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Advisory Commission of the
United Nations Relief and
Works Agency

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Advisory Commission of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Rules of Procedure

Preamble

As initially established under UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, the purpose of the Advisory Commission of UNRWA is to advise and assist the Commissioner-General in the execution of the programme. The work of UNRWA and the Advisory Commission is guided by the UN General Assembly resolutions concerning Palestine refugees.

As subsequently elaborated, and to promote good practice in line with UN directives, the Advisory Commission will advise and assist the Commissioner-General on UNRWA's planning, implementation and evaluation of its programmes for the benefit of Palestine refugees. With the objective of exercising its mandate, the Advisory Commission shall discuss important operational issues, such as items pertaining to the strategic planning, budget, the apportionment of funds among projects, proposed changes in previously approved plans and current operations, and the Commissioner-General's Annual Report to the UN General Assembly. These will be discussed in a timely manner corresponding to UNRWA's schedule and the work cycle of the General Assembly. As specified in these Rules of Procedure, the Advisory Commission may, in consultation with the Commissioner-General, also respond to extraordinary developments affecting Palestine refugees related to the work of the Agency.

The Advisory Commission will strive to undertake its work by consensus and in a transparent manner that promotes the principles of partnership. In that spirit, the Commissioner-General will strive to keep the Advisory Commission informed of developments affecting the Agency. Likewise, the Commissioner-General, with the support of the Advisory Commission, will inform the Agency's informal stakeholder bodies of its main conclusions and recommendations.

I. Sessions

a. Annual Session

- i. The Commission shall convene in an Annual Session, in the autumn of each year, to consider *inter alia* the Commissioner-General's Annual Report prior to its submission to the UN General Assembly.

b. Regular Sessions

- i. The Commission shall meet in one or more Regular Sessions between the Annual Sessions, at times determined in the annual Calendar of Meetings of the Commission, and in line with the reporting and annual work cycle of UNRWA and the General Assembly

c. Extraordinary Sessions

- i. An Extraordinary Session may be convened in order to discuss urgent business, at the request of: the Commissioner-General; the Bureau; or at least three Members.

d. Place of Meetings

- i. Annual and Regular Sessions of the Commission will ordinarily take place in Jordan. With the approval of the Advisory Commission, sessions may be convened under exceptional circumstances in other locations.
- ii. If the Session takes place at a location away from the Headquarters of the Agency, the Government responsible for hosting the meeting will be responsible for additional costs incurred by the Agency in consequence.

e. Notification of Sessions

- i. The Secretariat shall convey to the members the date, place and provisional agenda of each Regular Session at least six weeks before the commencement of each session.

II. Agenda

a. Adoption of the Annual Work Plan

- i. At the final Regular Session of each calendar year, the Commission shall adopt an annual Work Plan and Calendar of Meetings for the following year, in coordination with the Commissioner General. The Calendar shall be synchronized with the annual and biennial work cycles of UNRWA, the UN's consolidated annual calendar of meetings, and statutory reporting requirements of the Agency.
- ii. The annual Work Plan shall be prepared by the Secretariat under the direction of the Bureau, in consultation with Members and Observers.

b. Adoption of the Agenda

- i. A Provisional Agenda for each Regular and Extraordinary Session shall be prepared by the Secretariat under the direction of the Bureau, which will consult with Members and Observers. The agenda will include proposals made by the Commissioner General.
- ii. The Agenda shall be adopted at the beginning of each session.

III. Submission of Reports

a. Annual Report

- i. Before submitting his or her Annual Report on the work of the Agency to the UN General Assembly, the Commissioner General forwards it to the Advisory Commission, for its consideration;
- ii. The Advisory Commission agrees on the letter directed to the Commissioner General, which comments on the Annual Report and the work of the Agency. The letter is attached to the Annual Report when submitted to the General Assembly

b. Other Reports

- i. At the discretion of the Bureau, other reports from UNRWA, Members or Observers of the Advisory Commission, other UN organizations, other UN Member States contributing to UNRWA, Specialized Agencies or Inter-Governmental Organizations may be submitted to the Commission for information.
- ii. Members and Observers on an individual or collective basis, studying subjects related to the work of the Agency, in full cooperation and coordination with UNRWA and the host country concerned, and in line with current practice, are encouraged to share reports and information about their activities with the Advisory Commission.

IV. Documentation and Languages

a. Working languages

- i. The working languages of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies for oral proceedings and written documentation shall be Arabic, English and French;
- ii. UNRWA will make every effort to ensure that documentation related to items on the Provisional Agenda of each Regular Session shall be available to Commission members and observers in all three languages four weeks prior to the meeting.

b. Issuance of reports of the Commission

- i. The Commissioner General, with the support of the Advisory Commission, will brief the Hosts and Donors Meeting on the outcome of its proceedings.

V. Agreed Conclusions

- i. Acknowledging the advisory and assisting character of the Advisory Commission, the Commission shall endeavour to reach clear conclusions through consensus on substantive and organizational matters that would be approved by all Members and Observers at the end of the meeting. In the event of significant differences on substantive advice, the Summary Record of the Session shall provide a full account of all views. The Summary Record shall not exceed 15 pages in length, single-spaced, and shall be circulated to Members and Observers, for comments on accuracy within one month of the meeting.

VI. Representation

- i. The names of representatives, alternate representatives and advisers shall be submitted to the Secretariat, if possible, no less than 10 days before the session they are to attend.
- ii. The Secretariat shall circulate the list of participants ahead of the meeting.

VII. Officers and Bureau

- i. Officers of the Commission will consist of a Chair, and a Vice-Chair. Together the two office holders constitute the Bureau;
- ii. The Bureau serves as the link between the Advisory Commission and UNRWA, to promote dialogue and common understanding of issues facing the Commission. It will direct the Secretariat, *inter alia*, in the preparation and organization of Commission Sessions;
- iii. The Bureau provides general direction on the implementation of the Commission's annual Work Plan and facilitates transparent decision-making;
- iv. The Chair and Vice-Chair will each hold office for twelve-month terms, commencing on 1 July. To ensure continuity, the Vice-Chair will become Chair in the subsequent year;
- v. The Chair and Vice Chair will be rotated between Members in the alphabetical order of the country's name, in the English language, alternating between hosts and donors for each position;
- vi. If the Chair is the representative of a Palestine refugee host country, the Vice-Chair shall be a representative of a donor country, and vice-versa;

VIII. Secretariat

- i. UNRWA shall provide the Commission's Secretariat, whose terms of reference will be agreed by the Commission;
- ii. The Commissioner-General will designate a member of the Secretariat to serve as the Secretary of the Commission;
- iii. The responsibilities of the Secretariat will be to assist in arranging meetings and supporting the Chair in ensuring the smooth conduct of the Commission's meetings, to provide background documentation in advance of meetings, and prepare reports on these meetings.

IX. Conduct of Business

- i. The presence of a quorum is required for the convening of Regular, Annual and Extraordinary Sessions of the Commission;
- ii. A quorum shall consist of a double majority of Members, both hosts and donors;
- iii. Proceedings of the Commission shall be conducted in private;
- iv. The Commissioner-General or a member of the Agency designated by him or her as a representative may, at any time, make either oral or written statements to the Advisory Commission or any of its Subsidiary Bodies.
- v. The Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Commission, shall direct the discussion in line with the agreed agenda, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak and announce decisions.
- vi. Subject to these rules, the Chairperson shall have complete control over the proceedings of the Commission and over the maintenance of order at its meetings. He or she shall rule on points of order, which shall take precedence over substantive business. He or she may propose to the Commission the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times the representatives of each Member or Observer may speak on an item of the debate, and the suspension or adjournment of a meeting.

X. Subsidiary Bodies

- i. The Commission may form subsidiary bodies, such as sub- committees. The Commission will study the possibility of establishing ad hoc Working Groups at a future date. These bodies report back to the full Advisory Commission

Sub-committees

- ii. Sub-committees need to be established with the consensus of the full Advisory Commission. These are Committees of the Whole, in which all Members and Observers may participate.
- iii. A sub-committee shall execute its mandate as set by the Advisory Commission
- iv. A sub-committee shall serve for a period decided upon by the Advisory Commission

XI. Consultations on Commissioner-General Nomination

- i. When the UN Secretary General requests to consult with the Commission regarding a nominee for UNRWA Commissioner-General, the Chair will consult with Members and Observers, and draft a letter of reply to the Secretary General giving consensus views.
- ii. If necessary, an Extraordinary Session may be held to discuss the matter.

XII. Participation of Non-Members

Further to the decision of the UN General Assembly (A/C.4/60/L.18 and Rev.1) of December 2005;

- i. Palestine shall be invited to attend and fully participate in the meetings of the Advisory Commission, as an Observer;
- ii. The European Community shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Advisory Commission;
- iii. The League of Arab States shall be invited to attend the Advisory Commission as an Observer.

XIII. Amendments

- i. Amendments to or suspension of these Rules of Procedure can be effected through consensus. This clause will be provisionally adopted for two years after adoption of these Rules of Procedure.

XIV. Untitled

- i. The Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Commission should be in line with UNGA Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949. In case of any conflict in the interpretation of the Rules the Resolution itself shall prevail.