



PHÁI ĐOÀN THƯỜNG TRỰC
CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
TẠI LIÊN HỢP QUỐC

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

866 U.N. Plaza, 4th Floor, Suite 435
New York, New York 10017
(212) 644-0594 • Fax (212) 644-5732

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Statement
by Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien, Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam
to the United Nations
on Agenda Item 30: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
Refugees in the Near East
at the Fourth Committee of the 60th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly

(New York, 02 November 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to express our Delegation's congratulations on your election to Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to join other speakers in thanking Mrs. Karen Koning, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for a comprehensive Report on the work of the Agency during the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Viet Nam wishes to express its high appreciation to UNRWA for all the efforts the Agency has made last year in discharging its mandate. Despite numerous difficulties and obstacles, the UNRWA's work has continued gaining encouraging results in the implementation of its regular programmes, providing education, health, social services and microcredit assistance to Palestine refugees. Thanks to these efforts, certain aspects of life of Palestine refugees have been partially alleviated. About 490,000 children were

enrolled in the UNRWA elementary, preparatory and secondary schools in the 2004 – 2005 academic year. 19,766 loans worth \$17.17 million have been provided to the refugees as a result of the commercial, self-sustaining and market-oriented microfinance and microenterprise programme. Many other activities of UNRWA have also gained achievements. Cooperation between UNRWA and a number of UN programmes and organizations has been maintained and strengthened.

These outcomes reaffirm the important role of the Agency, as stated in the Report, being “the symbol of the international community’s commitment to the well-being of the Palestine refugees until a just and durable settlement of the refugee problem is achieved”. We therefore wish to reiterate our full support to the work of UNRWA.

Mr. Chairman,

The Report has shown that the activities of UNRWA during the report period have been affected heavily by the instability and violence in the region, in particular military operations carried out by Israeli forces, which included the imposition of both internal and external curfews and closures and the creation of closed military zones. These operations have continued having an adverse impact on the Agency’s ability to carry out its humanitarian functions in support of the Palestine refugees, thus severely affected daily life and future of refugees due to loss of access to employment, income, essential goods and services.

It is also our concern over the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the freedom and movement of the Agency’s personnel, vehicles and goods during the report period, especially the arrest and detention of the Agency’s staff. We are of the view that the privileges and immunities of UNRWA as an organ of the United Nations under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations must be fully respected and those actions that hinder normal activities of UNRWA must be eliminated.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.