



THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6 February 2017

Excellency,

I have the honor to transmit forthwith a letter from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, dated 31 January 2017, in connection with the implementation of the mandate contained in the operative paragraph 32 of General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/93 which requested [“the Secretary-General to facilitate broad consultations with Member States, notably host countries, members of the Advisory Commission and other donors, as well as with international financial institutions, to explore all potential ways and means, including through voluntary and assessed contributions, to ensure that the Agency’s funding is sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of the mandate,” and “report on the conclusions of those consultations and recommendations to the General Assembly by March 2017 for its consideration, without prejudice to the advice of relevant committees” .]

Accordingly, the Secretary-General has decided to establish a Steering Committee, chaired by Switzerland, to explore, through consultations with the Member States, ways and means to ensure that funding for UNRWA will be sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of its mandate.

Furthermore, the Chair of the Steering Committee has informed my Office that he intends to convene a briefing session on the consultation process in the afternoon of Monday 13 February and that he will soon be sending further information on this meeting.

I recognize that, over the last 65 years, UNRWA has been instrumental in providing essential services, including development programmers and emergency humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in the Middle East. However, the severe funding shortfall that the Agency has been experiencing puts at risk its ability to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

I trust that you will extend your full support and cooperation to the Steering Committee throughout the consultation process aiming to identify measures necessary to put UNRWA on more a stable and predictable financial footing.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

Peter Thomson

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1 February 2017

Dear Mr. President,

On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/71/93 on the “Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)”, which requested me to “facilitate broad consultations with Member States, notably host countries, members of the Advisory Commission and other donors, as well as with international financial institutions, to explore all potential ways and means, including through voluntary and assessed contributions, to ensure that the Agency’s funding is sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of its mandate,” and “to report on the conclusions of those consultations and recommendations to the General Assembly by March 2017 for its consideration, without prejudice to the advice of relevant committees” (Operative Paragraph 32).

In order to fulfil this request, I have decided to establish a Steering Committee to help facilitate the consultations, generate and explore ideas to ensure that funding for UNRWA will indeed be sufficient, predictable and sustained for the duration of its mandate. I invited Switzerland, as the current chair of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, to chair the Steering Committee, and Turkey, the chair of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, to function as its Vice-Chair. I am pleased that both countries have agreed to accept this responsibility.

Following discussions with the Permanent Missions of Switzerland and Turkey to the United Nations, it has been agreed that the Steering Committee will be supported by a Technical Expert from UNRWA, a Rapporteur from the United Nations system, and a Bureau that is staffed, equipped and managed by Switzerland, which will help to conduct relevant consultations and prepare the report on its findings and conclusions as requested in OP 32 of resolution A/RES/71/93. I will draw on these resources for the preparation of my report to the General Assembly.

His Excellency  
Mr. Peter Thomson  
President of the General Assembly  
New York

The Steering Committee will lead consultations with all Member States, including host countries, members of the UNRWA Advisory Commission and other donors, as well as with international financial institutions, as referred to in the resolution, both in New York and in selected capitals. I expect the Steering Committee to submit its report to me by 15 March 2017, at the latest.

As part of the process of consultations, I should like to invite interested Member States to share their views and recommendations on potential ways and means to assure the availability of sustained, predictable and sufficient funding for UNRWA. The Steering Committee intends to conduct a briefing with Member States at the level of Permanent Representatives on the process of consultations in the coming days. I would encourage Member States to participate actively in the process and this briefing, which will provide an important opportunity to submit inputs and to share views.

I would be grateful if this letter could be brought to the attention of the members of the General Assembly. I look forward to preparing my report, which I will forward to the Assembly by March 2017, as requested in resolution A/RES/71/93.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

*with my warmest personal regards*



António Guterres