



EU Statement by

Mr. Andrea Pontiroli
Counsellor
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

UN General Assembly 76th Session
Fourth Committee, Agenda item 54: UNRWA

19 October 2021

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to start by reiterating the European Union's deep and genuine appreciation for UNRWA's work and for its dedicated staff who is working in an extremely difficult and challenging context

Let me continue by reaffirming the commitment of the European Union to a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution and an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967, ending all claims and fulfilling the aspirations of both parties, including Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, on the basis of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

The EU's firm and united position on these Resolutions and parameters has been set out in detail on numerous occasions. We reaffirm our readiness to work with both parties and our partners in the region and the international community towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all final status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The refugee issue is another internationally agreed parameter for the solution of the conflict, which remains unsolved. It is thus of the utmost importance that UNRWA can continue to provide Palestine refugees with the necessary protection and essential services and promote their resilience. UNRWA and its services continue to make a

* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

key contribution to the viability of the two-state solution, which remains the only realistic way to achieve a just and lasting peace and which can ultimately only be reached through negotiations by the parties. Until such a solution is reached, we will continue to support UNRWA in all its fields of operations, including in East Jerusalem.

UNRWA is an essential provider of vital services to millions of Palestine refugees, and a stabilising force in the region. In particular, the provision of health services for all refugees and education for many young Palestinians is important not only in Gaza and Syria, but also in Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank including East Jerusalem. In this regard, the EU also wishes to reiterate its deep appreciation for the generosity and efforts of the host countries in support of the Agency and the welfare of Palestine refugees.

Mr. Chair

The European Union and its Member States are collectively the largest contributors to UNRWA's budget. The European Union remains a staunch and predictable supporter of UNRWA, both politically and financially. We commend UNRWA for its ongoing efforts to carry out efficiency gains and for its initiatives aimed at strengthening the management and efficiency of the organisation, and we will continue to support UNRWA in the future also in this regard. As they did last year, the EU and its Member States have also continued answering the Agency's call for additional funds. The EU welcomes the additional financial support from other and new donors and calls upon all partners to translate this positive step into multi-annual contributions.