

**Statement by Pakistan Delegation at the Fourth Committee on agenda item 52: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
Delivered during 75th UNGA**

Palestine refugees continue to live in a suspended state of exile longer than any other refugee group of the world. While exposed to a wide-ranging misery, the refugees have received a few opportunities to draw comfort and relief. UNRWA, since its establishment in 1949, has been providing one of those rare opportunities.

Pakistan believes that UNRWA's services to the Palestinian refugees have been invaluable, especially in the fields of education, health, housing, social protection and provision of infrastructure.

Amid COVID-19 pandemic, the role of UNRWA has become all the more critical: Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian students are able to sustain their education due to UNRWA's distance learning program. Similarly, UNRWA's telemedicine and home delivery of drugs have been crucial for the hapless families in refugee camps. Given COVID's dire economic impact, UNRWA's cash support and food delivery has provided a lifeline to some of the most vulnerable of the Palestine refugees. In Gaza, where the humanitarian and economic crises continue due to Israel's illegal land, air and seal blockade, UNRWA's presence has been particularly indispensable.

However, continuation of UNRWA's activities requires sufficient and predictable funding stream.

It is a matter of great concern that UNRWA continues to face structural financial challenges. We take note of the fact that the agency still faces a core funding shortfall of \$ 375 million.

Pakistan urges the international community to step up its efforts to support UNRWA, both financially and politically. As the pandemic mounts pressures on UNRWA's services and finances, it has become imperative to ramp up international commitment to the agency.

Taking this opportunity, we urge the international community not to allow the plight of Palestine refugees to aggravate. Palestinians have already been victims of great historical injustice. Undermining UNRWA will now put the lives of over 5 million refugees to a greater social and economic risk than ever before and will negatively affect the prospects of peace and stability in the Middle East. We must not let political considerations to take over humanitarian imperatives at this critical juncture.

Pakistan would like to reiterate that a solution to the Palestinian refugee situation is inseparably linked to a resolution of the Palestinian issue. We also believe that any one-sided settlement imposed on the Palestinians is not going to work.

Pakistan has consistently supported a two State solution, as enshrined in relevant UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We support a just and lasting solution through dialogue and negotiations which leads to the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. In this regard, Pakistan renews its call for the establishment of a viable, independent and contiguous state of Palestine, on the basis of internationally agreed parameters, the pre-1967 borders, and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital.

In conclusion, Pakistan commends UNRWA for efficiently carrying out its mandate and provision of vital assistance to the Palestine refugees. Pakistan would continue to extend political and financial support to UNRWA. We would also like to reiterate Pakistan's longstanding, solemn and time-tested support to the Palestinian brothers and sisters in their just struggle for right to self-determination, for an independent State and for economic development. Rest assured, Pakistan will always stand with its Palestinian brethren.
