



UNRWA

PRESS RELEASE

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First UNRWA Hosts and Donors Meeting Opens at Dead Sea

Dead Sea – Today the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) opened its first Hosts and Donors Meeting, at the King Hussein Bin Talal convention center at the Dead Sea, to discuss developments in assistance provided by the international community to Palestine refugees. Participants confirmed continued support for UNRWA and the Palestine refugees.

Opening the meeting was the Jordanian deputy prime minister for political development, Hisham El-Tal. El-Tal commended UNRWA and the delegates present for going ahead with the meeting despite the recent terrorist attacks in Amman, stressing the vital importance of UNRWA's humanitarian efforts in the areas of education, health and relief and social services.

A message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, condemning the recent terrorist attack in the Jordanian capital and calling for increased efforts for peaceful solutions to conflict, also made a special request to the many delegates present:

“I call on you today not only to continue your support to UNRWA, but to increase it. Increased funding will give a clear signal to the Palestine refugee community that their needs remain at the forefront of the international community's concerns. That will be a significant contribution to stability and hope in the region, as we keep working for a final, just and practical solution to the problem.”

Karen AbuZayd, UNRWA Commissioner-General, joined Annan and Tal in condemnation of the recent terrorist attacks. She then went on to outline a clear vision for the Agency under her new stewardship: “UNRWA's Medium Term Plan for the next four years will ensure parity of UNRWA services with host and international standards. It will also address the needs of vulnerable refugees, work to maximize refugees' economic potential, and improve refugee living conditions.”

Commenting on recent changes within UNRWA's areas of operation, including the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, AbuZayd said: “The new environment does not change the status of Palestine refugees. UNRWA is at the service of the international community, and will continue in all its areas of operation until the parties have found a comprehensive political solution to the Palestine refugee question, along with other final status issues.”

AbuZayd then outlined her vision of UNRWA in the coming years, in particular detailing her proposals for management reform: “UNRWA enthusiastically embraces the important internal reform processes currently underway. These reforms will enable UNRWA to transform itself and improve its overall functioning and efficiency for the benefit of the more than four million refugees we serve.”

122 participants - representing 64 donors, host authorities, U.N. agencies and NGOs' – attended the meeting. Many countries - China, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Algeria and Chile, among others - were participating in an UNRWA meeting for the first time.

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