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

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued its efforts in the past months to provide relief to Palestine refugees in its five operation areas.¹ The challenges UNRWA faced in the past months, which were discussed at the November meeting of the Advisory Commission (AdCom), included the changing weather conditions due to the beginning of winter, the ongoing conflict in Syria and other parts of the Middle East, and UNRWA's dire economic situation.² Nonetheless, UNRWA continued to implement its programs to aid Palestine refugees, especially in the context of education, with the launch of the School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) II Programme in December 2015.³ Additionally, UNRWA further strengthened its partnerships with other UN entities like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the non-governmental organization (NGO), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), to reinforce its own capacities.⁴ On 15-16 December, UNRWA also participated in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-led first Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 in Cairo.⁵

During the November meeting, the directors of the different fields of operation informed the AdCom about the precarious situation on the ground, which is mainly due to the ongoing conflict in Syria and the shortfalls in UNRWA's funding.⁶ Funding remains a particular problem in Lebanon, where, due to funding shortages, UNRWA was forced to stop its cash-for-rent program for Palestine refugees from Syria living in Lebanon, a program that constituted the main source of income for most of these refugees.⁷ The funding shortages were also one of the topics evaluated by the AdCom fieldtrip to Gaza in November 2015.⁸ The lack of funding in Gaza is most noticeable in the context of the emergency shelter program, which currently lacks \$473 million.⁹ This is why in its medium-term strategy for the period of 2016-2021, UNRWA is committed to improving internal communications and strengthening its partnerships with other regional and international actors, to expand its own resources.¹⁰ UNRWA's Commissioner-General, Pierre Krähenbühl, also addressed these challenges in front of the General Assembly (GA) Fourth Committee in November 2015.¹¹ He indicated that the organization would focus on service delivery in the next months, in order to streamline activities more efficiently and ultimately cut spending.¹² With regards to the crisis in Syria, the Commissioner-General recalled the important humanitarian work UNRWA is doing for Palestine refugees, and regretted that the emergency appeal for Syria will not be met.¹³ Overall, the funding shortage of the organization's ordinary budget is projected to be at \$81 million in 2016, which is why, on 16 January 2016, UNRWA launched its 2016 appeals for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Syria, amounting to \$817 million.¹⁴

In order to adapt to the winter temperatures, UNRWA launched its annual winter campaign on 1 December.¹⁵ The campaign, which will run until 29 February 2016, aims at raising \$2 million to buy objects that are necessary to survive the winter season, like blankets and hot plates, and to rebuild shelters that have been destroyed in the course of the hostilities in the Palestinian region.¹⁶ As part of the campaign, UNRWA plans to increase awareness about the aggravated situation of Palestine refugees during winter, especially individuals that have been forced to leave their

¹ UNRWA, *Address of UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl to the UNRWA Advisory Commission*, 2015.

² UNRWA, *UNRWA Launches Annual Winter Fundraising Campaign, #ShareYourWarmth*, 2015; UNRWA, *Address of UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl to the UNRWA Advisory Commission*, 2015.

³ UNRWA, *UNRWA Launches School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) II Programme in Schools*, 2015.

⁴ UNRWA, *UNICEF Provides Winter Assistance to Palestine Refugees Children in Lebanon Through UNRWA ATM Cards*, 2015; UNRWA, *UNRWA and NRC Hold Their Second Regional Meeting*, 2015.

⁵ UNRWA, *UNRWA Participates in 'First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030' in Cairo*, 2015.

⁶ UNRWA, *AdCom News*.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ UNRWA, *UNRWA Advisory Commission Field Visit to Gaza*, 2015.

⁹ UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 120*, 2015.

¹⁰ UNRWA, *AdCom News*.

¹¹ UNRWA, *Speech by UNRWA Commissioner-General at the General Assembly Fourth Committee*, 2015.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ UNRWA, *UNRWA Appeals for Over US \$800 Million for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2016.

¹⁵ UNRWA, *UNRWA Launches Annual Winter Fundraising Campaign, #ShareYourWarmth*, 2015.

¹⁶ UNRWA, *#ShareYourWarmth*.

homes due to armed conflict, through the hashtag #ShareYourWarmth, also launched on 1 December 2015.¹⁷ At the end of January 2016, the campaign had almost achieved its fundraising goal.¹⁸ In another effort to adequately relieve Palestine refugees of the burdens of the cold season, UNRWA has received support from UNICEF to provide assistance through UNRWA ATM cards, given to eligible Palestine refugee children up to 14-years-old in Lebanon.¹⁹ On 21 December 2015, UNICEF made these ATM cards available to eligible children, who are eligible for this program based on the poverty status of their families, through which they received \$40 to help their parents afford food and other necessities during the winter.²⁰

Following the success of the School-Based Teacher Development (SBTD) I Programme, which targeted grades 1-6 and which teachers described as beneficial and empowering, UNRWA launched the SBTD II Programme in December 2015, to train teachers of grades 7-12.²¹ About 5,300 UNRWA teachers will benefit from this program, ultimately enabling teachers to offer better quality education to Palestinian children.²² Education is also a key area of cooperation between UNRWA and the NRC, which became formal through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2011.²³ In October 2015, both organizations held their second regional meeting in order to re-evaluate this partnership, which expired on 31 December 2015.²⁴ Although a new MOU has not yet been drafted, the meeting discussed ways in which funding shortages could be addressed in the future, as well as new ways to cooperate in the area of education, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, relating to education.²⁵

The First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 was also an important platform for dialogue for UNRWA.²⁶ The aim of the meeting was to develop a strategy for implementing SDG 4 in the Arab region.²⁷ At the end of the meeting, participants adopted the *Arab Regional Roadmap for Education 2030*, which sets out immediate actions for Member States beginning in 2016.²⁸ Within this roadmap, UNRWA will be coordinating its actions in the education sector with partner governments and other actors in the region.²⁹

Overall, as Commissioner-General Krähenbühl mentioned in his address to the GA Fourth Committee: UNRWA still faces great challenges due to shortages in funding and ongoing conflicts.³⁰ Moving forward, more work needs to be done and the international community will need to help raise awareness about UNRWA's activities to meet the funding needed to continue its programs.³¹

¹⁷ UNRWA, #ShareYourWarmth.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ UNRWA, *UNICEF Provides Winter Assistance to Palestine Refugees Children in Lebanon Through UNRWA ATM Cards*, 2015; UNRWA, Department of Relief and Social Services, *Social Safety Net Programme*, 2009, p. 3.

²⁰ UNRWA, *UNICEF Provides Winter Assistance to Palestine Refugees Children in Lebanon Through UNRWA ATM Cards*, 2015.

²¹ UNRWA, *School-Based Teacher Development (SBTD): Transforming Classroom Practices*, 2012; UNRWA, *Education Reform*; UNRWA, *UNRWA Launches School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) II Programme in Schools*, 2015.

²² UNRWA, *UNRWA Launches School Based Teacher Development (SBTD) II Programme in Schools*, 2015.

²³ UNRWA, *UNRWA and NRC Hold Their Second Regional Meeting*, 2015.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UNRWA, *UNRWA Participates in 'First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030' in Cairo*, 2015.

²⁷ UNESCO, *First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030: A Roadmap for Collective Action*, 2015.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ UNRWA, *Speech by UNRWA Commissioner-General at the General Assembly Fourth Committee*, 2015.

³¹ Ibid.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2015, December 16). *First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030: A Roadmap for Collective Action* [Press Release]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/beirut/single-view/news/first-arab-regional-meeting-on-education-2030-a-roadmap-for-collective-action/#.VoqHE5MrJE4>

This press release, published by UNESCO in the aftermath of the Arab Regional Meeting on Education in December 2015, provides delegates with the different topics discussed and the overall results of the meeting. While recognizing the progress in education being made in the Arab region in the past years, the conference focused on ways in which actors in the region could coordinate their education efforts more effectively to benefit the population. The attendees focused their discussion specifically on ways to improve the quality of education in the region, in order to fully implement SDG4 by 2030. UNRWA, as the main provider of education for Palestine refugees in the region, is an important partner of these efforts.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (n.d.). *AdCom News* [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/advisory-commission/adcom-news>

This website offers a compilation of news regarding UNRWA's Advisory Commission. As no consolidated document on the November session will be published, this is the only way for delegates to inform themselves about the topics discussed at the meeting. The website also offers links to relevant press releases and speeches. The article on the presentations of the directors of the different fields of operation is of special interest, as it provides an overview of the challenges the region is still facing, especially as it concerns funding.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015, November 10). *Speech by UNRWA Commissioner-General at the General Assembly Fourth Committee*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from:

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/speech-unrwa-commissioner-general-general-assembly-fourth-committee>

This speech was given by UNRWA Commissioner-General Krähenbühl at the presentation of his annual report to the General Assembly Fourth Committee. It offers a useful summary of the challenges UNRWA faced in the past year in its different fields of operation, due to funding shortages and the conflict in Syria. It is also an appeal to the international community to show more solidarity in supporting the activities of UNRWA. He also offers an overview of UNRWA's achievements, especially in the education sector, as many Palestinian children are now receiving quality education thanks to the Agency's efforts.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015, November 20). *UNRWA Advisory Commission Field Visit to Gaza* [Press Release]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from:

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-advisory-commission-field-visit-gaza>

This press release is centered on the visit of UNRWA's Advisory Commission to Gaza in November 2015 and the meetings they held with partners. Gaza is still recovering from the hostilities of 2014 and AdCom members had a chance to see what challenges remain, and discuss how to address them. The results are presented in this press release. Overall, it was concluded that if no progress is made, Gaza might become unlivable by 2020, as there is not enough energy to supply its population and the water condition is degrading rapidly. The press release also includes a link to a video that displays the current situation in Gaza.

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2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-participates-first-arab-regional-meeting-education-2030-cairo>

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I. Addressing the Needs of Palestinian Women and Girls in Gaza

Recent Developments

In recent months there has been much activity to meet the needs of women and girls in Gaza.³² Strides towards the improvement of women's health, access to education, and advocacy for their protection, were highlighted in several meetings, activities, and global campaigns.³³ These developments have contributed to the debate already taking place within committee meetings of the United Nations (UN) Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to help address the issue of providing better services for women and girls within the UNRWA's areas of operations.

Much of the activity on fulfilling the needs of Palestinian women and girls stems from the continuing need to address the overall humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Reflecting this, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its 62nd session in September 2015, declared that Gaza would be uninhabitable by 2020.³⁴ The report stressed that, due to the recent conflict in Gaza in 2014 and ongoing unrest, de-development has caused life to become nearly impossible in the region.³⁵ Coupled with this report, in November 2015, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), in partnership with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) Department for International Development, published a report detailing the impact of how these and other conflicts affect women in Gaza.³⁶ The report specifically mentions, and includes first-hand accounts from women on some of the profound ways in which women are affected by the violence in Gaza.³⁷ The accounts specifically include how pregnant women were affected during conflict.³⁸ These details are important as they provide specificity to the different ways women can be affected by conflict; additionally they allow gaps in services to be identified and addressed.³⁹

At the end of the report, the NRC and the UK's Department for International Development provide recommendations for agencies and the broader international community to take in promoting the well-being of women during times of conflict.⁴⁰ Some of the recommendations include advocating for women's rights to the Israeli military authorities, providing psycho-social support systems for women and girls in Gaza, and greater access to safe, single sex bathroom facilities.⁴¹ A news article by Reuters further highlighted the impact that psycho-social effects can have on the lives of women in girls in Gaza, with particular regard for the inability for many women to seek proper mental health services due to the stigmas that accompany such issues.⁴²

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) also released statistics regarding the ways in which women and girls were specifically harmed during the 2014 conflict in Gaza.⁴³ OCHA specifically called attention to the need to address the gap in protections for internally displaced women and girls from harassment and gender-based violence (GBV).⁴⁴ Also highlighting the importance of creating equality for women and girls, in September 2015, the UN launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which calls on UN Member States to begin efforts towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the next 15 years.⁴⁵ Included in the SDGs is a call to "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls," which further underscores the importance for many international actors to continue to find solutions to achieve this goal.⁴⁶

From 25 November-10 December 2015, the annual *16 Days of Gender-Based Violence Campaign*, held by the UN

³² UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 125*, 2015.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ UNCTAD, *Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2015.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Norwegian Refugee Council, *The Impact of Conflict on Women in Gaza*, 2015.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Batha, *Marriage fears, stigma stop Gaza girls seeking mental health care*, 2015.

⁴³ UN OCHA, *The Gaza Strip: The Longterm Impact of the 2014 Hostilities on Women and Girls*, 2015.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), came to a close.⁴⁷ The initiative, held every year, calls on states and the international community, to put an end to violence against women.⁴⁸ This year's theme was "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All."⁴⁹ The campaign called on the global community to "Orange the World" and participate in global events aimed at bringing awareness to the violence that women face around the globe.⁵⁰ The UNRWA noted that the theme was in close alignment with their work in Gaza, specifically with their gender initiative which continues to raise awareness about issues facing women and girls in Gaza that include GBV.⁵¹ Across Community Based Centers and UNRWA's Women Program Centers, activities were held to bring awareness to ideas such as early marriages, adolescent health, GBV, and women's human rights.⁵² Additionally, in coordination with the campaign, a video was released with an appearance by UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl, calling for support in ending GBV.⁵³ Initiatives such as these work to continue to educate those within the camps on the importance of respecting the rights of women and girls. As GBV continues to be an area the UNRWA focuses on improving within camps and beyond, these films are an example of new approaches towards educating students from an early age on the importance of being respectful to women and girls.⁵⁴

By the end of 2015 and into the beginning of 2016, the UNRWA has remained committed to working with many international partners to find innovative ways to continue to better the lives of women and girls in Gaza. While a focus has remained on ending GBV and increasing mental and physical health services to women and girls, increasingly, creative methods are being attempted in providing women in Gaza a voice to share their experiences so that services can be improved. Many of the recent reports and statistics released will hopefully provide insight and ideas on solutions for better supporting women and girls within Gaza during conflict and can add specificity to the solutions brought into debate at the UNRWA on ways to improve the lives of this population within future work.

⁴⁷ UNRWA, *From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All*, 2015.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ UN-Women, *16 Days of Activism*, 2015.

⁵¹ UNRWA, *From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All*, 2015; UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 122*, 2015.

⁵² UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 122*, 2015.

⁵³ Zananiriri, *16 Days Campaign Launching Video – UNCT Palestine 2015*, 2015.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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Norwegian Refugee Council. (2015). *Gaza: The Impact of Conflict on Women* [Report]. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://www.nrc.no/arch/img/9210434.pdf>

This report effectively highlights the plight of women within Gaza. It provides examples of ways in which women are severely affected by the recent conflict of 2014 as well as the consequences their children and girls face. Of particular interest are the stories through which some of the information is delivered as it provides some greater detail of the plight of women in the area. Delegates can use this as a source for forming a sharp picture of the kinds of assistance women in Gaza may need in order for life to improve.

United Nations, Conference on Trade and Development. (2015). *Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/tdb62d3_en.pdf

This report contains information regarding the dire circumstances of Gaza as outlined by UNCTAD. The alarm of having the region become inhospitable because of declining GDP and de-development presents a grave situation for the women and girls residing in the region. Delegates will find this useful as it highlights specific issues that are contributing to this decline in the quality of life in the region. Of particular note is the mention of high unemployment rates amongst women. As unemployment is a large factor in leading to the decline of the overall health of UNRWA camps, solutions to create opportunities for employment amongst women are important to address many of the inequalities that women face within Gaza daily.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Gaza Situation Report 121*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-121>

Gaza situation report 121 details the actions taken by UNRWA in observance of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. The report discusses some of the programming held and how UNRWA students were impacted by the events held. Links within the report also provide further evidence of the work done that day and provide examples for how this topic is being discussed within Gaza.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Gaza Situation Report 122*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-122>

This report includes more details about actions taken by UNRWA in observance of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, specifically it contains quotes and direct information from the children that participated in the UNRWA-sponsored events. It also provides information on a UNRWA workshop that focused on GBV in reference to emergency situations and standards. From this report, delegates will also glean up-to-date financial information from UNRWA, including areas that require more funding.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Gaza Situation Report 125*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-125>

This report provides a broad summary of the work done by the UNRWA in Gaza within all of its major project areas. Starting from January 2015, the report highlights projects completed and work conducted by the UNRWA and partners to improve the lives of Palestinian refugees in Gaza. These include micro-financing initiatives, apprenticeship programs for girls, and the launch of animated videos raising awareness of social issues including gender stereotyping. Particularly, November and December are noted as times of achievement in the promotion of women's rights. Delegates can glean a large scope of information from the document generally, and also see where work towards making life more peaceful for women and girls has been done.

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II. Improving Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance and Relief for Palestinian Refugees in Syria

Recent Developments

In recent months, the international community has continued to discuss the humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing conflict in Syria.⁵⁵ Multiple United Nations (UN) bodies, in addition to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), have contributed actively to alleviating the humanitarian situation in Syria, most notably the UN Security Council (SC), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).⁵⁶ The international community also renewed its commitment to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP), by publishing a regional strategic overview for 2016-2017, within which UNRWA plays an active role.⁵⁷ Furthermore, UNRWA was also able to look back on successes in the provision of services to Palestinian refugees in Syria, in its “Humanitarian Snapshot, October 2015.”⁵⁸ The displacement of Palestinian refugees from Syria, especially to Lebanon, was also addressed in UNRWA’s Advisory Commission (AdCom) meeting in November.⁵⁹

4.5 million people currently still live in hard-to-reach areas in Syria, without direct access to food, water, sanitation or health care.⁶⁰ Due to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country, the SC adopted resolutions 2254 of 18 December 2015 and 2258 of 22 December 2015 on the topic of Syria.⁶¹ Resolution 2254 calls on all involved parties, especially the Syrian authorities, to secure access for humanitarian aid agencies throughout Syria.⁶² Resolution 2258, adopted less than a week after resolution 2254, notes with great concern that in 2015, only 29% of UN humanitarian convoys were approved by the Syrian authorities, in comparison to 65% in 2013.⁶³ At its 70th session, the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted resolution 70/234 on the human rights situation in Syria, which condemns the denial of access for humanitarian workers, both from within and outside the UN System.⁶⁴ The resolution furthermore calls on the Syrian authorities to provide access to hard-to-reach and besieged areas.⁶⁵ In December, the UN and some of its partners, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), which is one of UNRWA’s most important partners in the region, were able to help evacuate more than 460 injured individuals from towns in Syria that were under siege.⁶⁶ Overall, however, access for humanitarian organizations is still greatly restricted.⁶⁷ A UN senior official recently emphasized that this was not for lack of trying from the part of these organizations, but because a political solution, as outlined in the latest Security Council resolutions, needed to be implemented to achieve longer-term stability.⁶⁸

At the end of December 2015, UNHCR published a new Regional Refugee and Resilience Response Plan (3RP) for the period of 2016-2017, to continue the efforts undertaken within the 3RP for 2015-2016.⁶⁹ The 3RP, initiated in 2014, combines different policies of national authorities in the region on how to address the needs of vulnerable groups in Syria and its neighboring countries.⁷⁰ The appeal for the year 2016 within the 3RP is 10% higher than the

⁵⁵ UN DPI, *Syria: UN and Partners Aid Evacuation of Injured From Four Besieged Towns*, 2015.

⁵⁶ UN DPI, *Syria: Security Council Demands Immediate Humanitarian Access Across Battle Lines*, 2015; UNHCR, *Syrian Arab Republic*, 2016; UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic*.

⁵⁷ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Response Plan 2016-2017: In Response to the Syria Crisis, Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015.

⁵⁸ UNRWA, *Syria: UNRWA - Humanitarian Snapshot October 2015*, 2015.

⁵⁹ UNRWA, *AdCom News*.

⁶⁰ UN DPI, *Syria: UN and Partners Aid Evacuation of Injured From Four Besieged Towns*, 2015.

⁶¹ UN Security Council, *Middle East (Syria) (S/RES/2254(2015))*, 2015; UN Security Council, *Middle East (Syria) (S/RES/2258(2015))*, 2015.

⁶² UN Security Council, *Middle East (Syria) (S/RES/2254(2015))*, 2015, clause 12.

⁶³ UN Security Council, *Middle East (Syria) (S/RES/2258(2015))*, 2015, p. 3.

⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/RES/70/234)*, 2015, clauses 23, 24.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ UN DPI, *Syria: UN and Partners Aid Evacuation of Injured From Four Besieged Towns*, 2015.

⁶⁷ UN DPI, *Failure in Syria not Humanitarian but Political, Says Senior UN Relief Official*, 2016.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Response Plan 2016-2017: In Response to the Syria Crisis, Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015.

⁷⁰ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Response Plan 2015-2016: In Response to the Syria Crisis, Regional Strategic Overview*, 2014, p. 8.

appeal requested in 2015, which is a result of an increase in the number of refugees and, as a consequence, increased support needed for host countries.⁷¹ UNRWA plays a crucial role within this plan, as it is the main agency responsible for providing goods and services to Palestinian refugees from Syria.⁷² Under the 3RP framework for 2016, UNRWA commits to raising over \$21 million dollars for activities carried out in the entire region.⁷³ However, the 3RP also notes that UNRWA's ability to provide the services needed to Palestinian refugees has been severely undermined due to funding shortages, leaving UNRWA unable to fully implement its programs and strategies.⁷⁴ Already in May 2015, UNRWA had to discontinue its cash assistance for housing (cash-for-rent) for Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon.⁷⁵ UNRWA will need to further call on the international community for their support, for example through its most recent Emergency Appeal for Syria, launched on 12 January 2016.⁷⁶

At its AdCom meeting of November 2015, UNRWA members were able to discuss the humanitarian situation of PRS still residing in Syria, and that of those displaced to neighboring countries like Lebanon and Jordan.⁷⁷ According to the Director of UNRWA Affairs in Syria, 96% of Palestine refugees in Syria are dependent on services provided by UNRWA.⁷⁸ He also noted that access for humanitarian aid is still of major concern, with approximately 40,000 Palestine refugees still living in hard-to-reach areas.⁷⁹ The Director for UN operations in Jordan noted that the high number of PRS currently residing in Jordan puts high pressure on the infrastructure of the country, which is already strained by the regular number of refugees they are hosting.⁸⁰ The situation in Lebanon is similar, where 43,000 PRS are currently residing.⁸¹ In an effort to continue its humanitarian relief activities in Syria, UNRWA entered the third round of its cash assistance program for PRS on 18 October 2015.⁸² Recent evaluations have shown that PRS are spending most of their cash assistance on food, followed by rent.⁸³ In its submission to the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 to be held in May, UNRWA stressed that cash assistance remains one of the most efficient ways to support displaced persons.⁸⁴ It is therefore especially important for the whole international community to support UNRWA's efforts to uphold its cash assistance program, as it is the least harmful to local economies and the most direct way to help people in humanitarian crises.⁸⁵

⁷¹ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Response Plan 2016-2017: In Response to the Syria Crisis, Regional Strategic Overview*, 2015, p. 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷⁵ UNRWA, *Lack of Funds Forces UNRWA to Suspend Cash Assistance for Housing for Palestine Refugees from Syria in Lebanon*, 2015.

⁷⁶ UNRWA, *2016 Syria Emergency Appeal*, 2016.

⁷⁷ UNRWA, *AdCom News*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² UNRWA, *Syria: UNRWA - Humanitarian Snapshot October 2015*, 2015.

⁸³ UNRWA, *Belgium Contributes EUR 1,5 Million to Provide Cash Assistance to Palestine Refugees in Syria*, 2015.

⁸⁴ UNRWA, *World Humanitarian Summit – UNRWA Contribution*, 2015, p. 3.

⁸⁵ UN OCHA, *2016 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Response Plan*, 2015, p. 27.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, December 22). *Syria: Security Council Demands Immediate Humanitarian Access Across Battle Lines* [News Article]. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52883#.VovZN5MrJE4>

This news article, published after the adoption of the latest Security Council resolutions 2254 of 18 December 2015 and 2258 of 22 December 2015 on Syria, offers useful analysis of the recent Security Council decisions regarding Syria. The article places the resolutions in context, while including information on how many refugees and internally displaced persons are currently relying on humanitarian aid. It also offers data on how many people are still living in hard-to-reach areas and describes the efforts undertaken by the UN to access them.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/RES/70/234)* [Resolution]. Adopted on the Report of the Third Committee. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/489/Add.3>

This resolution, adopted by the General Assembly at its 70th session, outlines the humanitarian situation in Syria as it was this fall. It is an appeal to Member States to do their utmost to alleviate the crisis in Syria. It presents actions that have been taken in the recent past, for example letters that have been sent to the General Assembly President, to the President of the Security Council, and to the Secretary-General, as well as relevant statements and resolutions that have been adopted on the subject. The resolution has 41 operative clauses and thus provides delegates with a large number of ideas on how to move forward on the subject. Amongst other points, it recalls the Syrian authorities' obligation to protect its population and comply with international humanitarian law. It also reaffirms the responsibility of the different parties of the conflict to allow access to humanitarian organizations.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Regional Refugee & Resilience Response Plan 2016-2017: In Response to the Syria Crisis, Regional Strategic Overview* [Report]. Retrieved 29 January 2016 from: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/3RP-Regional-Overview-2016-2017.pdf>

This Response Plan, prepared by UNHCR, is the newest appeal for the partners of the 3RP to receive the funds necessary to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Together with 200 partners, UNHCR created this framework to coordinate humanitarian action in the region. The new 3RP overview for 2016-2017 describes the achievements of 2015 in eight sectors, showing that education, health and nutrition, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene had the highest funding levels. It also provides an overview of the aid structures set up by the different partners in the entire region, and how they can improve. It is noted, for example, that Turkey is the main responder to the emergency, both in the number of refugees it is welcoming and in its efforts to strengthen resilience. This document will be crucial for delegates to understand what the current state of humanitarian coordination is in Syria and the surrounding region, as well as the most important needs for aid funding.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Syria: UNRWA - Humanitarian Snapshot October 2015* [Report]. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/syria_prs_snapshot_oct_2015.pdf

This document, provided by UNRWA, compiles the most recent data on humanitarian activities led by UNRWA and its partners for Palestinian refugees in Syria. It also provides data on how much funding is still required to make its services fully operational. The maps included highlight the distribution of goods and services in the different regions in Syria, which is helpful to identify the severe regional disparities in the country. The snapshot was developed after the opening of the new school year, thus providing the most recent data on the educational facilities that are still operational as well as current needs.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *World Humanitarian Summit – UNRWA Contribution* [Report]. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/node/504264>

This report, submitted as UNRWA's contribution to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, is an outline of its mandate and its work in the humanitarian field. It also outlines UNRWA's priorities

in the field for 2016: emergency education needs, the expansion of its cash assistance program, and the protection of humanitarian personnel, amongst others. The document was drafted in relation to the topics to be discussed at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and thus remains of great relevance. As streamlining humanitarian efforts will be one component to more efficiently coordinate them, this report can be used as a guideline on how to efficiently use funds.

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III. Strengthening Access to Education Through the Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) Policy

Recent Developments

In recent months, the United Nations (UN) Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has continued to collaborate with civil society organizations, Member States, and various UN bodies to continue to provide better access to education for Palestinian refugees at UNRWA schools within their service areas and beyond.

In particular, action continued to focus on implementing new tools within classrooms to improve Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance (HRCRT) educational program delivery.⁸⁶ One critical development was the completion of the “UNRWA School Parliament Good Practices Booklet,” published in late 2015, which was co-funded by the United States of America.⁸⁷ This booklet, provided to UNRWA teachers throughout the five fields of operations, provides an overview of best practices gathered from the UNRWA’s five stations of operation.⁸⁸ They are presented in the form of activities, examples, and lessons undertaken at various schools in accordance with the HRCRT policy.⁸⁹ The purpose of the booklet is to provide clear examples for how other schools within the five stations of operation have implemented the HRCRT curriculum, what things worked well, and lessons to be learned.⁹⁰ Ozlem Eskiocak Oguzertem, Human Rights Education Program Coordinator for UNRWA, also highlighted the use of global citizenship education (GCED), recently, to help teachers and students address the dichotomy many of them feel when learning and teaching about respecting human rights while feeling as if their rights are not respected in turn.⁹¹ GCED principles, a project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is a framing paradigm which seeks to promote the ways in which education can teach skills and attitudes which can contribute to a more just and peaceful society.⁹²

In October 2015, during the Agency’s Ad Hoc meeting, further financial pledges were given to provide continued funding to UNRWA.⁹³ These pledges were largely a response to a speech given by Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl in New York during a high-level meeting on the financial sustainability of UNRWA.⁹⁴ Additionally, UNESCO released the 2015 Global Monitoring Report entitled “Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges,” which seeks to show efforts by Member States to achieve the goal of providing a quality education for all of their citizens.⁹⁵ The report summarizes the progress made since 2000 towards the Dakar Framework’s Goals and recounts whether the Education For All (EFA) goals, which the work of UNRWA supported, were reached.⁹⁶ This review is important given the end of the EFA initiative and the beginning of the new Education 2030 agenda, which succeeds EFA and was officially adopted and launched on 4 November 2015.⁹⁷ Education 2030 focuses on achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”⁹⁸

Critically, on 15 December 2015 an important first meeting of the “First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030” was held in direct response to the Education 2030 initiative.⁹⁹ The meeting discussed ways in which Arab region Member States could create concrete steps towards achieving the Education 2030 goals within their respective region, which has faced the additional challenges of meeting these goals under the duress of armed

⁸⁶ UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 123*, 2015.

⁸⁷ UNRWA, *UNRWA School Parliament Good Practices Booklet*, 2015.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Oguzertem, *Making global citizenship education possible for refugees*, 2015.

⁹² UNESCO, *Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century*, 2014.

⁹³ UN DPI, *Deputy Chief of Palestine Refugee Agency Paints Dire Picture of Financial Position as Member States Announce Donations at Pledging Conference*, 2015.

⁹⁴ UNRWA, *Statement of UNRWA Commissioner- General Pierre Krahenbul at the High-Level Ministerial Meeting on the Financial Stability of UNRWA held in New York City*, 2015.

⁹⁵ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, 2015.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ UNESCO, *Education for All: Education 2030*.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ UNRWA, *UNRWA Participates in “First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030” in Cairo*, 2015.

conflict.¹⁰⁰ The meeting concluded with the adoption of the “Arab Regional Roadmap for Education 2030,” which hopes to put into motion efforts to concretely achieve the goals set out by Education 2030.¹⁰¹

On 5 October, UNESCO led the celebrations for World Teacher’s Day (WTD).¹⁰² The UNRWA marked this day by releasing a short documentary film entitled “I will never forget you,” which seeks to highlight the importance of teachers in the lives of their students throughout their extensive educational system.¹⁰³ Additionally, UNRWA celebrated WTD by leading region-specific events to highlight the achievements their teachers and wider education reform has had on students within their classrooms.¹⁰⁴ The video was effective in conveying the strong relationships built between students and their teachers and promoting the importance of teachers within UNRWA schools and their communities as a whole.¹⁰⁵ On 10 December 2015 the international community celebrated Human Rights Day.¹⁰⁶ The day celebrates the signing of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* on 10 December 1948.¹⁰⁷ In Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, the UNRWA gathered together students, their families, and communities to participate in programs taken directly from the HRCRT curriculum.¹⁰⁸ The activities ranged from asking attendees to identify ways in which diversity can be further strengthened, a skit on gender equality, and a demonstration of voting for parliament.¹⁰⁹ The inclusion of students and their parents within these activities is a step towards tackling the challenge of engaging the wider community within the HRCRT curriculum.¹¹⁰

Making progress towards increased collaboration with community based organizations, on 11 December 2015, the Chalhoub Group donated 1,500 back-to-school kits to prepare students to attend and fully participate in UNRWA schools in Jordan.¹¹¹ Additionally, on 6 January 2016, UNRWA schools in the West Bank received the British Council’s International School Award for their ability to introduce the global community into UNRWA’s classrooms.¹¹² Particularly, they were praised for their use of the “Connecting Schools” initiative, which aims at connecting Palestinian refugee students with students from all over the globe to enhance cultural understanding and connectedness.¹¹³

¹⁰⁰ UNRWA, *UNRWA Participates in “First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030” in Cairo*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 113*, 2015.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*; UNRWA, *World Teacher’s Day 2015*, 2015.

¹⁰⁴ UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report 113*, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*; UNRWA, *World Teacher’s Day 2015*, 2015.

¹⁰⁶ UNRWA, *UNRWA Promotes Diversity and Tolerance on Human Rights Day*, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ UN, *Human Rights Day*, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ UNRWA, *UNRWA Promotes Diversity and Tolerance on Human Rights Day*, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

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¹¹¹ UNRWA, *Providing Palestine Refugee Students in Jordan with the tools they need to succeed*, 2015.

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This news article relays some of the direct thoughts of an UNRWA staff member on how the GCE segment of the curriculum is directly being implemented with their students. It also summarizes her broader thoughts on achieving human rights understanding through the UNRWA schools. The article also includes links to a string of education videos created to be included in the UNRWA's HRCRT curriculum. Delegates will gain examples on how the HRCRT is being used on a regular basis throughout the UNRWA school system, as well as new tools being developed to enhance and strengthen that curriculum.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2015). *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges* [Report]. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf>

This report synthesizes the progress made towards the EFA initiative since 2000. It also highlights the challenges still faced to provide education for all and concludes with recommendations for steps the international community should undertake to further work towards achieving goals in providing quality education for all. Specifically, the report synthesizes efforts made in achieving six goals which outline what makes a strong education program, including efforts in early childhood care and education, universal primary education, providing adult literacy programs, and more.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Gaza Situation Report, 113*. Retrieved 9 January 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-113>

This report provides a brief overview of some of the most recent happenings in all of the UNRWA's operations. In the 113 issue, observance of Human Rights Day is highlighted, as well as the observance of World Teacher's Day, with details provided on activities and events that took place during those days by UNRWA's school programs. One example is of the release of a short film entitled "I will never forget you" which showcases the relationships built between teachers and their students. This provides delegates with a recent understanding of some of the ways in which the HRCRT curriculum is being used in creative ways to enhance human rights understanding throughout the region.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *Gaza Situation Report 123*. Retrieved 5 February 2016 from: <http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/gaza-situation-report-123>

This report details further events and programs that took place on Human Rights Day. Some of the events that took place included sketches and dances to celebrate the ways in which human rights can be observed and achieved. Additionally, it outlines some other events that occurred up until 20 December 2015 that affected UNRWA schools and shows collaborations between the UNRWA schools and other Member States. This is an important, recent document that illustrates how UNRWA schools are impacted regularly by the partnerships and collaborations the UNRWA has with the international community in enriching the lives of its students.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2015). *UNRWA School Parliament Good Practices Booklet*. Retrieved 28 December 2015 from: http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/school_parliament_good_practices_booklet_english_11.11.2015.pdf

This document, produced as a collaboration between the UNRWA and the United States of America, provides guidance for how to best introduce school parliament systems within schools managed by UNRWA teachers. The booklet provides examples for how lessons were carried out at UNRWA schools with tips on what was done correctly within the lesson and ways to improve the teaching of various facets of the HRCRT curriculum. In this way, students and teachers can see more clearly how the lessons for school parliaments can be implemented within their own classrooms.

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