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**Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of the
Palestine Refugees in the Near East:
Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA**

Working Group II

**“Community Development and Refugees:
Infrastructure, Environment, Housing and Social Development”**

Discussion Paper

**Chair: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
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Community Development and Refugees: Infrastructure, Environment, Housing and Social Development

I. Executive Summary

The report defines community development as the improvement of the Palestine refugees' livelihoods and living conditions through the upgrading of their physical and social environments. It demands a combination of strategic and practical interventions undertaken by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in partnership with host authorities, the refugee community and other stakeholders, that are sustainable over time, from a social, economic and environmental perspective. Community development does not affect the refugees' status and rights under relevant United Nations resolutions.

The objectives of this discussion paper are:

- to address short and medium term challenges facing refugees
- to provide policy and operational recommendations

The paper targets camp communities in relation to physical infrastructure and all refugees in relation to housing and social infrastructure. In both respects, the challenges are significant:

- **Environment:** Lack of resources and the pressure of demographic growth, combined with restrictions on camp expansion and poor solid waste management and, in some cases, sanitation problems have led to a deterioration of physical and environmental conditions, posing hazards to the health and welfare of the refugees.
- **Shelter:** Lack of resources (and uncertainties about UNRWA's budget continuity) and lack of space for improvement and expansion have contributed to an overall deterioration in conditions.
- **Social infrastructure:** Whilst standards of Agency facilities generally compare favorably with host authorities, access to basic services remains restricted for some refugees given UNRWA's longstanding eligibility criteria and financial constraints. For those living in more remote informal refugee gatherings, and for all refugees in times of conflict, physical access to UNRWA facilities is difficult. In addition, social infrastructure facilities suffer from overcrowding, poor maintenance and understaffing.
- **Social development:** Despite improvements in involving refugees and community based organizations (CBOs) as partners in planning processes, key themes such as community empowerment, participation, and local governance have not been fully implemented due to a variety of constraints.

UNRWA's new Medium-Term Plan (MTP) provides guiding principles and lists practical medium term objectives in this and other sectors of the Agency's activities. As such,

it represents a significant step towards coherence in investment planning. Further consultation with donors and host governments is required to assess, prioritize and plan for new programmes included in UNRWA's MTP.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Working Group II Chair), the United States of America (Vice-Chair) and Switzerland (Rapporteur) hope that this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by UNRWA and enhanced support for its work to the greatest extent possible, including infrastructure improvements and social development.

In support of UNRWA and the refugee community, various interrelated recommendations are proposed.

General recommendations:

- Work towards equity in access to services (education, health, social, shelter, infrastructure) amongst refugees, and equity in services quality between refugees and non-refugees. This will require an effective system of data-based monitoring and planning to identify gaps and record progress.
- While ensuring that UNRWA remains the main actor responsible for services, work towards the strengthening of complementarity, through negotiated partnerships with all service providers, including host authorities, and engage refugees in the planning, implementation and management of projects.

Specific recommendations:

These recommendations are targeted at principal stakeholders individually and as a group.

To the International Community:

a) Donors:

- Expand the funding base of UNRWA and of its partners in order to meet the challenges and the gaps in services provided, and permit the strengthening of UNRWA.
- Coordinate donor actions in order to maximise comparative advantage and the efficient use of financial and technical resources.
- Support the establishment of a data-based planning and monitoring system on service provision, service use, and service quality in UNRWA.

b) All Partners:

- Promote social enterprise, which may include new partnerships with CBOs such as community contracts for shelter rehabilitation, solid waste management, and social infrastructure maintenance.
- Develop a pro-active communications policy to deal with the media and the refugees themselves based on agreed themes, including the full implications of rehabilitation and pro-development policies.
- Establish mechanisms for improved coordination amongst partners in order to identify financial and human resources and tap new funding sources.

To Host Authorities:

- Continue to provide, when and where possible, specific services to the refugees.
- Create joint planning mechanisms with UNRWA in order to maximize the advantages of UNRWA-provided infrastructure with respect to host authority plans and priorities, and to address where possible the unmet basic needs of the refugees.
- Address the legal obstacles faced by the refugees in accessing labour markets and resources by undertaking necessary measures wherever applicable.
- In cooperation with UNRWA, establish a list of persons displaced from British Mandate Palestine by the 1948 conflict, who did not meet the eligibility criteria for Palestine refugee status determined by the Agency. Those include *inter alia* members of some nomadic tribes and children born to refugee women married to men not registered as refugees.

To UNRWA:

- Establish a data-based management and socio-economic profiling system of specific refugee types (users and non-users) in order to facilitate prioritisation, guarantee complementarities and measure impacts of interventions.
- Create a systematic basis for evaluating pilot projects with a view to drawing lessons.
- Further engage national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and CBOs as operational partners.

II. Methodology

This discussion paper was drafted in line with the provisions of a Terms of Reference document agreed upon by the members of Working Group II. Its compilation is based on the following activities and sources of information:

Desktop research including UNRWA reports and publications, published and unpublished research documents and internet sources.

Field research including visits to refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Field work included direct observation of conditions and interviews with refugees, refugee NGOs and CBOs and UNRWA field staff. Due to the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank and Gaza at the time of the study, field work research could not be carried out in these two fields of operations.

Semi-structured interviews with host country officials and UNRWA staff at various levels from the Departments of Education, Health, Relief and Social Services, and of Operational Technical Services.

Brainstorming sessions with Jordanian and other Arab host authority officials at the Department of Palestinian Affairs (Jordan), during which issues raised in the report were discussed at length.

Working group meetings and feedback. These included five formal and informal meetings held in Amman with varying degrees of participation by host authorities, donors, UNRWA, other UN agencies and international NGOs. Presentations were made with both verbal and written feedback to draft reports.

III. Issues at Stake and Themes Addressed

A. Definition

This paper defines community development as the improvement of the Palestine refugees' livelihoods and living conditions through the upgrading of their physical and social environments. It demands a combination of strategic and practical interventions undertaken by UNRWA in partnership with the host authorities, the refugee community and other stakeholders, which can be sustained socially, economically and environmentally over time. Community development does not affect the refugees' status and rights under relevant United Nations resolutions.

B. Objectives

- *Address short–medium term challenges:* Raise the challenges facing the refugees in the short and medium terms given the current political and financial context, highlighting the resources demanded to meet those challenges.
- *Provide strategic and operational recommendations:* Explore the way forward and offer practical recommendations for UNRWA and other stakeholders with respect to tasks, roles and priorities in community development.

C. Context and focus

1. *Basic data on the Palestine Refugees:* While the number of refugees registered with UNRWA is well-known, i.e. 4.1 million in December 2003¹, the overall number of users is more difficult to quantify, since not all the registered refugees reside in the region or use UNRWA's services. The number of regular users of medical services may be the closest to that number. According to the Agency's Health Department, that number currently reaches 3.3 million, i.e. 70 percent of the 4.1 registered refugees region-wide².

Camp refugees account for 32 percent of the total number of registered refugees. They are typically believed to be one of the poorest groups in all five fields of operation, yet camp residents account for only half of UNRWA's registered special hardship cases, the "poorest of the poor," who qualify for relief assistance on strict financial and sociological eligibility criteria³. Of the 68 percent of refugees living outside camps, the report will only consider those refugees living in identified, delineated communities outside official refugee camps. For the purpose of the report we will label those communities "informal refugee gatherings."

2. *Spatial framework:* For all issues related to physical infrastructure, the paper is restricted to the camp communities, as communities living outside camps fall under the municipalities' authority for such matters. For all issues related to social infrastructure

(education, health facilities, CBOs) and housing, the report addresses all refugee communities.

D. Norms, Obstacles and Challenges

The status of community building (physical and social infrastructure, shelter and social development) varies among host countries with significant local variations. Moreover, camp refugees and refugees residing in informal refugee gatherings face very different problems.

With regard to infrastructure and shelter, UNRWA has developed its own norms taking into account international and host country standards. However, given recurrent financial and physical constraints (particularly within camp boundaries), UNRWA has found itself unable to apply its norms across all areas.

One can identify three major types of difficulties faced on a daily basis by the refugee communities:

- Access problems (legal, administrative, physical, etc.).
- Unsatisfactory physical and social infrastructure and shelter conditions (with significant host authority variations).
- Inadequate or substandard financial and institutional support for CBOs and other kinds of refugee initiatives.

The following subsections highlight the way each of these problems affects the refugees' livelihoods, and reviews their impacts on refugee communities. When relevant, comparisons are drawn between camp communities and informal refugee gatherings.

i. Physical infrastructure and environment in refugee camps

Since their establishment in the late 1940's, camps have symbolized the refugees' right of return and the expression of their humanitarian plight. While some refugees have been able to create economic prosperity amidst crowded and difficult camp conditions, many others have remained mired in poverty⁴.

Camp refugees are suffering from substandard physical infrastructure and poor environmental conditions resulting from the combination of high population growth, restrictions on camp expansion and lack of sufficient resources.

Buildings and shelters have often been extended horizontally and vertically, thus narrowing the alleyways and preventing the establishment of playgrounds, green areas and recreational facilities. Moreover, overcrowding and a general lack of maintenance with respect to buildings and shelters have led to poorer housing and unsatisfactory environmental conditions in terms of ventilation, sunlight, humidity, temperature, storage, and privacy. The resulting health hazards are compounded by a solid waste management system widely judged to be insufficient.

Water, sewage and electricity are available in nearly all camps, although supplies of electricity and drinking water are unpredictable. In recent years, the combined efforts of UNRWA and host authorities have led to significant upgrades in the camps' physical

infrastructure. In Jordan, for instance, camps have been included by the authorities in their Social Productivity Programme (SPP) launched in 1999. Sewage and drainage networks and water supply networks were upgraded in 10 of the country's 13 camps⁵. In addition, progress in road pavement has been achieved, but is constrained by space limitations in the camps. In Lebanon refugees face a dramatic situation, as camp rehabilitation schemes are officially considered tantamount to resettlement and thus to be avoided. Accordingly, sewerage systems are often exposed and roads need paving. In the camps of southern Lebanon, access to construction material is still severely restricted.

Similarly dramatic is the situation of the West Bank and Gaza refugee camps due to the deterioration of the camps' physical infrastructure since the beginning of the *Intifada* in September 2000. In Rafah Camp (Gaza Strip), electricity and water networks as well as communal facilities and nearly 1000 shelters, housing over 9200 refugees, have been destroyed or damaged beyond repair⁶.

ii. Shelter Conditions

Most shelters have been improved by the refugees themselves, with UNRWA providing financial and technical support only to certain special hardship cases. Since the early 1990's, technical standards applied to individual shelters within UNRWA's regular rehabilitation programme have been considerably upgraded, from mere concrete temporary "core" blocs devoid of any specific equipment, to shelter units including at least one room, a cooking area and sanitary facilities soundly constructed with good natural lighting and ventilation. The Agency is now promoting an "assisted self-help" approach for selected shelter rehabilitation projects⁷.

Since 2001, UNRWA has begun "camp-level approach" housing schemes that seek to improve shelter status and the overall environment of a community. Examples are the Neirab/Ein Al Tal rehabilitation project in Syria and the Jenin Camp reconstruction project in the West Bank. These projects are implemented in close coordination with host authorities and the refugees themselves.

However, recent experience indicates that technical and qualitative improvements handled on an individual basis have contributed little to the overall improvement of conditions and livelihoods in the community for the following reasons:

- Camp refugees and UNRWA field staff agree that shelter and housing improvements are offset by the dismal environmental conditions outlined above.
- Beneficiaries of UNRWA's regular shelter rehabilitation programme are restricted to some special hardship cases, which represent only 6 percent of the overall refugee population.
- Due to lack of space within camp boundaries and funding scarcities, it was not always possible to extend the shelters beyond the initial "core" blocs. Accordingly, overcrowding in shelters is still prevalent: around 30 percent of households have three or more persons per room, with regional variations of up to 40 percent⁸.

- Funds available for the shelter rehabilitation programme have not enabled UNRWA to cover all the needs. On average, 600 shelters have been upgraded per year whereas the number of SHC shelters in need of replacement or major maintenance is estimated at 14,700 Agency-wide (MTP-Housing and Camp Upgrading Programme).
- The need to provide new shelters to the 16,000 refugees made homeless following Israeli military incursions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since 2000, has only added pressure on the Agency (MTP-Relief and Social Services Programme, par.1.3).

Informal refugee gatherings generally benefit from better housing conditions than the official camp residents, especially with regard to availability of space (see definition on page 5). However, this is not always the case. Some of the informal gatherings are also affected by overcrowding and substandard, unhealthy environmental conditions, such as in the “Gaza Buildings” (formerly Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) facilities) in the vicinity of the Shatila camp (Beirut, Lebanon). In other parts of the region, informal gatherings are makeshift locations where most shelters are made of mud and corrugated iron sheets.

For special hardship cases, access to UNRWA’s shelter rehabilitation programme is difficult, not least because the Agency’s eligibility regulations state that beneficiaries living outside of camps must possess titles to the dwelling/land they occupy; if not, their shelters may be considered only for repair⁹. Few refugees meet this requirement area-wide; while in Lebanon, ownership of land by refugees is banned by law.

iii. Social Infrastructure: Education, Health, Relief and Social Services

a. *Eligibility barriers to access basic services*

Eligibility for basic services has, from the outset, been denied to those needy Palestine refugee applicants who could not prove conformity to the instructions included in UNRWA’s operational definition of the “Palestine Refugee”. Until 1992, these instructions included need and residence in one of UNRWA’s operational areas¹⁰. However, it is important to note that since UNRWA registration is voluntary, the number and socio-economic profile of non-registered refugees has never been established.

b. *Financial and physical access to basic services*

UNRWA’s chronic financial constraints have affected access to services. For instance, the Agency admits that enrolment rates for the special hardship cases programme are limited by its financial capabilities. Accordingly, UNRWA has been unable to provide relief services to some very poor refugees entitled in principle to that programme¹¹.

Refugees living in informal gatherings encounter specific physical difficulties in reaching UNRWA or host authority service facilities. For example, there is no UNRWA health clinic to serve 16,000 refugees living in an informal gathering in Aqaba, Jordan. In Lebanon, informal refugee gatherings often have no schools or clinics. Area-wide, problems of physical access are acute when informal refugee gatherings are located in remote areas. Refugees rely on medical teams visiting twice or thrice a week or have to cross long distances by their own means to reach the nearest health facility. Reaching facilities is also a problem for children who cannot afford public transport fares.

Access problems are particularly difficult in times of conflict, e.g. during Israel's Gaza invasion in 1956, the Lebanon wars (1975-1991), and the two *Intifadas* in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (1987-1994 and since 2000). Surveys conducted in the context of the current *Intifada* indicate that both refugees and non-refugees have been affected by Israel's closure policy when trying to reach schools (52 percent and 55 percent, respectively) or place of work (67 percent and 55 percent, respectively). As a rule, inhabitants of villages (including refugees) have generally found it more difficult to reach those locations (over 70 percent) than city and camp dwellers (around 50 percent for both categories)¹².

c. Substandard social infrastructure

Acute problems have resulted from financial and space-related restrictions on the vertical and horizontal expansion of UNRWA's facilities in the camps. The number of primary health care facilities has not increased over the last two decades despite population growth and increased demands on the Agency's services. Although local and international NGOs narrow the resulting gap in the delivery of medical services, pressure on UNRWA's health facilities remains high. UNRWA's schools suffer from acute overcrowding and the percentage operating on a double-shift basis is significantly higher than in host authority schools (for instance, 77 percent vs. 21 percent in Gaza and 93 percent vs. 15 percent in Jordan). Moreover, UNRWA buildings and facilities are often dilapidated, in need of repair and often lack the space to accommodate additional facilities needed to adapt to new curricula adopted by the host authorities, in schools or vocational training centres, and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities.

Problems faced by informal refugee gatherings also include technically unsuitable social infrastructure facilities. This is especially true where UNRWA premises outside camps are often rented and not designed for the specific purpose of schools, clinics, etc.

Both in official camps and in informal gatherings, UNRWA's services suffer from severe understaffing and heavy workloads. For instance, the ratio of patients per doctor is significantly higher in UNRWA than in host authority clinics. The average number of consultations per doctor per day is more than 100 in the former versus 30-60 in the latter. The same holds true for educational facilities: the pupil/teacher ratio in elementary schools area-wide reaches 35 in UNRWA schools, compared with 22 in host authority schools (MTP-Education Programme). Working conditions for teachers have deteriorated and are below those at host authority schools. As a result, staff morale is low, UNRWA has difficulty in filling key vacant posts and turnover of competent teaching staff is high. The Agency's schools also have insufficient numbers of support staff, including laboratory technicians, librarians, attendants, etc. This type of work often has to be undertaken by the teachers themselves adding further to their workload.

Yet, despite all these problems, UNRWA's educational and health services still compare favourably with the host authorities' in terms of cost-effectiveness and global efficiency of programmes.

UNRWA staff and refugees alike believe that the growing gap between refugee needs (as reflected in both natural population growth and increasing costs of providing services) and the level of funding and space available for new facilities and shelter is leading to the steady deterioration of UNRWA's otherwise cost-effective social infrastructure.

This raises several pertinent questions for all UNRWA stakeholders:

- How can the international community ensure that support and levels of funding keep pace with rising levels of usage of agency services and the increasing demand for shelter, physical and social infrastructure and relief needs? In the absence of significant new funds for UNRWA, can the current levels of services carry the additional capacity given that some services are already understaffed?
- How and where will the additional numbers of refugees be housed given current regulations on camps' land? To what extent will UNRWA and the local authorities be able to control the vertical expansion of shelters in camps and enforce current standards?
- Does investment in existing physical and social infrastructure and land planning take into account future demand? Currently, UNRWA possesses detailed socio-economic information on just one category of refugees - the special hardship cases, who constitute a mere six percent of the total registered refugee population (247,000 people).

iv. Social Development

While UNRWA and other stakeholders have in the past advocated community empowerment and participation for its social development centres (women's programme centres and community rehabilitation centres), they remain under-funded and the Agency's social development unit understaffed. In addition, refugees have for decades opposed developmental schemes in the name of the preservation of the "right of return" and have considered UNRWA's services an entitlement pending the implementation of that right, which may have reinforced the Agency's relief approach.

Nonetheless, refugees have come to adopt more flexible attitudes toward the notions of development and participation. Increasing numbers of refugees believe that improvement of their living conditions, especially through the rehabilitation of the camps' physical and shelter infrastructure up to host country standards, does not have any direct bearing on their right of return and does not constitute permanent resettlement.

Host authorities have tacitly endorsed this stance by implementing, or helping to implement, rehabilitation schemes in and outside the camps (e.g., UNRWA's Peace Implementation Programme since the mid-1990's, the Jenin housing project in the West Bank, the Neirab project in Syria, and the Social Productivity Programme in Jordan). The Arab League officially supported this approach in 2002 when it called on UNRWA to

coordinate with local authorities to carry out projects relating to infrastructure in the refugee camps.

In a similar vein, refugees have endorsed UNRWA's decision to entrust them with the management of CBOs established by the Agency (youth, women and community-based rehabilitation activity centres). On their own, or with the support of the host authority, some CBOs have proven effective in establishing links with local and international NGOs, attracting more than US\$3 million in grants and in-kind assistance during 2002-2003 (MTP-Relief and Social Services Programme).

At the same time, other CBOs have languished without strong local or international support. In Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank, refugees participate actively in community development through Camp Services Committees established by the local authorities. These committees assist UNRWA and host authorities in rehabilitating the camps' infrastructure; in this way, they express their intentions to play a more significant role in handling all matters concerning their future as a community. This trend towards greater voluntary involvement of refugees in communal affairs has not yet been given enough consideration and adequate financial support by the international community. Community building implies that local communities are enabled both to increase control over the social, economic and environmental conditions that affect their lives, and to influence governmental policies meant to improve their livelihoods.

IV. Consolidated Recommendations

To meet the challenges outlined above, UNRWA has put forward a Medium-Term Plan (MTP). This plan provides guiding principles and lists practical medium term objectives and related projects – a significant step towards coherence in investment planning. Consultation with donors and host governments is required to assess, prioritize and plan for new programmes included in UNRWA's MTP.

In support of UNRWA and the refugee community, the following interrelated recommendations are addressed to various parties:

General Recommendations

Work towards equity:

1. With regard to access to services amongst all refugees. Identify refugees who currently do not have equitable access to education, health, shelter, social and physical infrastructure services, to target service delivery to them and to monitor the impact of the services delivered on refugees' living conditions.
2. With regard to service quality between refugees and host country populations. Ensure that basic services of equal quality as those available for host authority populations are provided to the refugees, despite the fact that UNRWA's social infrastructure facilities are already overused and understaffed compared to host authority facilities.

3. Move to data-based planning and monitoring of service delivery, service use, and service quality aiming at the development of a database on equitable access to services. Its purpose is to help identify, in all areas of intervention, priorities for the investment of human and financial resources during the planning process and to measure progress towards the achievement of equity in service access and service quality.

Work towards complementarities in the delivery of services:

4. Complementarity entails three related considerations:
 - a) Negotiate partnerships between UNRWA and other stakeholders based on an assessment of comparative advantage and mutual understanding of goals and responsibilities. This would serve to widen the scope of available operational options. Problem-driven, spatially-defined action plans aimed at hardware development (water, shelter systems) could be subsumed within larger scale policy-driven, strategic plans leading to sustainable partnerships and enhanced empowerment of the refugee community as a whole.
 - b) Ensure that UNRWA remains the principal stakeholder for service provision working with host authorities and refugee communities. While maintaining its central role in the provision of basic services to the Palestine refugees, UNRWA should operate as a catalyst for social and economic development through contractual partnerships, engagement of informal enterprises and promotion of self-help, cooperative management and CBO social initiatives.
 - c) Work towards engaging the refugee community as a fully-fledged stakeholder. UNRWA, host authorities and donors should assist CBOs in building assets which are to contribute directly to the refugees' livelihoods, and vice-versa.

Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations aim at implementing the general strategic recommendations outline above. They are targeted to each of the three principal stakeholders individually and as a group.

To the International Community

a) Donors

5. Expand the funding base of UNRWA and of its partners in order to meet the challenges mentioned in this paper and reduce the gaps in services provided. In addition, the human resources of UNRWA need to be enhanced.

6. Coordinate donor activity in order to maximize comparative advantages and efficient use of donor resources according to donors' interests and capacities.
7. Support the establishment by UNRWA of a data-based planning and monitoring system on service provision, service use, and service quality.

b) All Partners

8. Promote social enterprise around shelter, environmental health, infrastructure and services as a means of improving living conditions and targeting poverty. The following steps may be considered:
 - a) For housing improvements, develop a range of options with levels of self-help and related costs and loans relative to sanitation, superstructure, space addition and environmental improvement. Projects should include a requirement that contractors hire a given percentage of refugees.
 - b) For management and maintenance of services and utilities, define parameters for engaging alternative partners on voluntary and contracted bases, particularly in the refugee community sector. Parameters would include skills, complementarities of interests and organisational capacities.
 - c) Explore, where possible, alternative land tenure models outside of individual property titles, for example community leaseholds, land-trusts, co-operatives, etc.
9. Develop a pro-active communications policy which ensures consistency across the region in dealing with media and other outside parties based on an agreed understanding of key messages, including rehabilitation of camp infrastructure and individual shelters, and pro-development policies promoting such programmatic concepts as empowerment and participation. Criteria will also need to be developed for engaging other UN and national development agencies.
10. Establish mechanisms for improved coordination amongst partners in order to identify financial and human resources and tap new funding sources. This exercise could be conducted at the host authority level through public seminars and consensus-building workshops to tackle the host authority's specific and regional issues.

To Host Authorities

11. Continue to provide, when and where possible, specific services to the refugees. The physical rehabilitation projects carried out by the Jordanian authorities since the late 1990's are a case in point.
12. Create channels of joint planning mechanisms with UNRWA in order to maximise the advantages of UNRWA-provided infrastructure with respect to host authority plans and priorities, and to address, where possible, the unmet basic needs of the refugees.

13. Address the legal obstacles faced by the refugees in accessing labour markets and resources, by undertaking necessary measures wherever applicable.
14. In cooperation with UNRWA, establish a list of persons displaced from British Mandate Palestine by the 1948 conflict, who did not meet the eligibility criteria for Palestine refugee status determined by the Agency. Those include, *inter alia*, members of some nomadic tribes and needy children born to refugee women married to men not registered as refugees.

To UNRWA

15. Establish a database and socio-economic profiling system of specific refugee types (users and non-users) and move to data-based monitoring and rational planning designed to prioritise investment and enable resources to be managed equitably over the long-term. The following such schemes could be carried out:
 - a) Undertake a stocktaking of refugee communities affected by problems of access to UNRWA and/or host authority services through participatory approaches, possibly in coordination with local authorities and NGOs.
 - b) Build on current initiatives of camp profiling, with related characteristics differentiated *qualitatively* in terms of spatial plans, density, quality of services, vulnerability to risk and socio-economic status. This can be the basis for developing appropriate standards and action plans linked to need and feasibility.
 - c) Measure the positive and negative impacts of interventions on different categories of users (e.g. women, children, the elderly, disabled, etc.) that may tip the balance of interventions in favour of one group over another.
16. Create a systematic basis for the evaluation of pilot projects in the area of major rehousing or camp redevelopment schemes with a view to drawing lessons. External evaluation is needed to assess the impacts of pilot projects and identify those elements that can be applied to other UNRWA programmes such as the links between community participation, social enterprise, shelter and infrastructure, the environment and the various socio-economic impacts of the projects. Pilot projects to be evaluated include:
 - The Neirab/Ein Al Tal rehabilitation project in Syria
 - The Khan Eshieh/Khan Danoun projects in Syria
 - The Jenin reconstruction project in the West Bank
 - The re-housing projects in the Tel El-Sultan area in Gaza

Lessons could also be learnt from Jordan's Social Productivity Programme which has targeted the physical infrastructure of refugee camps.

17. Promote intersectoral initiatives. For instance, integrate environmental awareness and educational programmes amongst children and others in the areas of sanitation, conservation and health; use housing and infrastructure to generate employment and enterprise, etc.
18. Engage skilled NGOs for tracking, channelling and meeting the needs of refugees, particularly where they are located in informal refugee gatherings. NGOs could also be engaged for various types of tasks in the field of community empowerment, including building the capacity of CBOs as operational partners¹³.

End Notes

¹ UNRWA's definition of a Palestine Refugee states that "a Palestine Refugee shall mean any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict". For various reasons, UNRWA has also registered the descendants of Palestine refugees born after 14 May 1948 as well as deprived non-refugee categories who lost their means of livelihood as a result of the 1947-1948 conflict ('economic refugees' or 'other claimants') and their descendants. These categories include the Frontier Villagers in the West Bank and members of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.

² See Draft – Medium-Term Plan-Health, pp.10-11. According to UNRWA's Education Department, 51 percent of all (in camp and outside camp) registered refugee children attend UNRWA schools area-wide.

³ Special hardship cases account for 6 percent of the total number of registered refugees overall, i.e. 247,000 people. Eligibility for enrolment in the special hardship cases programme requires that no male adult in the household between the ages of 19 and 60 years be capable of earning a living and that the total combined family regular monthly income from all sources does not exceed two-thirds of the remuneration of an UNRWA area staff member Grade 1, Step 1 with the same number of dependents. In addition, applicants for the special hardship programme must belong to one of the following categories: female-headed households, elderly, medically unable to work, dependants of imprisoned, orphans and exceptional cases. Ultimately, the Agency's financial limitations dictate enrolment rates.

⁴ See FAFO's report "Finding means" (2000) and the University of Geneva report, "Palestinian Public Perceptions on their Living Conditions", vol. VII, to be released in June 2004. These documents indicate that on average, the camp refugee population have less access to the labour market and are poorer than non-camp communities.

⁵ This total includes three camps recognized as such only by the government. UNRWA recognizes 10 camps. Ten out of the thirteen camps were covered by the SPP.

⁶ The total number of destroyed refugee shelters in Gaza, at 30 April 2004, stood at 1542, with almost 14,000 refugees made homeless.

⁷ Through the assisted self help approach, UNRWA provides partial financial and technical assistance to enable beneficiaries of its shelter rehabilitation programme to undertake the work themselves. It may also mean refugee cost-sharing of shelter rehabilitation. The assisted self-help approach is used for "finishing works" such as electricity, plumbing, plastering, tiling, doors and windows. The self-help approach is used to varying degrees in the Fields; quite extensively in the West Bank, where all SHC housing during the past ten years has been built using this approach, to lesser degrees in other Fields. Overall, the self-help approach was used for 51 percent of housing reconstruction and/or repairs during the period 1993-2003.

⁸ FAFO: Finding Means: UNRWA's financial situation and the living conditions of Palestinian refugees, Summary Report 2003, p. 28.

⁹ In Gaza, one of the criteria for eligibility is based on need for both camp and non-camp residents, rather than title ownership.

¹⁰ In 1993, the initial requirements of need and formal residency were lifted. This change in the Agency's eligibility rules has enabled close to a thousand never-before-registered persons to register, although it is doubtful whether it has resulted in the inclusion of all those refugees - and their descendants - who were previously excluded from UNRWA's definition on such or other grounds; for instance, members of nomadic tribes (and their descendants), who could not prove they had lost their normal place of residence as a result of the 1948 conflict. It should also be borne in mind that some refugees refused to be registered with the Agency because they viewed reliance on humanitarian aid as affecting their dignity and pride.

¹¹ In 2004, for instance, increase in enrolment rate will be at 2.5 percent while it was forecast at 3.5 percent.

¹² See Palestinian Public Perceptions on their Living Conditions", vol. VI, covering the period July-December 2003; University of Geneva; report available in: www.dartmonitor.org.

¹³ The UNRWA - Bisan (a Palestinian NGO based in Ramallah) joint project, whereby Bisan was asked to train the personnel of several Women Activity Centres and of Services Committees operating in the camps of the West Bank in the mid-late 1990's is a case in point.

Annex I

**Table of Registered Refugees, Registered Refugees in Camps,
and Special Hardship Cases**

	Jordan*	Lebanon	S.A.R.	West Bank	Gaza	Total
Registered Refugees (RRs)	1,740,170	394,532	413,827	665,246	922,674	4,136,449
RRs as % of total RRs	42	10	10	16	22	100
Existing camps	10	12	10	19	8	59
RR in camps (RRCs)	307,785	223,956	120,865	179,541	484,563	1,316,710
RRCs as % of RRs	18	57	29	27	53	32
Special Hardship Cases (SHCs)	46,286	45,146	30,994	37,664	86,663	246,753
SHCs as % of RRs	2.7	11.4	7.5	5.7	9.4	6.0

Source: UNRWA, *Figures as of 31 December 2003*, Public Information Office, UNRWA Headquarters, Gaza.

* Three additional refugee neighbourhoods in the governorates of Amman (Prince Hassan Suburb), Zarqa (Sukhneh) and Madaba are considered unofficial camps by UNRWA.