



United States Department of State

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 19, 2021

Mr. Philippe Lazzarini
Commissioner General
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Dear Mr. Lazzarini:

The Biden Administration has stated its intent to resume the full range of assistance to the Palestinians. On the humanitarian track, the United States is prepared to re-engage with UNRWA to support its provision of services to its beneficiaries and strengthen our shared goals and priorities as outlined below.

Between 2005 and 2018 the United States and UNRWA worked in partnership through a Framework for Cooperation to provide humanitarian assistance, human development, and protection to UNRWA's population of concern in accordance with its mandate as approved by the United Nations General Assembly. The United States is committed to resuming this longstanding partnership with UNRWA to assist UNRWA-registered refugees and other persons falling under its mandate. The United States acknowledges the important role the Agency plays in developing the human capital of its beneficiaries and maintaining regional stability.

Pending completion of a new Framework, this letter seeks to address goals and priorities which we have agreed are shared; monitoring and reporting; and communication and partnership. The United States intends to hold consultations with UNRWA with the goal of completing a new comprehensive Framework for Cooperation by June 15 that both reflects the following shared goals and priorities and addresses how they will be achieved.

Shared Goals and Priorities

--The United States and UNRWA are jointly committed to addressing the needs of UNRWA's beneficiaries through effective provision of humanitarian assistance and protection, and to promoting the enhanced human development potential of UNRWA's beneficiaries.

--Conformance with conditions on U.S. contributions pursuant to section 301(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA), specifically that UNRWA is taking "all possible measures to assure that no part of the United States contribution shall be used to furnish assistance to any refugee who is receiving military training as a member of the so-called Palestine Liberation Army or any other guerrilla type organization or who is engaged in any act of terrorism," and conducting operations consistent with UN humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, independence, and impartiality, remain shared priorities.

--The United States and UNRWA expect to continue to work in partnership to promote UNRWA's financial stability, both through efforts to control and contain costs, as well as to mobilize additional resources and highlight the value of UNRWA's contributions to regional stability.

--UNRWA intends to continue to strengthen the Agency's (i) transparency, (ii) accountability, and (iii) internal governance and oversight processes.

--Further, the United States and UNRWA condemn without reservation all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief, including anti-Semitism.

Recognizing the need for early, sufficient, predictable and sustained funding, the United States aims to provide contributions to UNRWA for the Agency's Program Budget and Emergency Appeals early in the calendar year. The United States is committed to providing, subject to the availability of funds and meeting other U.S. legal and policy requirements, a contribution to UNRWA's annual Program Budget, Emergency Appeal (EA) for West Bank/Gaza, and EA for the Syria Regional Crisis, based on past practice and consistent with the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles of providing predictable and flexible funding.

To that end, the United States expects UNRWA to uphold its neutrality in the conduct of its staff, the review of host state curricula, and the management of its buildings, and to ensure the proper use of its assets. The United States further expects UNRWA to take all possible measure to ensure funding provided by the United States to UNRWA does not provide assistance to, or otherwise support, terrorists or terrorist organizations.

In addition, subject to these same conditions, the United States intends to continue support for selected special projects mutually identified by the United States and UNRWA, with an emphasis on strengthening UNRWA's neutrality, oversight and accountability, as well as the Agency's human rights, conflict resolution, and tolerance education materials. Continued U.S. support is expected to depend on UNRWA's demonstration of needs and the delivery of results on the shared goals and priorities discussed above.

Monitoring and Reporting

The United States commends UNRWA for the transition to the Annual Operational Report (AOR) and believes that the standardized reporting included in the AOR should satisfy the majority of U.S. reporting requirements for U.S. contributions to the Program Budget for 2021-2022.

Additional specific reporting requirements for contributions are expected to be addressed within contribution agreement award provisions and in a future Framework. The United States would expect UNRWA to provide regular reports on emergency appeals, special projects, visibility efforts, and expenditures on U.S. contributions, and continue to adhere to the established conditions and understandings regarding the use of U.S. funding. In conformance with U.S. funding conditions pursuant to section 301(c) of the FAA, UNRWA is expected to continue to provide semi-annual reports on activities outlined in the Annex of the 2018-2019 U.S.-UNRWA Framework for Cooperation until a new Framework has been signed.

Communication and Partnership

In the meantime, the United States and UNRWA are committed to continuous information sharing and cooperation at all levels.

As with other humanitarian partners, the United States plans to monitor its funding to, as well as the policies and programs of, UNRWA on an ongoing basis and in a number of ways, including by actively participating in the meetings of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions as well as UNRWA's Advisory Commission, regular meetings of the Commission's Subcommittees, regular meetings of the Harmonized Results Working Group, and other ad hoc working groups; analyzing UNRWA's regular reports and updates; undertaking field visits by PRM staff; holding bilateral discussions between PRM and UNRWA staff at all levels; and attending briefings by UNRWA staff. The United States intends to continue to share with UNRWA the results of its monitoring and analysis and welcomes feedback from UNRWA in response to U.S. findings and recommendations.

Receipt of UNRWA's response confirming our mutual understanding will enable PRM to obligate our first funding tranche for UNRWA's 2021 Appeals. I look forward to discussing the development of a new U.S.-UNRWA Framework for 2021, as well as how we can work together to advance UNRWA's efforts to improve neutrality, transparency, accountability, and financial sustainability to assure the most effective delivery of services to its beneficiaries

Sincerely,



Ms. Nancy Izzo Jackson
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Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
U.S. Department of State