and publishing accounts;
- (c) Receiving, safeguarding and disbursing all monies;
- (d) Procuring and controlling the inventory of supplies;

(e) Ensuring that sufficient internal controls are in place at all times in all Agency operations;

(f) Overseeing the financial administration aspects of the work of the Provident Fund Secretariat, which is located at the Amman headquarters.

Section 9 Department of Legal Affairs

9.1 The Department of Legal Affairs, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by the Legal Adviser (Director), who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

9.2 The Department consists of the Office of the Legal Adviser, the General Legal Division and the International Law Division. Technical supervision is provided for legal staff in the field offices.

9.3 The core functions of the Department are as follows:

(a) Providing legal advice and assistance to the Commissioner-General and all programmes, departments and field offices, with a view to ensuring that all Agency operations and activities are carried out within an appropriate legal framework;

(b) Providing legal advice on all matters affecting the Agency, including host country agreements, the Agency's legal rights and obligations, its legal status as well as privileges and immunities, its legal relations with Governments and other organizations, the application of international agreements and conventions, contracts for the supply of goods and services, the interpretation of the financial regulations and the staff regulations and rules, the preparation and review of staff appeals and recourse procedures.

Section 10 Audit Office

10.1 The Audit Office, located at the Amman headquarters, is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

10.2 The core functions of the Office are as follows:

(a) Providing an independent oversight function that examines and evaluates financial accounts and internal control systems and conducts investigations into the security and protection of Agency assets;

(b) Auditing the Agency's accounts, including reviewing procedures for the protection of cash, supplies, equipment, buildings and other property to ensure that controls are adequate and are applied;

(c) Inspecting Agency operations for compliance with prescribed procedures and standards;

(d) Investigating the loss of Agency cash and loss of or damage to supplies or other property.

Section 11 External Relations Office

11.1 The External Relations Office, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

11.2 The core functions of the Office are as follows:

(a) Implementing fund-raising strategies established by the Commissioner-General, mobilizing resources and advocating the importance of UNRWA and its mandate to the international community;

(b) Serving as the focal point, in close cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner-General, for the Agency's relations with

donors;

(c) Liaising for the purpose of fund-raising with donors and other Governments and with intergovernmental, political and other bodies concerned with Palestine refugees;

(d) Providing advice on and managing fund-raising strategies and dealings with donors and potential donors to Agency funds;

(e) Obtaining donor support and coordinating, effecting and monitoring projects;

(f) Effecting and developing Agency fund-raising activities with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Section 12

Public Information Office

12.1 The Public Information Office, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

12.2 The core functions of the Office are as follows:

(a) Handling the Agency's relations with the media and providing information to the general public;

(b) Managing relations with the media;

(c) Producing and issuing press releases, written publications and audio-visual and other material as well as developing and updating the UNRWA web site in order to inform world opinion, United Nations organs, organizations and related agencies, donor Governments, refugees and staff about Agency operations;

(d) Arranging visits to refugee camps and Agency installations;

(e) Providing internal translation services;

(f) Responding to routine informational queries;

(g) Providing technical support and direction to the public information offices in the field.

Section 13

Policy Analysis Unit

13.1 The Policy Analysis Unit, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by a Chief who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

13.2 The Unit assists the Agency in developing policies and in making informed and appropriate decisions through research and analysis, in close cooperation with other organizational units and substantive programmes.

Section 14

Office of the Director of Operations

14.1 The Office of the Director of Operations, located at the Gaza headquarters, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

14.2 The Office assists the Director of Operations in coordinating, under the guidance of the Commissioner-General, UNRWA activities in the field, including overall management of the operational and administrative aspects of UNRWA field operations.

Section 15

Department of Relief and Social Services

15.1 The Department of Relief and Social Services, located at the Amman headquarters, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

15.2 The Department consists of the Office of the Director of Relief and Social Services, the Relief Services Division and the Social Services Office.

15.3 The core functions of the Department of Relief and Social Services are as follows:

- (a) Advising the Commissioner-General on policies for the provision of relief and social services;
- (b) Planning and providing technical supervision for the implementation of the relief and social services programme;
- (c) Maintaining a record of refugees registered with the Agency and their eligibility for Agency services;
- (d) Coordinating the activities of voluntary agencies working with UNRWA.

Section 16

Department of Education

16.1 The Department of Education, located at the Amman headquarters, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

16.2 The Department consists of the Office of the Director of Education, the General Education Division, the Vocational and Technical Education Division, the Institute of Education and the Educational Planning and Management Division.

16.3 The core functions of the Department of Education are as follows:

- (a) Advising the Commissioner-General on policies for the provision of education in conformity with the UNRWA agreement with UNESCO;
- (b) Planning, supervising and evaluating the implementation of educational services covering elementary, preparatory and secondary education (Lebanon only), as well as vocational, technical and teacher education;
- (c) Administering a limited university scholarship programme.

Section 17

Department of Health

17.1 The Department of Health, located at the Amman headquarters, is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

17.2 The Department consists of the Office of the Director of Health, the Medical Care Services Division, the Family Health Division, the Disease Prevention and Control Division and the Environmental Health Division.

17.3 The core functions of the Department of Health are as follows:

- (a) Advising the Commissioner-General on policies for the provision of health services in conformity with the UNRWA agreement with WHO;
- (b) Planning and providing technical guidance for the implementation and supervision of a comprehensive health programme including medical care, family health, disease prevention and control and environmental health services.

Section 18

Field offices

18.1 There are five UNRWA field offices, located in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and each field office is headed by a Director who is accountable to the Commissioner-General.

18.2 The responsibilities and functions of each field office are as follows:

- (a) Directing the implementation of UNRWA programmes and services;
- (b) Ensuring that the operations and services of UNRWA are provided in accordance with policies and directives from UNRWA headquarters;
- (c) Advising and making recommendations to the Commissioner-General on matters affecting UNRWA operations in the field and providing reports on the progress of work and on particular aspects requiring the Commissioner-General's attention;
- (d) Providing advice and assistance to the Commissioner-General on relations with government authorities and governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- (e) Through the Field Director, in consultation with the Commissioner-General, maintaining harmonious working relations with UNRWA staff in the field and ensuring that corrective action is taken as necessary to meet this objective.

Section 19

Committees

19.1 The following UNRWA committees provide advice and assistance to the Commissioner-General in exercising his responsibilities as chief executive officer of the Agency:

- (a) Audit Committee;
- (b) Consultative Committee;
- (c) Executive Committee;
- (d) Human Resources Committee;
- (e) Management Committee;
- (f) Provident Fund Committee.

19.2 In addition, there is a Headquarters Contracts Committee vested with the authority delegated to it by the Commissioner-General to award contracts and to ensure that all applicable regulations and rules are complied with and that contract proposals are overall in accordance with the Agency's best interests. Similar responsibilities, at a lower level of delegated authority, are performed by field office staff and committees.

Section 20

Final provisions

20.1 The present bulletin shall enter into force on 1 March 2000.

20.2 The Secretary-General's bulletin of 7 December 1995, entitled "Functions and organization of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East" (ST/SGB/Organization, Section: UNRWA), is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Kofi A. Annan
Secretary-General

Notes

1/ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations under General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, in accordance with Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Agency's mandate has been renewed periodically and was extended to 30 June 2002 by the Assembly in its resolution 53/46 of 3 December 1998. Under its mandate, as set out in paragraph 7 of resolution 302 (IV), the scope of the Agency's activities is mainly humanitarian in nature, and includes a development component carried out through its three main programmes, namely, education, health and relief and social services. In subsequent years the Agency's mandate has been expanded by the Assembly, which has added other activities to its traditional programmes. Certain development activities were added. In this context, paragraph 5 of Assembly resolution 48/40 A of 10 December 1993 called upon the Agency "to make a decisive contribution towards giving a fresh impetus to the economic and social stability of the occupied territories".

2/ The Commissioner-General is appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with Governments represented in the UNRWA Advisory Commission in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 302 (IV). The Advisory Commission, composed of representatives of Governments, including contributing Governments, was established under the same resolution to advise and assist the Commissioner-General. The Commissioner-General reports directly and independently to the Assembly, pursuant to its resolution 302 (IV), as indicated in section 3.4 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/5. Under paragraph 21 of resolution 302 (IV), the Commissioner-General is required to submit an annual report on the work of UNRWA, including an audit of funds. The Agency's budget is presented to the Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and is funded mainly by voluntary contributions from Governments and international organizations.

3/ UNRWA is governed by its own financial regulations, which were established on 8 May 1950 by the Commissioner-General in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, pursuant to paragraph 9 (c) of General Assembly resolution 302 (IV). They were revised and amended on 28 November 1991.

4/ Pursuant to paragraph 9 (b) of General Assembly resolution 302 (IV), the Commissioner-General selects and appoints UNRWA staff in accordance with general arrangements made in agreement with the Secretary-General, including such Staff Rules and Regulations of the United Nations that the Commissioner-General and the Secretary-General shall agree are applicable, and to the extent possible utilizes the facilities and assistance of the Secretary-General. UNRWA is staffed by a limited number of international staff members in posts funded through the regular budget of the United Nations, and by more than 22,000 locally recruited staff. UNRWA staff regulations and rules have been established for both international and locally recruited staff. UNRWA international staff participate in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. A provident fund has been established for the purpose of providing benefits to eligible local staff members upon their separation from UNRWA, especially upon retirement.