UNRWA Medium Term Strategy
2010 - 2015
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For the population of 4.6 million Palestine refugees we serve, UNRWA’s humanitarian and human development role is as critical today as it has ever been. Throughout the decades since its establishment in 1949, UNRWA has been responsive both to refugee needs and to the exigencies of its operational environment, working closely with its stakeholders and constantly striving through reform and innovation to maximise the impact of its programmes.

This Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is an expression of that spirit. As the blueprint for programmes and field operations from 2010 through 2015, the MTS underscores UNRWA’s fundamental commitment to meeting the human development aspirations of refugees, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable. It affirms that UNRWA’s principal instruments will remain its programmes of basic education, primary health care, social safety-net, infrastructure improvement and microfinance. The MTS also sets out the objectives and priorities that will guide the use of resources as well as the direction of UNRWA’s work.

At the same time, the MTS reflects the reforms and new approaches in programme and operations management that were introduced through the organisational development process and are now part of UNRWA’s ethos. These include an emphasis on rigorous adherence to all components of programme cycle management and on accountability for the delivery of quality services.

The MTS was finalised after a thorough process of internal reflection and consultation with host countries and authorities and donors. As such, it encapsulates shared understandings of how UNRWA can enhance its effectiveness going forward. We harbour no illusions regarding the challenges lying ahead. Yet I am confident that our Medium Term Strategy will not only be a reliable guide, but will also yield concrete results in the form of more efficient and effective services for Palestine refugees.

I am proud to present the MTS to UNRWA’s stakeholders, the most important of whom are the refugees we serve. I trust that within its framework, UNRWA’s efforts will continue to inspire confidence and support from all, while delivering for Palestine refugees the quality of service they deserve.

Karen Koning AbuZayd, Commissioner-General
i) At UNRWA’s creation in 1949, few could have predicted that the Agency would be required to serve the needs of three generations of Palestine refugees. As long as a just and lasting solution to the conflict that displaced them remains elusive, UNRWA will continue to play its unique role in advocating and providing for the human development and humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. This Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is UNRWA’s strategy for its programmes and field operations for the period 2010-2015, and will guide three, two-year cycles of field planning. The MTS is best understood in conjunction with other key documents that outline in detail how the Agency’s strategy will be implemented in practice by UNRWA’s field offices and headquarters departments and through its biennial Programme Budget.

ii) Chapter one describes the Agency’s mission, the context in which it operates, and the planning assumptions guiding the strategy: (i) while the MTS is based on the status quo scenario prevailing, UNRWA must be ready to adapt to new field realities; (ii) continued high staff costs; (iii) the need for better data to support planning; and (iv) the risk to UNRWA’s performance - and especially to quality - from continued underfunding, and the need for better financing overall to enable the strategy to be implemented.

iii) Chapter two describes a new programme strategic framework that provides direction for the Agency based on 15 strategic objectives, each of which contributes to one or more of four human development goals: a long and healthy life; knowledge and skills; a decent standard of living; and human rights enjoyed to the fullest. To help UNRWA focus its scarce resources, the MTS further defines UNRWA’s priority services, of which certain core services will remain common to all fields.

iv) At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to focus on improving the quality of UNRWA services. Over time, in the face of a growing refugee population and static resources, the quality of UNRWA’s services has declined. Providing quality services is not only a necessity for human development, it is fundamental to respecting refugees rights and their dignity. Chapter three describes UNRWA’s commitment to providing quality services, tackling poor quality where it exists and prioritising investment in activities that enhance quality, over other demands. A stronger focus on protecting and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, including giving them priority access to some services, is a second key theme, in response to deepening need among some refugees. Other important themes for the medium term are mainstreaming gender-awareness, strengthening partnerships, and increasing refugee participation.

v) Chapter four sets out directions in UNRWA’s programmes in response to the strategic framework. Under the goals of helping refugees to have a long and healthy life and to acquire knowledge and skills, strategies to ensure access, and to tackle poor quality of services are described for UNRWA’s health and education programmes. To help refugees achieve a decent standard of living, UNRWA will: (i) strengthen its social protection interventions to help the poorest; (ii) expand and better integrate services that help refugees escape poverty through employment, such as technical and vocational training and microfinance opportunities; and (iii) prioritise shelter improvements for vulnerable refugees and pursue a new approach to camp improvement. To help refugees enjoy human rights
to the fullest UNRWA will play an active role in safeguarding the protection needs of Palestine refugees and promoting respect for their rights; promote refugees’ self-reliance; and continue to oversee refugee registration in line with relevant international standards.

vi) The five fields in which UNRWA operates share similarities, but are also somewhat distinctive. Chapter five outlines the defining characteristics and issues in each field context, and key priorities for the medium term. Over time these contextual factors have led to differences in the conditions in which refugees find themselves, and determine what UNRWA can achieve and what must be the focus of UNRWA’s resources and effort. In Jordan the refugee population is the largest of all UNRWA’s fields of operation; in Syria there is high youth unemployment; in Lebanon, need is acute but opportunities have been limited by ongoing denial of rights; in Gaza widespread social and physical devastation results from intensive armed conflict; and in the West Bank, vulnerability is increasing due to the Israeli occupation and in particular the access regime. All UNRWA field offices have planned for the first of the three biennia that will make up the six-year MTS period, guided by UNRWA’s goals and 15 strategic objectives. Field planning, contained in Field Implementation Plans (FIPs) also accords with the Agency’s categorisation of priority services (Chapter two) in which core services, such as basic education and health are common to all five fields. The focus on other priority services varies, depending on field needs and realities.

vii) The Organisational Development process (OD) has laid the foundations of a transformation in UNRWA’s management, of which decentralisation and innovation are core themes. The momentum and benefits of OD will have to be sustained in the Agency far into the future. Chapter six highlights elements of these reforms – already achieved or planned - that will have the most direct impact on improving UNRWA’s ability to deliver the programmes and services outlined in the MTS. First, UNRWA has reviewed its approach to resource mobilisation in response to the Agency’s funding constraints. Second, establishment of strategic planning processes, of which the MTS is a product, will result in the MTS being translated into action through three cycles of detailed FIPs, Headquarters Implementation Plans (HIPs), and two-year Programme Budgets based on the strategy. These documents provide details related to implementation and accountability such as intended outcomes, indicators, targets and baselines, consistent with the direction set out in this MTS. Other drivers of success will be the implementation of results-based budgeting by which resources will be linked to the MTS; improved arrangements for knowledge management, in particular the need to build better capacity to gather and use data on refugees; more robust arrangements for evaluation; human resource management reforms; and stronger risk management and accountability.
Chapter 1
Introduction
Background

1. At UNRWA’s creation in 1949, few could have predicted that the Agency would be required to serve the needs of three generations of Palestine refugees. As long as a just and lasting solution to the conflict that displaced them remains elusive, UNRWA will continue to play its unique role in advocating and providing for the human development and humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees. In doing so, UNRWA exerts a stabilising influence among refugees, and through them on the communities, the host countries and the region in which they live.

2. This document is UNRWA’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) for its programmes from 2010 to 2015. The strategy should be viewed in conjunction with several associated documents, including the Field Implementation Plans, Headquarters Implementation Plans and the Programme Budget which provide details on how the strategy outlined in this MTS will be implemented across different parts of the Agency. The MTS:
   - Explains the context in which UNRWA operates and the implications for the Agency.
   - Sets 15 strategic objectives, and identifies priority services, to guide UNRWA in its operations, in line with the Agency’s vision and four human development goals.
   - Describes the application of the Agency’s strategic objectives in each of the five field locations in which UNRWA operates.
   - Promotes better quality services for Palestine refugees and a focus on vulnerability as its core themes.
   - Pursues protection, gender equality, partnership and participation as essential to UNRWA operations.
   - Highlights the main policy direction and priorities that the Agency will pursue in its services - education, health, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance - and in its response to emergencies.
   - Describes elements of the institutional transformation that UNRWA has undertaken that will have the most direct impact on improving the quality and delivery of services, especially the new programme cycle management approach, which includes a stronger focus on evaluation.

UNRWA’s mandate, mission and vision

3. UNRWA was established under General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 and became operational on 1 May 1950. Its mandate is to respond to the needs of Palestine refugees until a durable and just solution is found to the refugee issue. It is now one of the largest United Nations programmes, with a population of 4.67m Palestine refugees under its mandate, and with around 29,000 staff.

4. The mission of UNRWA is to “help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential in human development under the difficult circumstances in which they live”. The Agency fulfils this mission by providing a variety of essential services within the framework of international standards, to Palestine refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic (SAR). Among United Nations agencies it is unique in delivering services directly to refugees, and as such is similar in character to a public service organisation. UNRWA’s mandate - which derives from the General Assembly and has evolved over time in response to developments in the overall situation in the region - extends at present to providing: education, health, relief and social services, microfinance and emergency assistance to refugees, infrastructure and camp improvement within refugee camps, and refugee protection. The Agency is not responsible for administering camps, or for the rule of law or security within refugee camps or communities.

5. The Agency’s vision is for every Palestine refugee to enjoy the best possible standards of human development, especially:
   - attaining his or her full potential individually and as a family and community member;
   - being an active and productive participant in socio-economic and cultural life; and
   - feeling assured that his or her rights are being defended, protected and preserved.

Context

6. UNRWA works against a backdrop of significant trends and pressures. These affect UNRWA’s ability to realise its objectives and present challenges to which this strategy seeks to respond. The factors include the absence of a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ongoing denial of refugees’ rights and recurrent armed conflict in some UNRWA locations, the policies and contributions of UNRWA’s donor countries, and changes taking place within the refugee population itself.

The quest for a just solution

7. The absence since 1948 of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict contributes to a strong sense of dispossession and injustice among Palestine refugees. This helps to fuel tensions which are exacerbated by the occupation since 1967 of Palestinian territory and by recurrent armed conflict. Intra-Palestinian divisions further aggravate this volatile political climate, creating a challenging operating environment for UNRWA.
8. Furthermore, the failure to reach a solution for the refugees and ongoing conflict perpetuate a climate in which scarce resources are wasted, including aid money: for example UNRWA projects worth USD 93m were suspended in Gaza in 2008 due to border closures there; and considerable UNRWA staff time and resources are lost each year because of access restrictions.

Field contexts

9. The extent to which refugees can live without fear of violence or rights violations, move freely and access public services, employment and property are all factors that determine their prospects for meaningful human development. However, these conditions are critically absent in some field locations, compounding the vulnerability of refugees and adding to the pressures on UNRWA services.

10. In Gaza, a regime of border closures that was intensified during 2007 brought public services, the private sector and the socio-economic situation to a state of near collapse. From 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, intensive armed conflict led to hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries alongside the widespread destruction of refugee homes, civilian and public infrastructure. Almost the entire refugee population was rendered aid-dependent. In the West Bank, the effects of the Israeli occupation, such as the tight regime of access restrictions, settlement expansion along with continuous low-level violence, imposes burdens on daily life that are becoming more permanent, more challenging and demeaning, and more costly to UNRWA and refugees. Intra-Palestinian tension and fighting has had further adverse consequences on the prospects for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). In Lebanon, the government has been supportive of efforts to improve the situation of refugees through action on identity documentation, employment and camp conditions. However, the lack of rights afforded to refugees continues to constrain their human development potential. Moreover, refugees in Lebanon are often directly affected by political crises or armed conflict, as demonstrated by the destruction of Nahr al-Bared in 2007, which led to the displacement of 31,000 refugees.

11. In Jordan and Syria, the environment is more favourable to Palestine refugees, thanks to the willingness of the host governments to permit them civil and economic rights similar to those of their own citizens, or in Jordan’s case to grant them forms of citizenship.

UNRWA’s work and Palestine refugees rely on the help and hospitality of the respective authorities and people in each of the Agency’s fields of operation. The strong relationship of trust and mutual confidence between UNRWA and host authorities is a vital ingredient for UNRWA’s success. UNRWA’s ability to deliver services will continue to depend heavily on the willingness and ability of hosts to help shoulder the burden of safeguarding the rights and hopes of Palestine refugees to live lives of dignity.

Other external factors

12. The global economic climate prevailing as the MTS was prepared is of considerable concern to UNRWA. The economic crisis that began in 2008 had an immediate effect on the Agency, its host countries and refugees themselves. UNRWA’s already uncertain financial situation that year was immediately exacerbated by global increases in the price of food, fuel and commodities and unfavourable currency fluctuations. Refugees most affected by poverty experience these shocks acutely and immediately, when rising food and fuel costs absorb ever larger proportions of their household income or become entirely unaffordable.

Changes in the refugee population

13. In 1950, there were approximately 750,000 Palestine refugees. Their number has increased to 4.67 million in 2008, with an average annual growth rate of three per cent (though this is abating). In the past 20 years the refugee population has nearly doubled. Use of key UNRWA services has increased as a result. Population density (and overcrowding in refugee camps) is amongst the highest in the world and has increased by 18.5 per cent in the last decade. Critical demographic shifts are also apparent. The refugee population is predominantly made up of young people: more than 56 per cent of refugees were under 25 years of age in 2000. In addition, numbers of refugees within camps are slowly declining; only 30 per cent of refugees now live in refugee camps.

14. While the refugee population compares well with middle income countries on some indicators of human development such as infant mortality, life expectancy, adult literacy and immunisation,
the picture is less positive in other areas. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases related to lifestyle is increasing, in line with global trends. There is extreme poverty and vulnerability in all fields of operation, and clear signs that this is worsening in some fields. Unemployment levels among refugees are also high in all fields.13

Planning scenarios and assumptions

16. The continuing elusiveness of a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the related absence of a solution to the plight of refugees, preclude UNRWA from assuming a radical departure from the status quo - as represented by its current role and programme portfolio- in the medium term. Planning is therefore predicated on the continuation of the status quo. But complementary to its main role in providing services, and within the limits of its non-political role, UNRWA has been and will continue to pursue key themes which better equip the Agency and refugees for the possibility of a future solution. These are: (i) taking steps to strengthen its institutional capacity to meet the demands of a transitional process once a just solution is effected; and (ii) promoting activities such as human rights education, participatory approaches and community self-sufficiency amongst refugees so that they may be in a stronger position to contribute positively when peace takes hold (see Chapter 3 on participation). The absence of a solution also affirms the continued need for a role for the Agency in protecting refugees. This includes measures to promote respect for their rights under international law through monitoring, reporting and intervening with relevant actors able to address them (see Chapter 3 on protection).

17. While this MTS is based on the status quo prevailing, UNRWA must be ready to respond to changes in political and economic contexts within the current overall scenario. Political and security developments in particular, may require changes to UNRWA’s focus in certain fields, such as in the level of resources required for emergency planning, and the cost of meeting the needs of refugees sliding into deeper poverty if local economies continue to deteriorate. Should the political and economic environment improve in fields such as West Bank and Gaza, or more rights be afforded to refugees in Lebanon, there will be greater potential to focus on improving livelihood opportunities and poverty reduction in these fields. And though impossible to forecast with any accuracy, UNRWA must also be ready to respond to more fundamental change, leading to a significantly different scenario, should a just solution to the refugee issue emerge.

18. A further planning assumption is that staff costs will continue to absorb the bulk of UNRWA’s budget. This is because the day to day direct delivery of services requires a large number of staff (around 29,000 currently). Due to the pressure on UNRWA to keep pace with respective hosts’ public sector salaries, this situation is likely to remain the same, leaving the Agency’s finances susceptible to economic volatility.

19. The trends within the refugee population described above call for a stronger focus on data gathering, statistical analysis, flexibility and better planning in the Agency (see Chapter 6). This is essential to ensure that UNRWA’s services remain sensitive and responsive to the changing needs of the refugee population. The MTS’s emphasis on ensuring universal access to certain services, reflects recognition that some refugees have difficulty accessing services, often due to vulnerability. Emphasis on employment and increasing opportunities for technical and vocational education is important because of the demographic profile and high
unemployment levels among refugees. And strengthening the Agency’s approach to poverty alleviation is evidence of signs of deepening poverty in several fields.

20. Should host and donor governments experience continued economic pressures, the demands on UNRWA will also intensify. A reduction in host government service provision for example in Syria or Jordan, or a decline in the value of donor contributions to UNRWA would allow only limited realisation of UNRWA’s ambitions as presented in this MTS. Experience in 2008 demonstrated how an unfavourable funding situation generates deficits in UNRWA’s General Fund, leading to compromises in the provision of UNRWA’s core services.

21. The aims contained in this MTS, reflect UNRWA’s assessment of what is required to respond fully to the needs of refugees (as demonstrated by needs assessments in 2008) in the medium term, as well as UNRWA’s capacity to deliver. In the past, the Agency’s budget has been more modest than its assessment of need, given experience of actual patterns of donor income. UNRWA’s voluntary programme financing arrangements will continue to preclude accurate forecasting of income over the medium term. However, this MTS’s objectives and articulation of priority services will be used as a means of responding to changing resource levels in the future. Under continued financial pressure, UNRWA will be guided by this strategy in its allocation of scarce resources.

22. If donor contributions remain static, UNRWA will be able to deliver services only at lower than current quality levels and additional pressure on host authorities may occur. With reductions in the value of contributions over the medium term, further serious compromises in the quality of services, or cuts in certain areas and in staffing would be unavoidable. Full delivery will require better financing than in recent times. An increase in resources, coupled with continued gains in efficiency and effectiveness sought by the Agency, will put UNRWA in a better position to make progress towards the strategic objectives, and on proposals to improve quality. While highlighting the Agency’s need for additional resources, UNRWA recognises that the current economic climate may place constraints on being able to realise extra donor support.
UNRWA Medium Term Strategy 2010 - 2015
Chapter 2
Goals and direction
23. UNRWA’s long period of operation has seen its services stretched and adapted continually to respond to new needs, while the Agency’s core resources have declined in real terms. Data show that with the exception of two periods (1989-91 and 1993-95), income to UNRWA’s General Fund has declined steadily from a high of USD 100 per refugee in 1991 to USD 60.6 in 2006, picking up again slightly in 2007. The regular budget, including the General Fund and in-kind contributions is the Agency’s primary means of sustaining core services. A decline in the value of these resources thus places strain on the Agency’s main operations. The effects of the decline are further magnified by the long term costs arising from under-investment, as in deteriorating infrastructure or acute health conditions caused by poor living conditions. Equivalent declines in real terms in public expenditure, by governments responsible for services similar to those provided by UNRWA, are rare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regular budget income per refugee 1990 PPP USD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>94.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>99.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>100.77</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>1994</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>72.97</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>59.68</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>61.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>59.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>60.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>60.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>62.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>66.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UN statistical division; UNRWA RSS and External Relations

24. As a result of these and other pressures, the decline in the conditions for Palestine refugees and in the Agency’s ability to deliver quality services became increasingly evident in recent years. This was recognised at a major international conference in Geneva in 2004. Following the Geneva conference, UNRWA’s Medium Term Plan (MTP) for 2005-2009 established a new planning framework with the objective of restoring the living conditions of Palestine refugees to acceptable international standards. In the latter stages of the MTP period, UNRWA embraced the need to overhaul its planning processes more comprehensively. To achieve this, the 2008-09 biennium, as described in UNRWA’s Interim Programme Strategy, was a transitional period during which the foundations for the Medium Term Strategy (MTS) were put in place, including: needs assessments, policy review, reflection and dialogue with hosts and donors on the Agency’s purpose and performance, leading to the setting of new priorities and objectives. Many UNRWA staff, refugees and other key stakeholders participated in the preparation of the MTS.

Human development goals

25. As part of its shift to a new planning approach, UNRWA has identified four human development goals that will be the focus of the Agency’s operations. The UN describes human development in the following terms:

*Human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices. Enlarging people’s choices is achieved by expanding human capabilities…. At all levels of development the three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have a decent standard of living. If these basic capabilities are not achieved, many choices are
simply not available and many opportunities remain inaccessible. But the realm of human development goes further: essential areas of choice, highly valued by people, range from political, economic and social opportunities for being creative and productive to enjoying self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community.¹⁶

Following this definition, UNRWA’s goals for the human development of Palestine refugees are:

- A long and healthy life
- Acquired knowledge and skills
- A decent standard of living
- Human rights enjoyed to the fullest extent possible

26. Sixty years after UNRWA’s creation, this definition of the Agency’s mandate for the 21st century reflects an ambition to facilitate the enhancement of human development and self-reliance of refugees to the extent possible until a just solution to their plight is reached. The original focus of the Agency has, over time, been strengthened to reflect international thinking on human development, and a broader understanding of Palestine refugees’ needs. Through quality services and support for their human rights, UNRWA aims to expand the choices and opportunities available to refugees. In addition, its role must often be explicitly humanitarian in response to emergencies, as with the Nahr al-Bared conflict in Lebanon in 2007 and the Gaza war in December 2008.

Strategic objectives and direction

UNRWA will focus its programmes on the achievement of 15 strategic objectives

27. In addition, UNRWA has identified 15 Agency-wide strategic objectives that derive from its mission and support the achievement of the four human development goals above. UNRWA will focus its programmes on the achievement of the strategic objectives. These objectives are to:

i) Ensure universal access to quality, comprehensive primary health care
ii) Protect and promote family health
iii) Prevent and control diseases
iv) Ensure universal access to and coverage of basic education
v) Enhance education quality and outcomes against set standards
vi) Improve access to education opportunities for learners with special educational needs
vii) Reduce abject poverty
viii) Mitigate the effects of emergencies on individuals
ix) Offer inclusive financial services and increased access to credit and savings facilities, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth and the poor
x) Improve employability
xi) Improve the urban environment through sustainable camp development and upgrading of sub-standard infrastructure and accommodation
xii) Ensure service delivery meets the protection needs of beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups
xiii) Safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees by promoting respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law
xiv) Strengthen refugee capacity to formulate and implement sustainable social services in their communities
xv) Ensure Palestine refugee registration and eligibility for UNRWA services are carried out in accordance with relevant international standards

28. The goals, strategic objectives and indicators that accompany them provide direction for the Agency at the highest level (see Annex 1). The framework is ambitious and represents a departure from the Agency’s past practice by emphasising: (i) outcomes instead of inputs as measures of performance; (ii) the Agency’s collective impact over the work of separate programmes. Fields and programmes have applied the new framework – as well as the findings from field needs-assessments – in the course of defining their own priorities, strategies and budgeted work-plans for the first biennium (see Chapter 6). Many of the strategic objectives will not be achieved through UNRWA’s efforts alone. Objectives such as poverty reduction, employability and respect for human rights depend significantly on other factors, such as conditions in host countries or political processes. UNRWA’s impact and its accountability for results will be more direct and measurable at outcome level in Field Implementation Plans (FIPs), though many of the same external factors apply.

Priority services

All fields will sustain UNRWA’s core services and implement second priority services according to field needs and context

29. The strategic objectives provide a clear framework for the Agency’s future direction. However, UNRWA recognises that the possibility of future resource scarcity, coupled with growing demands either as a result of population growth or deepening need, requires that the Agency embrace a clear perspective on how to focus its efforts. A third
element of the policy reflection process was therefore an analysis of the full range of UNRWA’s activities and services. The services in Table 2 are those that UNRWA considers to be the most important among the wide range of its activities.

30. UNRWA has identified a set of core services that respond best to the needs of refugees and are fundamental to enabling refugees to enjoy their basic rights. UNRWA will keep these services at the heart of its work, and field operations will therefore have strong similarities in the provision of these core services. The FIPs for the first biennium are highly consistent in their focus on these activities. The core services should have first call on resources from the General Fund, though in some instances project funding may contribute to their achievement as well.

31. Beyond the non-negotiable core services are other services that remain important to UNRWA’s field operations. This group encompasses services that: (i) meet the needs of the highly vulnerable; and (ii) provide a clear and measurable contribution to the human development of refugees. The difference between these services and those in the set of core (or highest priority) services is that the focus on and scale of investment in the second priority services is more contingent on field specific conditions than the core services. For example, in UNRWA’s conflict-affected fields such as West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon, services which meet the needs of the most vulnerable, or advocacy on protection issues are likely to be a high priority. By contrast, in more stable fields such as Syria and Jordan, economic development or employment promotion services are likely to be highly relevant to refugees’ needs. While some of the second level services will be financed from the General Fund, these activities may be well suited for project financing.

32. The services or activities included in Table 2 are not an exhaustive list of UNRWA’s activities. Those that are not shown are by implication viewed as less central to the Agency’s work in the medium term. Some were specifically identified as being beyond the scope of UNRWA to deliver effectively such as: provision of services where there is an appropriate, alternative service provider; and direct provision of hospital services.
### Table 2: UNRWA’s priority services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest priority: common to all fields</strong></td>
<td>• Basic education</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Comprehensive primary health care</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relief and direct support (cash, food and shelter) to the abject poor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(through safety-net and emergency programmes)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Environmental health; and improvement of critically substandard shelter,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>facilities and infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priority level two: weighting will vary</strong></td>
<td>• Shelter improvement for the most vulnerable</td>
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<tr>
<td>from field to field</td>
<td>• Social services for the most vulnerable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Support for hospital services for selected conditions for the most</td>
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<td></td>
<td>vulnerable</td>
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<td>• Advocacy on protection issues</td>
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<td>a) Services that meet the needs of the highly</td>
<td>• Technical and vocational education</td>
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<tr>
<td>vulnerable</td>
<td>• Credit and microfinance from MD</td>
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<td>• Employment promotion</td>
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<td>And</td>
<td>• Environmental protection activities</td>
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<td>b) Services that provide a clear and measurable</td>
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<td>contribution to the human development of</td>
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<td>Palestine refugees</td>
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Chapter 3
Key themes
33. UNRWA will pursue clear policies and strategies in delivery of all its programmes on a number of cross-cutting themes of equal importance: quality, vulnerable groups, gender, protection, environment, partnership and refugee participation.

Prioritising quality

UNRWA is committed to providing quality services and tackling poor quality where it exists. Investment in quality-enhancing activities will be prioritised, and given preference over other demands on UNRWA.

34. Reflection on UNRWA’s performance highlighted that increasing demands such as pressure to widen the range of services, along with funding constraints had, over the years, resulted in a decline in quality in some aspects of UNRWA services. If services are substandard, UNRWA will fall short of achieving the human development goals that are its purpose. But providing quality services is not only a necessity for human development, it is also fundamental to respect for refugees’ rights and preserving their dignity. UNRWA’s commitment to quality and its mandate to protect refugees’ rights are inseparable. International conventions and other global agreements enshrine inter alia, the right to health, education and shelter. Low quality services represent a collective failure of responsibility towards refugees.

35. Improving quality is therefore a key theme for the medium term. Implicit in the new programme strategic framework is a commitment to enhance quality where it is lacking, and otherwise maintaining or further improving quality within resource constraints. Investment in quality-enhancing activities will be prioritised, and given preference over other demands on UNRWA, such as to expand the coverage, range or quantity of services to new or existing groups of beneficiaries. Full realisation of the Agency’s commitment to better quality will require additional resources for some initiatives.

36. UNRWA is in the process of reviewing three of its major programmes (education, health and relief and social services) and will use the reviews’ findings to identify options for improving quality in the medium term. Several strategies for improving quality are already clear, however. First, UNRWA will seek to invest in quality-enhancing reforms, including, inter alia: skills upgrading of nurses, improving teacher-pupil ratios, building better management information systems and ensuring minimum standards in refugee registration. Because these reforms have costs associated with them, success will depend on adequate resources being available.

37. Second, achieving greater efficiencies in current operations can be a key route to better quality and can often be done with minimal, or without additional, resources. Reforming appointment systems in health so that patient time with doctors is long enough to allow quality consultations; and enhancing the quality of school curricula, are options UNRWA is exploring that are low cost.

38. Third, as described below, working in partnership with others, and prioritising the vulnerable will also help achieve better quality services because they will enable UNRWA to focus resources where they are most needed. Fourth, UNRWA will improve integration between programmes such as between education and health programmes in providing school health; the new camp improvement and infrastructure approach; and emergency programming and RSS programmes in relief assistance to the poorest. The potential for better integration and cross-fertilisation between technical areas has been created by UNRWA’s reorientation to four human development goals, because the scope of activities of UNRWA’s programme departments in several instances spans more than one goal. Changes in the organisation of field level operations as part of OD is also expected to result in stronger interdisciplinary working and inter-programme synergies.

39. Finally, services must, to the extent that resources permit, meet internationally defined input norms and standards (see Annex 2). Programme departments set these standards for UNRWA. The Agency takes them as starting points and aspires to reach them. However, international standards are sometimes beyond the scope of UNRWA to deliver, given the depth of needs of refugees and UNRWA’s resource base, and in other cases are not relevant. In these instances UNRWA: (i) identifies its own context-relevant standards; and (ii) in the course of field-based planning, will strive to move...
services closer to international, host or UNRWA specific standards as appropriate.

40. The purpose of focusing on quality is to improve refugees’ human development as measured by the framework of indicators outlined in Chapter 2 and contained in Annex 1. These include specific strategic objectives concerning better quality, as well as indicators of improved quality that the Agency will measure during the medium term.

Vulnerable groups

**UNRWA will give priority to addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups**

41. Most refugees served by UNRWA are needy. However, UNRWA has identified certain groups that are particularly vulnerable and in need of protection. These groups include, but are not limited to: the abject poor, the elderly, chronically ill, children with special needs, female-headed households and homeless refugees. It is clear that vulnerability is linked to specific circumstances that prevail in UNRWA’s different field locations. In Syria, youth have been identified as particularly vulnerable. In West Bank, “Area C”, Bedouin and herding refugees are among the most vulnerable because of closures and restrictions on movement, while in Gaza high levels of vulnerability can be seen among women and the poor. Some groups have greater needs than others in relation to core services, such as special needs children with regard to education and the chronically ill or disabled with regard to health provision.

42. UNRWA has strengthened its response to the specific vulnerabilities of different groups recently through: (i) the introduction of the proxy-means test formula (PMTF) as a basis for determining eligibility for assistance under the safety-net programme, and the supplementary feeding programme for pregnant women and nursing mothers and (ii) efforts to develop appropriate strategies for children with special educational needs (see strategic objective 6).

43. To protect the vulnerable more in the medium term UNRWA will:

- explore options for the broader application of approaches such as means-testing, which result in priority access for vulnerable groups to certain services. Examples of this include reviewing hospital referral policies, or giving vulnerable groups preferential access to vocational training places. Further work will be needed on appropriate approaches and processes to facilitate this.
- include as priority services: relief and direct support to the abject poor (core service); and shelter, social services, hospital services and advocacy for the highly vulnerable (see Table 2, Chapter 2).
- ensure that planning and programming includes identification of specific vulnerable groups and puts in place effective strategies to meet their needs (similar to the approach described for gender-mainstreaming).
- put in place and implement policies and guidelines on specific groups, including youth and the disabled, as appropriate, to bring the Agency in line with international commitments and best practice.

Gender

**UNRWA will mainstream commitment to gender**

44. UNRWA adopted a new policy on gender equality in 2007, that committed the Agency inter alia to: (i) actively implement the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) conclusions on gender mainstreaming; (ii) use targeted interventions for women and girls to achieve greater empowerment, participation and access to services; (iii) achieve gender balance in employment of men and women in UNRWA; and (iv) give strong leadership to ensure a gender perspective is reflected in Agency policies and programmes. A key recent step towards gender equality has been to extend entitlement for services to the children of refugee women married to non-refugees (MNR). A gradual approach has been taken to implement this commitment to MNRs, especially in locations such as West Bank where there are large numbers of MNRs. Extending the full range of services to MNRs...
45. In the medium term UNRWA will ensure that the gender equality policy is implemented. In particular, gender analysis that highlights the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls in different contexts leading to appropriate follow-up interventions must become a routine part of UNRWA's programming. Action on gender issues is already being taken in all fields, such as the Equality in Action Programme in Gaza which provides recreational spaces, helps women facing domestic violence and offers other forms of social and psychological support. Additional gender issues such as poor educational attainment among boys, and the health needs of men have been highlighted in field needs assessments and require targeted interventions.

46. Activities associated with implementing the gender policy and mainstreaming gender-awareness also include: (i) making use of the recently formalised gender focal-point system in UNRWA; (ii) implementing commitments to gender-sensitive human resources management; (iii) building staff capacity for gender analysis, leading to gender concerns being mainstreamed in all programmes and field plans; (iv) disaggregating data on key indicators by gender; and (v) ensuring effective communication and outreach on gender equality in UNRWA to promote better understanding among internal and external audiences.

47. UNRWA has a mandate to provide ‘protection’, defined by the UN’s Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law (human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law)”. General Assembly resolutions referring to UNRWA have consistently affirmed UNRWA’s protection role, by referring to the “valuable work done by the Agency in providing protection to the Palestinian people, in particular Palestine refugees” and by encouraging the Agency to “make further progress” in addressing the needs and rights of children and women in its operations, in accordance with respectively, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

48. A just and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the ultimate key to achieving full protection for Palestine refugees and the realisation of their rights. While UNRWA’s focus is the provision of humanitarian and development assistance, it is also uniquely placed to advise and support where possible, necessary efforts by other actors toward achieving and implementing a solution. UNRWA’s senior staff will continue to contribute its experience and insights on related matters as appropriate.

49. UNRWA has also recognised the scope for a more explicit focus on ‘protection’ in its own operations. Protection is what UNRWA does to safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees. By so doing the Agency hopes to achieve its vision of every refugee feeling assured that his or her rights are being defended, protected and preserved. UNRWA has taken steps to explore how to embed protection ideas and practice at all levels of the Agency. The importance of this theme for UNRWA is clear from the central place that human rights and protection occupy, as one of four human development goals in the Agency’s strategic framework. Following extensive research and consultation, elements of a strategy on protection have emerged focusing on achieving protection through quality service delivery (strategic objective 12), and action on international protection (strategic objective 13). Senior level
capacity on protection issues has been increased to take forward this agenda in the medium term. UNRWA’s commitment to gender and vulnerable groups, as described above, is also consistent with the Agency’s focus on protection.

Environment

50. Responding to UN commitments on climate change, UNRWA is putting in place an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) that will guide intensified effort to both minimise the negative environmental impacts caused by the Agency, and optimise - as far as possible - opportunities to create environmental benefits. UNRWA’s interventions in relation to strategic objective three (safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, water drainage, and solid waste management) are most relevant here. There is scope for more active programming to promote environmental protection and environmental sustainability within refugee communities, working with refugees as partners. These activities will be pursued subject to field priorities as part of routine programming (see Table 2). In addition, as part of the EMF, UNRWA is committed to playing its part in helping the UN collectively achieve climate neutrality guided by the work of the UN Environmental Management Group. Attempts to analyse carbon emissions from UNRWA facilities have been initiated as a first step. UNRWA will seek over time to reduce its consumption of energy, water and materials in its own facilities, to achieve a reduction in greenhouse emissions associated with its operations.

Working in partnership

UNRWA will seek partnerships with other service providers as a means of providing better access to and quality of services to refugees; and will work with refugees and partners to ensure refugees’ needs are adequately met under these arrangements

51. UNRWA works in partnership with a variety of other organisations and host governments, but recognises the need to increase the range and depth of these relationships in future. Partnership is an important means of enhancing the quality of UNRWA’s services, because it offers the potential for new or critical perspectives on the Agency’s work by outsiders that could lead to better practices. Second, partnership enables UNRWA to better focus its finite resources on providing what others cannot. For example, where other organisations are providing or could provide services of an acceptable quality to refugees cost-effectively, partnership, contracting or out-sourcing agreements may be developed that ensure services are sustained. UNRWA will explore options for such arrangements during the medium term and will work with refugees and partners to ensure smooth transition in these instances to make sure refugees’ needs are met. Third, despite its unique characteristics, UNRWA will continue to play an active role in dialogue with donor organisations, other UN organisations and non-governmental partners to ensure that the Agency’s efforts are fully coordinated with other development and humanitarian efforts. Fourth, UNRWA will explore ways to strengthen coordination and complementarity with host authorities as a means of increasing service effectiveness. UNRWA recognises that enhanced partnerships will improve the Agency’s ability to respond to any significant contextual changes, in a manner that fulfils its obligations to Palestine refugees.

Refugee participation

UNRWA will give greater focus to refugee participation

52. UNRWA already employs a variety of mechanisms for ensuring that refugee voices are heard and help to shape programmes in each field. The Gaza Schools of Excellence Programme engaged parents in the education reform process; the Nahr al-Bared reconstruction planning involved extensive consultation with refugees in line with
the Agency’s camp improvement approach which has refugees’ participation as a central theme; and UNRWA supports more than 100 refugee-administered community-based organisations.

53. UNRWA’s new programme cycle management approach includes a commitment to refugee participation. Specifically, UNRWA will involve refugee communities more in the design and implementation of programmes. The FIP planning process for subsequent biennia will also place stronger emphasis on consulting with refugees. In these ways the Agency will strive to be more accountable and responsive to the needs and voices of refugees. But UNRWA also recognises the link between its present activities and the future needs of refugees in the event that there is peace and a just solution. By building their capacity and self-reliance through greater participation, UNRWA seeks to help build refugees’ preparedness for future horizons.
Chapter 4
Achieving the strategic objectives: programme strategies
A long and healthy life

Context and challenges

54. Guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) on health and environmental sustainability, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the policies and standards of the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNRWA provides basic health services and is responsible for providing safe water and sanitation in refugee camps. Over time, UNRWA has contributed significantly to the improvement of the health status of Palestine refugees. Despite the difficult conditions in which Palestine refugees live, diseases preventable by vaccines and other communicable diseases are under control and infant, child and maternal mortality rates have declined over time.

55. To sustain strong performance to date UNRWA needs to adapt its interventions to better respond to pressures such as population growth, deteriorating conditions that make refugees more vulnerable and new epidemiological challenges. These pressures are already placing the health system under considerable strain, and undermining quality.

56. Approximately three million refugees - 66 per cent of the eligible refugee population - make use of UNRWA health facilities. Refugees do not use UNRWA services if they do not need them, can avail themselves of other services, or are outside UNRWA’s areas of operation. Better data is needed to identify instances where refugees are not using services as a result of barriers to access, such as vulnerability or living in remote locations where there are no services. Field assessments conducted in 2008 also showed that the quality of UNRWA’s health care is hampered in all fields by chronic staff shortages and difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff, deteriorating health infrastructure and outdated equipment as a result of under-investment. The average number of consultations per doctor per day is around 95, leading to short consultation times that reduce the quality of refugees’ interaction with a medical professional. The cost of medical supplies and hospital care is also rising.

57. Other trends in refugees’ health result from their living circumstances: unemployment and insecurity, deepening poverty and poor living conditions. While connection to a water network is close to 98 per cent across UNRWA’s fields, problems of quality and continuity exist. Inadequate storm-water drainage systems, and substandard sewerage systems, including open sewers in many camps pose public health hazards in some locations. Communicable diseases, especially those associated with poor environmental conditions still occur, though at levels similar to those in host country populations. Anemia and iron deficiency, linked to inadequate diet is prevalent among preschool and school age children and pregnant and nursing women. Low
birth weight rates for infants suggest poor health among women. Finally, the Palestine refugee population is undergoing an epidemiological transition similar to many middle income countries in which the occurrence of non-communicable diseases (NCD's), such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hypertension and cancers, is rising.

**Strategic Objectives**

58. There are signs that UNRWA's health system would benefit from significant reform and modernisation in the years ahead to enable it to better deal with growing pressures. New approaches need further examination before implementation, but elements might include more partnerships, more outsourcing of services and focusing on services not provided by others. In the medium term, key steps to shore up the system in advance of broader reforms are needed. Under the goal of enabling Palestine refugees to have a long and healthy life, UNRWA has three strategic objectives for the medium term. These objectives will be achieved through interventions led by UNRWA's health programme and camp improvement and infrastructure programme.

59. i) Ensure universal access to quality, comprehensive primary health care. (Indicator: Percentage of registered Palestine refugees with access to health services). UNRWA will continue to offer comprehensive primary health care, integrating prevention, acute care and chronic care. UNRWA's outpatient care, laboratory, oral and radiology services, provision of medical supplies and physical rehabilitation are the main elements of its primary health provision. While UNRWA's aim is that all eligible refugees who wish to use UNRWA health services have access to them, a particular focus in the medium term - in line with the Agency's broader commitment to focus on the vulnerable - will be ensuring that those who are vulnerable because of specific health needs are given priority. Methods for achieving this will be developed, for example making use of improved data generated by the reformed Refugee Registration Information System (RRIS) (see strategic objective 15).

60. UNRWA will continue to help refugees by subsidising the cost of secondary medical care at public, nongovernmental and private health care facilities. Referral policies for hospital care will be tightened to ensure that resources are focused on the neediest patients. However, direct provision of hospital care is not considered a priority. During the period of this MTS, UNRWA will examine the options for withdrawing from the direct running of a hospital, taking into account the needs of the refugee communities that would be affected.

61. Improving quality in health has been and will remain a key theme for UNRWA. Ensuring that refugees experience high quality health care is fundamental to upholding their rights and dignity. Following a recent review of UNRWA's health programme, the Agency will pursue a number of approaches to achieve better quality and greater efficiency in health services during the medium term. Several of the following initiatives will be realisable only with additional resources:

- take action to increase patient-contact and to tackle the vicious cycle of short, repeat visits through a range of measures such as: training staff to manage their time; streamlining the appointments process, especially spreading appointments through the working day; and community education to address the causes of too many repeat visits by patients and to discourage the unnecessary use of outpatient care.
- introduce practices such as nurse-prescribing, as recommended by WHO and applied with success in many countries.
- ensure health professionals, including health managers, have the right skills and capabilities through training and recruiting.
- introduce better health management information systems, following pilot programmes in Lebanon and Gaza.
- strive for greater complementarity and avoid duplication with other health providers, by scanning the local market and community in each field for opportunities to develop stronger partnerships.
62. **ii) Protect and promote family health.** (Indicators: Infant mortality rate; low birth weight rate). UNRWA will continue its vital work in health promotion and education, giving women of reproductive age ante-natal and post-natal care, family planning services, treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition, early detection of breast cancer as well as infant and child health care and school health services (in collaboration with the education programme). In fields with prolonged or acute emergencies, where mental health is under strain, the Agency will continue to provide community mental health programmes, especially to support children affected by violence or trauma.

63. **Prevent and control diseases.** (Indicators: Outbreak of vector borne diseases; percentage of shelters with access to sewage infrastructure; and percentage of shelters with sustainable access to a drinking water source). Prevention efforts have yielded good results in the past. Under its health programme, UNRWA will continue to provide immunisation, disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and tuberculosis control in every field. There is scope to rebalance the Agency’s efforts in favour of prevention compared with curative services, in particular regarding oral care, and non-communicable diseases related to lifestyle. Efforts to prevent and control diabetes and hypertension, for example, must be intensified if escalating costs of hospital and specialist treatment in future are to be avoided. Joint effort between the health programme and other programmes, especially RSS and education, will be important to optimise opportunities for prevention activities.

64. In addition, UNRWA will continue its work to sustain acceptable environmental conditions in refugee camps, either directly or in collaboration with municipal partners, and as part of the camp improvement approach (strategic objective 11). Key services that must be sustained include operation and maintenance of water supply systems; water quality testing and treatment; solid waste collection and disposal; insect and rodent control; improvement and maintenance of sewers and storm water drainage in camps; and sanitary inspection of public facilities. More efficient practices in solid waste removal and intensive health education in camps to promote healthier environments are important ingredients for success. Better data on the condition of these systems and continued data-gathering on water supply and adequacy of sewerage systems is needed for planning and prioritising environmental health interventions in future and for monitoring achievement of this strategic objective (see Annex 1).

65. **Children have a right to education.** Achieving universal primary education is the second MDG and the international community has committed to work towards better quality education for all. UNRWA operates 668 elementary and preparatory schools, providing free basic education for nearly half a million Palestine refugee children. Over time, UNRWA’s schools established a reputation for low drop-out rates and academic achievement. Literacy rates among Palestine refugees compare well with regional and global levels and there has been gender equity in enrolment since the 1960s.

66. Despite many achievements, significant challenges need to be addressed to sustain UNRWA’s track record in education. First, while in Syria and Jordan UNRWA students often outperform their peers in host government schools, data show that education standards have slipped in other UNRWA locations in recent years. In Gaza, student test results in Arabic and mathematics in 2007 revealed significant underachievement and called for robust action to reverse the decline. Downward trends in performance in UNRWA primary schools in Lebanon and in the West Bank are also apparent. Second, while school enrolment among refugees is high in fields such as West Bank and Gaza, there are indications that this is not the case in other fields, such as Syria and Jordan where enrolment levels are lower than expected. In addition, while drop-out rates are generally low for middle-income countries, some students are not completing basic education. Field needs-assessments pointed to socio-economic and cultural factors such as the pressure to work to support a family - which may explain enrolment levels and drop-out rates in some UNRWA fields.

67. Through its education system, UNRWA has the greatest potential to help Palestine refugee
children to thrive, to achieve their potential and to grow up understanding their rights and respecting the rights of others. Basic education, delivered by UNRWA’s education programme is therefore considered among the highest priorities of all the Agency’s services to refugees (see Table 2, Chapter 2). UNRWA’s education programme also contributes to the strategic objective on employability (strategic objective 10).

Strategic Objectives

68. UNRWA’s objectives for the medium term focus on improving the quality of education, and ensuring access for all Palestine refugee children, including those with special educational needs. A comprehensive review of UNRWA’s approach to education is taking place in 2009. This will help the Agency identify opportunities for innovation and new approaches that will improve quality and access, including through greater efficiencies in programme delivery. The review will also help redefine roles and structures both at the field and headquarters level. The findings of the review will be reflected in future Agency planning.

69. iv) Ensure universal access to and coverage of basic education. (Indicator: Net enrolment rate of registered Palestine refugees in basic education). In order to achieve this objective, UNRWA must first ensure continued operation of its schools and the provision of additional places as the refugee population grows. This means maintaining the basic elements of UNRWA’s education services: staff costs, text books, furniture, equipment and supplies and teacher training. More accurate refugee registration data, improved under UNRWA’s new registration system, will enhance planning of education provision in the future.

70. Whether in UNRWA schools or host authority schools, UNRWA’s objective is to ensure that refugee children are able to achieve their right to education. However, because of difficulties in accessing accurate, detailed and comprehensive data on the refugee population, it has not been possible to date to establish with certainty whether universal access to basic education is being achieved among Palestine refugees. This means that there is a risk that some refugee children may be missing out on their right to education.

71. A clearer picture needs to be established of enrolment rates among all refugees, and action taken to tackle obstacles to access and completion. UNRWA’s education programme will work in partnership with appropriate partners and host authorities to survey enrolment levels, and with UNRWA’s RSS department to better understand the reasons why some children may not be attending school, and to devise appropriate outreach strategies for children not at school, especially those from vulnerable groups.

72. Ensuring the supply of well trained teachers is a vital element of UNRWA’s education programme. As part of a review of the education programme, UNRWA’s pre-service and in-service teacher training will be examined and new approaches put in place as appropriate to ensure that the Agency can source the right numbers of the best-trained teachers across all its fields of operation.

73. v) Enhance education quality and outcomes against set standards. (Indicator: Student achievement levels against unified UNRWA tests). Consistent with the Agency’s overarching commitment to improving service quality, enhancing the quality of education is a high priority. A quality education translates into both academic attainment and behaviours that equip children for life.

74. To know whether education provided by UNRWA is achieving these outcomes, better data on education outcomes is needed than has been available to date. UNRWA will put in place mechanisms for testing children’s performance against normative attainment standards for different ages, as well as other dimensions of education quality. The testing will be independent and transparent, and show how performance levels compare between UNRWA schools, as well as how children at UNRWA schools perform compared to their peers in national and international tests. UNRWA will work with recognised international and regional entities to design and implement these testing arrangements, agencies such as UNESCO, the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) and Ministries of Education. Test results will be used to pinpoint specific problems, to devise effective follow-up strategies, and to appropriately target resources
and deploy expertise to rectify underperformance, where it exists, in UNRWA’s school system.

75. Experience shows that the following factors are instrumental in achieving better quality in education: school expenditure; school facilities; provision of textbooks; smaller class sizes; adequate instructional time; and teacher training and sound teaching practices, especially for children with disadvantaged backgrounds. Field needs-assessments conducted in 2008 already provide a broad picture of quality challenges faced across UNRWA’s fields of operation. Education expenditure per child has declined in real terms; 17 per cent of UNRWA’s schools are deemed to be in unsuitable premises; instructional time and co-curricular activities are curtailed, as a result of double-shifting in 70 per cent of UNRWA schools; class sizes are often high - 65 per cent of UNRWA schools in WB and Gaza have 41-50 pupils in a class; and teacher quality is not consistently adequate. Moreover, there are specific challenges of high levels of violence in schools in some fields, related to the operational environment.

76. The causes of problems in education need to be identified in each field, and followed up with relevant strategies and appropriate levels of funding. Full realisation of UNRWA’s commitment to provide quality education will depend on more adequate financing for the Agency overall. There is scope and need for innovation and learning from experience - such as the Schools of Excellence Programme in Gaza - in devising field-relevant strategies. However, UNRWA sees investment in the following areas as a priority for the medium term, to address known constraints to quality.

- Upgrading the quality of teachers: UNRWA will do this by implementing a Teacher and School Development Strategy, focusing on improving the pedagogical skills of teachers in particular, and making greater use of information and communication technology-based (ICT) approaches.
- Promoting respect for human rights and eliminating violence from schools: Levels of violence in some UNRWA schools are unacceptably high. UNRWA will take action to eliminate all forms of violence, including corporal punishment. UNRWA will also implement well-designed programs in partnership with qualified external partners to give children the strongest foundations in human rights, through dedicated programmes, but also by adapting curriculum and textbook content as needed to reinforce tolerance and respect for human rights.
- Improving school governance: UNRWA will seek to devolve responsibility and accountability to empowered head teachers, so that they can implement solutions relevant to specific schools, and will increase community involvement in the implementation of school-level initiatives.
- Tackling double-shifting, unsuitable school premises, and bringing pupil-to-teacher ratios closer to regional averages. The most effective approach to these issues is to build or obtain additional classroom space or increase the number of teachers. Where possible and most needed, fields will pursue this (Jordan, Gaza and Syria). But where not possible, because of financial or other constraints, alternatives such as developing self-learning materials for children, partnering with other agencies to find venues for co-curricula activities and equipping teachers with pedagogic skills that help them to deal with large class sizes, will be pursued.

77. vi) Improve access to education opportunities for learners with special education needs (SEN). (Indicator: Percentage of SEN children of all children enrolled). Current provision does not meet the needs of the estimated 20 per cent of SEN students who require special assistance. Over the next biennium UNRWA will implement a new framework for support to SEN children, starting with assessments at field level aimed at expert medical and psychosocial diagnosis. These assessments will be followed by appropriate interventions including making facilities accessible to those with mobility impairment; having specially trained teachers in schools; or establishing centres where students with special educational needs can receive additional specialised support. Greater use of partnerships with other service providers that can offer specialist inputs or give SEN children help in non-UNRWA facilities is also needed. In areas such
as Gaza and Lebanon that have been sites of active conflict, there will be special efforts to address the long-lasting emotional and behavioural effects of exposure to violence and traumatic incidents, which impede students’ academic progress.

A decent standard of living

**UNRWA will strengthen its approach to poverty alleviation by building capacity for better poverty analysis, strengthening social protection interventions, and by expanding, and better integrating services that help refugees escape poverty.**

**Context and challenges**

78. To live with dignity, refugees must be able to attain a decent standard of living: the shelter of a safe place to live; confidence that the drinking water is clean; enough food; the opportunity to learn skills that will lead to work; and the chance to escape poverty. The right to a decent standard of living - through adequate shelter, food, clothing and work - are set out in human rights agreements and reinforced in the first MDG, to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, which includes targets to achieve productive employment and decent work61. The UN is also committed to building inclusive financial services for the poor62.

79. UNRWA provides direct support to the poorest refugees under its safety-net programme for approximately 250,000 refugees each year; has trained more than 60,000 graduates in technical and vocational skills; has given microfinance products to around 20,000 refugees; and over time has rehabilitated around 13,500 shelters63.

80. But poverty levels among refugees are high and appear to be increasing, most visibly in the West Bank and Gaza63. Official data for 2007 indicate that around 24 per cent of refugee households in the West Bank, and 50 per cent in Gaza were below the official poverty line, with about 13 per cent (West Bank) and 35 per cent (Gaza) below the deep poverty line65. Between 2006 and 2007 alone, there was an increase of 23 per cent in the number of refugee households living in deep poverty in the oPt, even after assistance66. In the absence of accurate data, UNRWA assumes refugees’ poverty levels in other fields to be roughly equivalent to host country poverty levels, specifically 13 per cent in Jordan, 28.5 per cent in Lebanon and 30 per cent in Syria66.

81. Though definitions vary, at the most extreme UNRWA considers as ‘abject poor’ refugees who cannot meet their food consumption needs. Others are described as ‘absolute poor’, which means they are more able than others to meet food and other basic needs, but by any measure are living a life of extreme hardship60. Among the abject poor, many are likely to remain in their current situation, since disability or age reduces their prospects for making marked changes in their circumstances. In the oPt and in recent years in Lebanon, long term poverty is compounded by the effects of emergencies, which affect many, but impact most on the vulnerable.

82. Other poor refugees would be able to exit poverty, in the absence of emergencies, given the right education, training and employment opportunities. While the economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as limited opportunities for refugees to work in Lebanon are severe limiting factors for poverty reduction, UNRWA can nevertheless make a significant impact on refugees’ livelihood prospects by equipping them - through training or microfinance - and helping them to access the right opportunities to exit poverty. In fields such as Syria, where youth unemployment is 56 per cent, this is especially critical61.
83. And for all refugees, but especially the most vulnerable, UNRWA’s work to improve the quality of refugees’ shelter to acceptable standards remains vital if refugees are to live with the dignity that is their right. Levels of overcrowding among Palestine refugees are high, especially in camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. In Jordan field alone, approximately 15 per cent of shelters within camps are assumed to be in a dilapidated condition.

84. UNRWA’s interventions in support of this goal require an integrated response from its RSS programme, microfinance programme, education programme, and camp improvement and infrastructure programme.

Strategic Objectives

85. vii) Reduce abject poverty. (Indicators: Level of poverty of the abject poor; and percentage of abject poor of all registered Palestine refugees). Reducing poverty calls first, for direct interventions to alleviate the despair of the abject poor by helping them meet basic consumption needs through UNRWA’s social safety net (SSN) programme (formerly the special hardship case programme), and through social protection support from UNRWA’s social workers. In addition to these services, which are led by UNRWA’s RSS programme, helping achieve poverty alleviation among refugees requires UNRWA to do more to provide opportunities for refugees who have a real chance of escaping poverty, especially in Syria and Jordan. UNRWA will therefore strengthen the range of training and economic opportunities that can help refugees escape poverty, as described under strategic objectives 9 and 10, below.

86. UNRWA’s SSN programme has undergone significant reform and innovation. In the medium term refugees classified as ‘abject poor’ - those who cannot meet their basic consumption needs - will be given the highest priority in food and cash relief. This marks an important shift away from eligibility for relief based on status, towards assistance based on real need among refugees. The package of assistance, which amounts at present to the equivalent of USD 110 per capita per year, has also been re-examined to establish whether it makes an impact on the poorest. At current levels the assistance leaves many without sufficient help to reach caloric intake norms or even to reach the abject poverty line (basic consumption needs).

87. However, UNRWA does not have detailed and comprehensive data on the entire refugee population to provide a global picture of need, or facilitate genuine targeting of the neediest refugees. UNRWA has accurate poverty data only on the approximately 250,000 refugees enrolled as special hardship cases. Through a partnership with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics which, in 2007, allowed UNRWA for the first time to benefit from detailed data on refugee living conditions, the Agency has a more accurate understanding of poverty levels in the oPt than in other fields. Strengthening data gathering, as a means to reach those who are not currently registered under the SSN programme is therefore a priority. Where possible, UNRWA will seek to partner with host governments to gather and use poverty data. Building stronger expert capacity within the Agency to gather and analyse data, and use it to plan interventions, will also be a high priority (see Chapter 6 on knowledge management).

88. Although not adequate, available data suggest that significant numbers of poor refugees are not reached with direct assistance. Only 2.4 per cent of refugees in Jordan receive help under the safety net programme, whereas local poverty rates suggest that approximately 13 per cent of refugees are likely to be poor. In Syria, the gap is larger, with 6.5 per cent of refugees receiving help compared to local poverty averages of 30 per cent. Surveys show that external assistance was well targeted but was insufficient to reduce the overall extent and depth of poverty in the oPt in 2007.

89. UNRWA’s SSN programme is delivered through, and is part of a wider social protection framework. Through its network of 266 social workers, UNRWA aims to provide comprehensive social support to the poorest refugees, ensuring that their specific needs are identified and that strategies are put in place to help them escape from poverty. Social workers provide a crucial link between refugees and opportunities available from UNRWA or other service providers. This aspect of UNRWA’s work has been under-resourced, and social worker caseloads are too high. In fields where social protection is a priority, investment is needed to bring caseloads down to acceptable levels or to develop partnerships that enhance the quality and coverage of social protection services.
90. A comprehensive review of UNRWA’s RSS programme is examining the Agency’s social protection interventions, and will determine the most effective approach for the medium term. In particular, UNRWA will ensure that its approach to social protection: (i) employs cost effective approaches that are relevant to UNRWA’s field contexts and that represent best practice; (ii) improves coverage, especially reaching needy refugees that are not currently served by UNRWA; (iii) is effective at relieving abject poverty; and (iv) is coherent with emergency assistance, which provides similar inputs. More investment for this strategic objective is likely to be needed in the medium term, especially if the causes of poverty continue to prevail or intensify.

91. Mitigate the effects of emergencies (both small-scale family and national crises) on individuals. (Indicator: Percentage of affected registered Palestine refugees reached by emergency assistance). Refugees look to UNRWA to support them when crises strike. These may be small-scale family disasters; destitution arising from protracted emergencies (such as in the West Bank and Gaza); or large scale emergencies that cause both immediate devastation to large numbers and have long term consequences (such as in Nahr al-Bared in Lebanon, and the Gaza conflict).

92. UNRWA's RSS programme will continue to respond quickly to the needs of refugees in instances of small-scale family disasters with assistance under the safety-net programme. In the case of protracted crisis, the impact of the emergency is sometimes difficult to distinguish from chronic poverty caused by other factors. The introduction of poverty-based approaches (that measure need) to targeting in emergency and regular social safety-net programmes in Gaza and West Bank will allow for greater harmonisation between emergency support and safety-net assistance.

93. UNRWA will also give priority to sustaining readiness to respond robustly to large-scale emergencies. The right systems, procedures and capacity must exist in the Agency as a whole to support crisis response. Recent progress towards this has been made as part of the Organisational Development (OD) initiative. UNRWA has built capacity to better plan, manage and monitor emergency response through dedicated capacity at headquarters level. At field level, a network of around 30 Operations Support Officers (OSOs) across the Gaza Strip and West Bank and other humanitarian staff support emergency programmes. Changes to procurement procedures have also been made to support rapid response in crisis situations.

94. In fields most vulnerable to crisis, more effective contingency and preparedness planning is also needed. In Gaza, emergency planning, including pre-positioning stocks, identifying shelters, crisis management arrangements and staff training, proved crucial to an effective response during and after the armed conflict in December 2008. In the medium term, UNRWA will work to consolidate similar arrangements to ensure optimal levels of preparedness in relevant fields. Large scale emergencies also require preparedness and a fully integrated response from UNRWA's programmes, for example, to enable health systems to function even during a crisis, to sustain or restart education services quickly and to carry out crucial repairs or reconstruction of shelters or camp infrastructure. Finally, UNRWA is committed to working effectively with other UN or NGO partners as part of coordinated early recovery or reconstruction efforts.

UNRWA will reach full self-reliance and financial self-sufficiency for its microfinance operation as soon as possible, and aim to achieve transformation to full independence by the end of the medium term, in line with international best practice.

95. Offer inclusive financial services and increased access to credit and savings facilities, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth and the poor. (Indicator: Social rating of UNRWA Microfinance Department). UNRWA's Microfinance Department has, since its creation in 1991, financed over 166,000 loans worth USD 181m from a revolving loan capital fund that has grown by USD 1.4m per year to reach USD 23m, including a trust fund of USD 6.88m. The microfinance programme has provided services to over 20,000 refugees, who have received 100,000 loans, through its network of 17 branch offices across four of UNRWA’s five fields of operation. Seventeen per cent of its clients are women and 27 per cent are female-headed households.

96. Well designed and appropriately delivered microfinance services have a direct impact on people's standard of living, and on poverty levels, by promoting economic security and giving opportunities to marginalised groups. They
also contribute to UNRWA’s three other human development goals, because refugees can make use of their access to credit to improve their health, enhance their skills and improve their enjoyment of human rights. Fifty-one per cent of UNRWA microfinance clients report a positive change in their family debt situation, 85 per cent an increase in family autonomy and 49 per cent increased levels of respect within the family as a result of their access to microfinance services\(^7\).

97. The economies in which refugees live are dominated by micro-enterprise, which provide the most significant source of long term sustainable job creation. However, there is very little access to banking or savings services, making it vital that refugees can access microfinance institutions instead, to allow them to finance business and household needs they cannot meet from other sources of income. Studies show that of the UNRWA microfinance programme’s new clients in 2006, 62 per cent had had no previous access to credit from banks or other financial institutions.

98. Data show that there is potentially a market of 1.22m clients for microfinance services compared with the 24,500 clients currently served by UNRWA each year. There is also significant unmet demand for savings services, especially among the poor who are considered ‘unbankable’ in the regional economic context. During the period of this strategy the microfinance programme aims to respond to some of these market realities and to consolidate itself as a leading microfinance institution in the region, in two main ways:

- expanding its network of branch offices to cover all major cities and towns where there are large refugee populations, across UNRWA’s five fields, but especially in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. In so doing, the programme expects to quadruple its current annual lending to more than USD 120m.
- diversifying its loan products in all locations, including pioneering voluntary savings to poor clients.

99. By making these important steps and continuing with internal reforms designed to consolidate the programme’s financial self-sufficiency, the microfinance operation will be increasingly ready to be institutionally independent of UNRWA, and to become an entirely financially self-sustaining operation, akin to a small international banking entity. UNRWA will aim for this transformation within the period of the MTS, as soon as the political and business conditions make this feasible.

100. x) Improve employability. (Indicator: Employment rate of technical and vocational training centre graduates). More than 6,000 students were given places at UNRWA’s technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centres in 2008. Over time more than 60,000 refugees have graduated from TVET courses. UNRWA’s teacher training programme, while supplying UNRWA’s school system with trained teachers, has also been an important route to employability for the refugee community. Through the microfinance programme’s Small and Micro Enterprise Training (SMET) programme, UNRWA also provides 60 short-term business and entrepreneurship training courses to around 1,200 participants each year in Gaza. Job-creation schemes under UNRWA’s emergency programmes provide further short term opportunities for employment, such as in Gaza where 10,000 destitute refugees were given temporary work during 2008\(^7\), Employment rates and opportunities for refugees depend in large part on prevailing economic climates and the policies of host authorities. However, UNRWA has an important role to play in improving refugees’ ability to exploit employment opportunities when they arise, and in so doing helping them avoid or escape unemployment and poverty.

101. The numbers of students participating in technical and vocational training programmes is far lower than demand. Some fields can enrol only 20 per cent of applicants. Over the medium term, UNRWA intends to expand the numbers of places on these courses so that more refugees can benefit. To achieve this, better use of existing training facilities will be made, for example by opening them up to double shifts, or devising shorter courses. This is a high priority, especially in fields such as Syria, where refugees are able to participate fully in employment.

102. Employment rates of graduates from UNRWA courses have been strong to date. Nearly eighty per cent of students who completed TVET courses secured employment within one year of course completion and almost all graduates have obtained employment after graduating
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from one of UNRWA’s three pre-service education institutions. However, there is scope to adapt the type and quality of courses so that they are aligned more fully with market demands and realities. In so doing, UNRWA aims to help refugees gain more relevant skills to compete in the job market.

103. Other priorities will be to provide more assistance to refugees in finding job opportunities, for example through job centres and through more integrated efforts, such as between RSS social workers and education programme staff to target opportunities on the neediest refugees.

UNRWA will prioritise shelter improvements for vulnerable refugees and will pursue a holistic and participatory approach to camp improvement that reflects the social as well as the physical aspects of camps.

104. xi) Improve the urban environment through sustainable camp development and upgrading of sub-standard infrastructure and accommodation. (Indicator: Percentage of critically sub-standard shelters rehabilitated, of all shelters in need of rehabilitation). Following the Geneva conference of 2004, which concluded that improving housing and infrastructure in refugee camps should be given higher priority, UNRWA reviewed its approach to shelter, housing and infrastructure, and in 2006 established a new Camp Improvement and Infrastructure Programme (CIIP)\(^2\). The CIIP is responsible for maintaining UNRWA facilities such as schools and health facilities, environmental infrastructure including water and sewerage systems (see strategic objective 3), improvements in refugee camps and shelter improvement.

105. Field needs-assessments of 2008 and other studies have highlighted that critical problems remain in all these areas, with sub-standard and overcrowded housing (especially in Lebanon, SAR and Jordan), dilapidated schools and health facilities and poor camp environments present in all locations?\(^3\). Underinvestment compared to the growing refugee population and its associated housing needs has, over time, made these problems more acute. UNRWA believes that decent living conditions for refugees is fundamental to their human dignity and does not compromise their right of return.

106. In the medium term, highest priority will be given to improving critically sub-standard shelter, especially for the most vulnerable refugees (see Table 2, Chapter 2). A methodology for determining eligibility for shelter improvement already exists, to ensure that the most vulnerable benefit first. UNRWA’s shelter rehabilitation programme aims to ensure that vulnerable families have at least one room and a kitchen, subject to family size\(^4\). Access to quality water and sanitary facilities are also basic requirements.

107. Given the estimated scale of the challenge regarding shelter - made worse by destruction from crises as in Gaza - and lessons learned from recent UNRWA housing projects, it is clear that UNRWA needs to take a more systematic approach to planning and implementing shelter upgrading. Focusing on bringing the worst shelters up to minimum standards, rather than the more costly approach of demolition and reconstruction will be important to ensure that more refugees benefit from shelter improvements. Priority will be given to the abject poor. A starting point will be establishing a clear baseline of the number of shelters that need rehabilitation.

108. While the proportion of poor households is higher in refugee camps than outside, more refugees live outside camps than within them?\(^5\), and it is well known that there are groups of vulnerable refugees living outside camps, in informal gatherings, for example, where housing conditions are unacceptably low. UNRWA will take
steps to ensure that shelter rehabilitation does not overlook these vulnerable refugees.

109. Including but going beyond shelter, UNRWA has an important role to play in facilitating better planning in camp environments as a whole, including UNRWA facilities, as the latter have a direct bearing on the quality of UNRWA services. A new camp improvement approach has been devised, and has been piloted in the West Bank. In the medium term UNRWA will take steps to embed the principles of this approach at field level as opportunities arise, such as in Nahr al-Bared in Lebanon. The key elements are:

- Strategic planning of needs within camps, replacing the ad hoc approach of the past. Such planning will be done in close collaboration with other partners, especially host authorities who have ultimate responsibility for the camps. The outcome of this planning will be captured in a Camp Improvement Plan, that will guide investments and be a resource for UNRWA FIPs in future.
- Participation of refugee communities in planning and interventions, strengthening their ownership of the development process, building their skills and capacity and thus contributing to UNRWA’s fourth goal, regarding human rights and to the key theme on refugee participation.
- Bringing together UNRWA programmes, into an integrated effort (eg. working with the health programme to plan upgrading of clinics).
- Deploying stronger urban planning expertise, to give coherence to an approach which combines the previously separate efforts of UNRWA’s engineering and environmental health.
- Taking a holistic approach that gives consideration to socio-economic aspects of camp environments, as well as the physical, infrastructure issues.

Human rights enjoyed to the fullest

UNRWA will play an active role in safeguarding the protection needs of refugees

Context and challenges

110. Just and equitable human development requires respect for human rights. Achievement of UNRWA’s first three human development goals relies on the fourth; ensuring that human rights are enjoyed to the fullest. Palestine refugees are entitled to respect of their human rights as laid down in international legal instruments. UNRWA has an important role to play in protection, which means safeguarding and advancing those rights under international law.

111. In addition to a just and durable solution, protection for Palestine refugees means that international law is upheld; that refugees’ rights are realised through the provision of quality services; and that Agency staff recognise protection issues and take adequate account of them in all aspects of their work. As described in Chapter 3, this multi-faceted approach to protection is considered central to UNRWA’s mission in the medium term. For the purposes of operations at field level, the Agency has defined four strategic objectives to help refugees enjoy human rights to the fullest.

112. Ensure service delivery meets the protection needs of beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups. (Indicator: refer to indicators under objectives 1,4,5,6 and 11). Through its service delivery role, UNRWA has direct responsibilities for providing health, education and social welfare functions, similar to the public service organisations of most governments. As described elsewhere, UNRWA is committed to delivering services of higher quality, and in doing so, ensuring that vulnerable groups have the same access as other refugees, or where appropriate preferential access. Upholding the human rights of refugees means protecting their internationally agreed rights to education, to health and to shelter, by providing services that are in accordance with internationally agreed standards. Action to ensure this objective is
reached is planned by fields in relation to goals one, two and three. In other words, protection standards will be integrated into the planning and delivery of UNRWA’s core services. In addition, UNRWA will ensure that protection needs are addressed in all aspects of programming, project design, policies, protocols and procedures as well as in staff training.

113. xiii) Safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees by promoting respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. (Monitor, including through a biennial review of internationally recognised indicators, any progress in ensuring protection for Palestine refugees). The rights and freedoms of Palestine refugees as laid out in international law, humanitarian law and refugee law are frequently ignored or violated by states and authorities in UNRWA fields of operations. This is especially the case in the oPt and Lebanon where critical protection needs arise in addition to those inherent to the situation of all Palestine refugees. The violations relate to a variety of rights: (i) identification and legal status; (ii) the right to life, liberty and the security of the person, denied through deliberate actions by authorities or as a result of lack of law and order or functioning civilian authorities in camps; (iii) the right to recognition as persons before the law, for example through detention without due process; (iv) the right to freedom of movement denied through the access regime in the oPt; and (v) the right to protection from arbitrary displacement.

114. There are clear limitations to UNRWA’s ability to address many of these challenges. However, UNRWA’s widespread presence and direct contact with refugees gives the Agency a unique understanding of the Palestine refugee situation, and therefore a solid foundation for action. Within the limits of its mandate, and in accordance with the General Assembly’s call “upon all parts of the United Nations to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms”79 UNRWA has an important role to play in direct action to deter violations; monitoring violations and interventions to press for remedial action; interventions to ensure due process or release from arbitrary detention; support and advice to individuals; reporting to bodies potentially able to affect protection outcomes; and advocacy at all levels, including through the media and engagement with host governments and the international community to raise the rights of refugees. The presence of international staff, such as the network of OSOs, is a particularly powerful tool at UNRWA’s disposal. To monitor this objective, the Agency will inter alia conduct a biennial review, capturing progress against internationally recognised indicators on refugee protection as these relate to the Palestine refugee context. The review will be carried out in keeping with UNRWA’s mandate and its preparation will involve dialogue with relevant stakeholders. The method for conducting the review will be refined early in the MTS period.

115. xiv) Strengthen refugee capacity to formulate and implement sustainable social services in their communities. (Indicator: number of people benefiting from CBO services). UNRWA works with a network of more than 100 community based organisations (CBOs) across its five fields of operation that reach a further 300 partner organisations. By contrast with UNRWA’s character as a direct service provider, these CBOs and the services they provide are led by refugees. Human development in its broadest sense requires that people have opportunities and choices to shape their own lives. By supporting these organisations, UNRWA’s goal is twofold: (i) to strengthen community participation and capacity to address refugee needs, through services such as micro-credit and community-based rehabilitation for the disabled; and (ii) to promote self-reliance through participation and empowerment among refugees.

116. xv) Ensure Palestine refugee registration and eligibility for UNRWA services are carried out in accordance with relevant international standards. (Indicator: relevant UNRWA standards to be developed and monitored). UNRWA registers Palestine refugees, and records, verifies and updates their data according to agreed procedures. The systems to support this vital activity have been upgraded recently, with the creation of the Refugee Registration Information System. This will enhance the quality and the safety of refugee data as well as allowing UNRWA to gather other socio-economic data needed for planning (see Chapter 6). UNRWA staff also determine eligibility
for UNRWA services, on a case by case basis, according to strict eligibility criteria.

117. In providing these critical services, UNRWA is committed to upholding relevant international standards in the registration process, especially those concerning refugee protection. The specific standards that apply in UNRWA’s case will be defined early in the MTS period and monitored alongside other indicators at strategic objective level. The goal of these standards - which do not alter the criteria for determining eligibility for refugee status - is to ensure that in the entirety of the registration process and in the procedures determining eligibility for services, nothing takes place that adversely affects refugees’ chances of achieving a fair outcome. In the period covered by this strategy, UNRWA will place renewed emphasis on ensuring that all staff involved in these processes adhere to the highest standards. Because protection standards in registration are a new focus area for UNRWA, it may be necessary to take action to ensure that, where needed, current practice is tightened and improved through training, awareness raising and strong management oversight.
Chapter 5
Achieving the strategic objectives: field operations
The five fields in which UNRWA operates share similarities, but are also in some respects distinctive. Core services, such as basic education and health are common to all five fields. The focus on second priority services will vary depending on field needs, realities and resources.

Field priorities

118. The five fields in which UNRWA operates share similarities, but are also distinctive. In Jordan and Syria most refugees enjoy rights similar to local populations and mostly stable social conditions, which afford them greater opportunities for human development. In Lebanon the defining condition is the limited rights of refugees, reflecting longstanding internal tensions within Lebanon. Widespread devastation from Israel’s military operation in December 2008 followed a period of protracted crisis in the Gaza Strip. Constant, low level violence and restrictions on movement characterise the West Bank. Over time these contextual factors have led to differences in the circumstances in which refugees find themselves, and determine what UNRWA can achieve and what must be the focus of UNRWA’s resources and effort.

119. All UNRWA field offices have planned for the first of the three biennia, guided by the Agency’s goals and 15 strategic objectives. Field planning also accords with the Agency’s categorisation of priority services (see Table 2, Chapter 2). Core services, such as basic education and health are common to all five fields. But while many field offices propose action on second priority services, the focus on these will vary, depending on field needs, realities and resources. This Chapter outlines the defining features and trends of each field context, and key priorities for the medium term.

Jordan

Context

120. Jordan hosts the most refugees of all the five fields in which UNRWA operates. The 1.9m Palestine refugees registered with the Agency constitute 42 per cent of all registered Palestine refugees in the Near East. Only 18 per cent live in the ten official camps. Others live in three unofficial camps, and elsewhere in urban and rural areas, though all share similar socio-economic conditions. The age profile shows a high number of youth, with 49 per cent of refugees aged 24 years or less.

121. Refugees in Jordan benefit from considerable integration into Jordanian society, increasing their prospects for human development and poverty alleviation compared with refugees living in other UNRWA fields. Most Palestine refugees who sought refuge in Jordan in 1948 and the years immediately following, were granted Jordanian nationality under the Jordanian Nationality Law of 1954, though this entitlement does not extend to the more than 130,000 ex-Gazan Palestine refugees from 1967 whose rights are limited and who are therefore more vulnerable.

122. The Jordanian government, through its Department of Palestinian Affairs oversees administrative and security matters in camps. It also supervises the infrastructure, including water pipes, sewage systems, electricity and road maintenance (helping to reduce UNRWA’s need to deliver environmental health services) and the construction of residential and commercial units in the camps.

123. Despite the significant benefits enjoyed by refugees in Jordan due to the government’s policy, Jordan’s context brings unique challenges to UNRWA operations. Many refugees avail themselves of UNRWA services despite the choice of host government or other services. The main challenge is therefore sustaining quality services to the largest refugee population, some of whom are difficult to reach due to their geographical locations outside refugee camps. The depth of need of some refugees in Jordan is also sometimes overlooked, with estimates showing that 250,000 refugees classify as absolute poor, including 35,000 abject poor.

124. Although UNRWA resources have not kept pace with the scale of the challenge and rising costs in Jordan, it is relatively harder than in other fields where UNRWA operates, to generate donor support such as project financing given the relative stability that most refugees enjoy.
**Priorities**

125. In response to these challenges, UNRWA has three main priorities for the medium term. First, Jordan field office will focus on maintaining core services at acceptable quality compared with government provision. In health, UNRWA is losing staff to other organisations where staff benefits are better, and the price of medical supplies, hospital services and fuel prices are rising. Retaining high quality staff, strengthening partnership and collaboration, and where possible integration with Jordanian health authorities are key directions to be pursued. In education, while student performance in UNRWA schools in Jordan is impressive compared with other schools in Jordan, children are succeeding despite highly unsatisfactory school environments. Fifty per cent of schools are in accommodation deemed unsuitable. Overcrowding, and double-shifting in more than 90 per cent of UNRWA's schools in Jordan (compared to double-shifting in only ten per cent of host government schools) make the learning environment sub-optimal. To sustain education performance and quality, a priority for the first biennium in Jordan will be to maintain high quality teachers, as well as upgrading education infrastructure and tackling violence in schools. Action to verify and ensure that refugee children are accessing education either from UNRWA or government schools is also needed.

126. Second, UNRWA in Jordan will intensify efforts to help refugees take advantage of the opportunities for employment and human development afforded to them by the rights they enjoy in Jordan, to reduce their dependency on assistance. In the first biennium, UNRWA's micro-finance programme in Jordan will aim to expand its presence beyond current levels, by opening new branch offices in areas hosting a significant urban population of Palestine refugees. Jordan field office will also seek to make vocational training more widely available in future and to make courses more relevant to the region's job market, to equip more refugees to gain relevant, marketable skills. These opportunities will be focused on vulnerable groups, especially youth in response to Jordan's demographic profile, but also women.

127. Third, UNRWA in Jordan will intensify help for the most vulnerable, especially the abject poor and ex-Gazans. These refugees will be the focus of Jordan field office's poverty alleviation efforts in the first biennium, including direct material and financial assistance, as well as initiatives to promote self-reliance. And in line with the Agency's commitment to protection, UNRWA in Jordan will focus on advocacy and support for ex-Gazans, but will also mainstream human rights concerns throughout its operations, and support vulnerable other groups, in particular refugees with disabilities with targeted programmes.

**Lebanon**

**Context**

128. Around 415,000 Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA in Lebanon, about 50 per cent of whom live in 12 official refugee camps, while others live in 27 ‘gatherings’ along with Lebanese and other communities.

129. The government in Lebanon has recently taken important steps to address the situation of Palestine refugees. In particular, the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) that was established by the government in 2005 has worked actively to address issues such as expanding the number of professions in which refugees can be employed; legalising the status of the approximately 3,000 Non-ID refugees; and actively advocating for the improvement of all Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. Nevertheless, refugees in Lebanon remain marginalised. Although the refugees constitute a sizeable portion of Lebanon's population of 4.5m people, they do not benefit from state social services, health and social benefits, or water and sanitation services, increasing their dependence on UNRWA services.
Palestine refugees in Lebanon are precluded from working in many skilled professions. Under recent law, they were denied the right to own property, or to pass on property they owned to family members. Denial of these rights poses a major obstacle to meaningful human development.

130. As a consequence of the restrictions they face, as well as factors that have limited UNRWA’s impact, refugees in Lebanon exhibit high levels of socio-economic hardship, lower than expected educational attainment and poor health. The unemployment rate within the Palestine refugee community stands at between 13-21 per cent and when employed, refugees in Lebanon often get lower wages and few or no social benefits. Infant mortality rates achieved by UNRWA have worsened since 2004, many refugees report their health conditions as being poor or very poor and levels of psychological distress are thought to be high. Male literacy levels are lower among refugees in Lebanon compared to the national population and to other UNRWA fields.

Priorities

131. Against this backdrop, UNRWA will continue to be a lifeline for refugees in Lebanon, their primary source of education, health and social assistance and a critical advocate for their rights. There is little scope in this context for cutting back services that go beyond what UNRWA provides in other contexts such as secondary education and tertiary health care. The focus for the medium term will be: (i) better health and education quality; (ii) a better standard of living for the poorest refugees; and (iii) protection.

132. UNRWA’s primary health care in Lebanon needs to be overhauled as the highest priority, so that UNRWA delivers a focused set of health services, efficiently and effectively. Key steps to achieve this will include: (i) developing a stronger framework of partnerships with external stakeholders, to ensure that refugees can benefit from comprehensive health care, including secondary and tertiary care; and (ii) re-organising health centres, including better delegation of authority to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Improving the quality of education, especially enhancing academic achievement at primary level in some locations, tackling low results, reducing school drop-out rates and eliminating violence in schools is also needed.

133. There will also be a strong focus on improving the standard of living of the poorest and most vulnerable, through safety-net assistance, shelter, employment, access to credit and community capacity building interventions. Action to improve employment, through training in relevant skills and better employment services to enable refugees to compete in an unfavourable employment environment, will also be an important element. In addition, UNRWA in Lebanon will continue to play a significant role in meeting the needs of large numbers of refugees still displaced and living in appalling conditions following the destruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp in 2007. However, since late 2008 significant progress has been made with the removal of rubble in the camp, the expropriation of land by the government of Lebanon and the initial steps towards reconstruction. This has been achieved with the active support and involvement of the LPDC.

134. The environment in which refugees live in Lebanon is characterised by a fragile security environment that in some instances has resulted in violence, putting refugees at risk. These issues spill over into UNRWA operations, and pose challenges to UNRWA in providing social and economic protection. Particular emphasis will be given to tackling the prevalence of gender-based violence, as well as other types of violence experienced by refugees. Efforts by the government of Lebanon to establish a new human security approach and security arrangements are also expected to prove important.

Syria

Context

135. There are approximately 450,000 registered Palestine refugees in Syria. There are 13 refugee camps in Syria and 75 per cent of refugees live in or around Damascus, within and outside camps.

136. Palestine refugees enjoy similar rights to Syrians,
though not nationality. They are entitled to work, to relocate outside official refugee camps, operate businesses and to own property with some restrictions. They are treated with dignity and respect by the Government of Syria.

140. UNRWA in Syria needs to intensify efforts to improve health services by ensuring provision of an adequate supply of quality drugs to all refugees; reducing the workload of its health staff; expanding referrals for hospital delivery and post-natal care to all pregnant women; and improving sanitary conditions in some of the camps. UNRWA's education programme in Syria will focus on promoting a healthy and safer education environment for children and youth, as well as improving enrolment and completion rates, particularly among boys.

141. To tackle poverty and unemployment, Syria field office will give priority to significantly increasing the number of places available on vocational training courses, streamlining existing courses, adding more short-term courses and maximising training opportunities outside of Damascus. Syria field office's Youth and Business Plan in particular, will help young people better prepare for life and challenges at work, familiarise them with entrepreneurship and provide career counselling starting at the sixth grade. Offering a broader range of microfinance services is another important route to poverty reduction and better employment. In addition, Syria field will seek to give women and people with disabilities assistance such as counselling, legal advice and career guidance, through community and women's centres. If successful, these interventions will reduce pressure on core relief services by increasing refugees' self-reliance. The role of UNRWA's social protection staff will remain vital, for example in helping refugees access opportunities to exit poverty.

142. The rights of Palestine refugees in Syria are largely upheld viis a viis international law and refugee law. But protection for vulnerable groups in Syria, especially the abject poor, youth, women, and the disabled, will be a key theme.

Priorities

137. However, significant challenges remain for UNRWA in responding to important realities in the refugee population. Fifty percent of refugees in Syria are under the age of 25. More than 50 per cent of youth of working age are unemployed. Unemployment rates in some camps are twice as high as nearby Syrian communities, indicating that refugees struggle to compete in the employment market. Social problems such as drugs and alcohol abuse are consequently increasing among refugees in Syria, as are signs of vulnerability to extremist influences and behaviour.

138. Other indicators suggest that the standard of living for Palestine refugees in Syria is declining. Infant mortality rates are 26 per 1000 live births compared to the Syrian population's rate of 14 per 1000 births. UNRWA's education infrastructure in Syria is decrepit and nearly 100 per cent of schools operate on a double-shift basis. Poor education infrastructure and crowded classrooms contribute to rising drop-out rates and with that, heightened risk of social instability. School enrolment levels among refugees are only 82.6 per cent compared with 95 per cent among Syrian nationals, and secondary completion rates are low at 43 per cent compared to 62 per cent among Syrian youth. Women also face significant obstacles in terms of opportunities, restricted mobility as well as high levels of poverty and illiteracy.

139. Because of the politically stable development context, the orientation of UNRWA in Syria, as in Jordan, can be clearly focused on human development in its broadest sense. In the medium term key priorities will be: (i) sustaining quality core services, and (ii) combating youth unemployment and rising poverty levels.
occupied Palestinian territory

Gaza

Context

143. There are approximately 1.06m registered Palestine refugees in Gaza, approximately 47 per cent of whom live in eight camps. The refugee population comprises 74 per cent of the Gazan population.145.

144. Of UNRWA’s five fields of operation, Gaza is the most unstable and violent context for refugees and the delivery of services. Conflict has erupted on a number of occasions with devastating consequences for the population. Between December 27 2008 and January 18 2009, an estimated 1,300 Palestinians were killed, including 410 children, and 5,015 were wounded in the course of an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) operation. A further 13 Israelis were killed and nearly 200 more were injured during the conflict. Thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed as were hundreds of industrial facilities and businesses. UNRWA facilities also sustained considerable damage, including the Agency’s main warehouse in the Gaza field office which was destroyed by Israeli shells.

145. The conflict compounded the already serious effects of an 18 month blockade of Gaza following the June 2007 takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas (which led to Gaza being declared hostile territory by Israel). Human development in Gaza was seriously impeded, even before the conflict of 2008. Poverty levels in Gaza were high, with 35 per cent of refugees households living in deep poverty in 2007 and unemployment at 46 per cent. These dire circumstances resulted in part from the collapse of the private sector, due to the closure regime under which the flow of humanitarian goods, but also goods essential for normal life was obstructed.

146. The aftermath of the military operation was large scale devastation of human and physical capital, reversing development and deepening the aid dependency of Gaza’s whole population, including refugees. Immediately following the conflict, food insecurity was estimated to have risen from 56 per cent to around 75 per cent. Destruction of public and private sector infrastructure was widespread, with grave consequences for the economy, employment and the delivery of public services. The social and psychological impact, especially on children, will be profound and long-lasting.

147. UNRWA’s operations and broader post-conflict recovery efforts will rely on certain enabling conditions which have been critically absent in recent years, accounting in part for the suspension of USD 93m of UNRWA projects in 2008. These conditions are: (i) the functioning of border crossings to allow access for goods, cash and people; (ii) operation of the banking sector and liquidity to enable resumption and sustained private sector activity; (iii) political prerequisites to allow humanitarian and service delivery operations to proceed without political interference and to ensure a stable security situation prevails; and (iv) respect by all actors for international law regarding humanitarian access and UN operations.

Priorities

148. UNRWA played a leading role in immediate humanitarian response to the latest crisis,
providing shelter to 50,000 during the violence, re-opening schools six days after the cease-fire, and then in early recovery efforts in the months after the conflict to allow for normal life to return to refugees in Gaza. But the task of rebuilding the 4,000 homes destroyed (including more than 2,000 refugees’ homes) and peoples’ lives in the aftermath of the conflict will require coordinated, well-funded recovery and reconstruction efforts on a very large scale.

149. In the first biennium of the medium term, UNRWA’s overarching goal in Gaza will be to enable refugees to live a life of dignity by providing quality services. Gaza field office has three main priorities within the overall framework of Agency goals and objectives. First, reviving the education system will be achieved through continued implementation of UNRWA’s innovative Gaza Schools of Excellence programme. The need for this programme is greater following the conflict, given damage to the education system and children’s exposure to violence. The programme will continue to address low educational attainment and to foster better lives for refugee children in Gaza by seeking to eliminate the double-shift system in schools; investing in better teacher training; providing intensive human rights education; dealing with behavioural problems; and putting in place appropriate strategies for children with special educational needs.

150. Second, Gaza field office will intensify efforts to meet the needs of the poorest refugees, including improving access to and delivery of adequate water, sewage and waste management services within camps. Where possible, UNRWA in Gaza will also stimulate economic development opportunities, through both emergency resources and the reformed social safety-net programme. Reconstruction efforts will play an important role in stimulating private sector activity and create opportunities to help people escape the vicious cycle of unemployment and poverty. However, only if the situation in Gaza improves, and the siege is lifted, will it be possible to make sustained impact on poverty, instead of meeting immediate needs.

151. Third, Gaza field office will maintain and consolidate the quality of essential services such as health at current levels, especially optimising the impact of services on vulnerable groups and placing greater focus on prevention, for example through education to foster healthier lifestyles.

152. Continued efforts on protection will also be vital, especially as the needs of specific vulnerable groups become progressively more acute, and because direct violations of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law against the refugee population are commonplace. UNRWA will also continue to insist on the highest standards of political neutrality, and zero-tolerance for violence in all its operations.

West Bank

Context

153. There are approximately 750,000 registered refugees in the West Bank, of whom 25.4 per cent live in 19 refugee camps. Refugees represent 32 per cent of the total population of the West Bank96. Thirty-nine per cent of refugees are aged 18 years and below.

154. Eight years after the onset of the Intifada, the West Bank still faces a protracted crisis with economic, social, political and humanitarian dimensions, due mostly to the worsening of the access regime imposed by the Israeli authorities. Conditions for refugees have been steadily deteriorating, with sporadic crises leading to even more acute suffering. Moreover the political tensions that have affected Palestinian society in the past few years are not likely to decrease, especially since the Gaza crisis in 2008.

155. Between 2006 and 2007 alone, the number of refugee households in the West Bank living in deep poverty, even after UNRWA assistance, rose from 9.9 per cent to 12.9 per cent97. Unemployment levels among Palestinians living in the West Bank are 9 per cent higher than before the Intifada at 26 per cent, with the refugee labour force growing three times as fast as non-refugees. High levels (29 per cent among refugees) of food insecurity are also apparent. In addition, conflict has led to deteriorating camp infrastructure, with people living in worse environments. Sixteen per cent of refugees in WB camps lack sufficient clean water to drink. These trends affect all Palestine refugees, but particular groups of refugees are becoming more vulnerable as a result of access restrictions.

156. Health and education indicators are also worsening. There has been a 100 per cent increase in the number of consultations over the last eight years at UNRWA health facilities; poverty is leading to worse health, including poorer diet; access restrictions are preventing the specific vulnerable groups from reaching health facilities98; and mental health is under strain due to a climate of generalised violence. School test results from 2007 show outcomes have declined compared to 2001 in key subjects at different grades.

157. UNRWA’s operations in the West Bank are directly affected by the Israeli occupation, in particular the closure regime and the effects of the separation Barrier. These restrictions frequently violate international law on humanitarian access, but they also waste UNRWA resources. Approximately
one-quarter of UNRWA employees had not been granted permits to enter Jerusalem to go to work by December 2007. The loss of UNRWA staff time due to incidents concerning access was ten times greater in the first half of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007.

**West Bank - priorities**

158. On current trends - a protracted crisis which witnesses periodic peaks in violence and pressure on the refugee population - the key features of the West Bank field operation must be: (i) maintaining regular, quality services, (ii) meeting the emergency humanitarian and growing basic needs of the refugee population, and (iii) ensuring that those made most vulnerable are adequately reached, prioritised and protected.

159. UNRWA’s health system has functioned well in the West Bank, but in the medium term the challenge will be to respond to increasing demands placed on the system as the Palestinian Authority (PA) health system continues to establish itself, and as the number of people seeking services, including MNR’s, rises. Other pressures derive from the emergence of new health problems, such as mental health problems, linked to life amidst protracted conflict, and communicable disease prevalence, which is made worse by infrastructure destruction and poor environmental health due to military incursions.

160. Robust action must also be taken to improve UNRWA’s education system in the West Bank. The quality of teaching is thought to be in need of particular attention to reverse these trends, as well as improved infrastructure, class size and school safety. To ensure refugees with special educational needs can access education, West Bank field office will also put in place the SEN framework developed by UNRWA’s education programme. As restrictions on movement pose a major obstacle to certain groups of children, WB field office will monitor and constantly adapt its approach to try to ensure children can access education services.

161. UNRWA in the West Bank will aim to ensure an acceptable level of sustenance for the most impoverished and disadvantaged refugees, in particular those unable to cope on a daily basis, for example refugees without a regular source of income, female heads of households or those most affected by access restrictions such as Bedouin in remote localities. More people need to be reached with this assistance as needs deepen. WB field office will also work to improve the urban environment through sustainable camp development and upgrading, giving high priority to refugee participation in planning under the new camp improvement approach.

162. Emergency preparedness and response will also remain a key part of UNRWA’s field operation in WB because sporadic peaks in tension and insecurity progressively shrink peoples’ abilities to sustain their livelihoods. The WB field office aims to ensure that through an integrated approach to emergency planning and UNRWA’s social safety-net programme, people in deep poverty are supported with food and cash, and that appropriate psychosocial support is available to help refugees cope.

163. There is significant scope in West Bank for UNRWA to expand the scale of vocational and technical
training opportunities and to tailor courses better to market conditions in order to help refugees secure stable and meaningful employment. Refugees also need better access to credit and other opportunities to enable them to participate in the labour market.

164. Ongoing confiscation and annexation of land, increased settlements construction, home evictions and demolitions, obstructed access to land, markets and essential services amount to a protection crisis in the West Bank. Protection of refugees is therefore a very high priority for UNRWA in the West Bank. The WB field office will ensure protection needs are met by mainstreaming protection concerns into service delivery; intensifying the focus of programming on reaching vulnerable groups; and putting in place methods for more systematic monitoring and documentation of violations against refugees and UNRWA staff and installations, as well as the mechanisms to refer protection concerns to relevant partner organisations.
Chapter 6
Drivers of success
Recent reforms have laid the foundations of a transformation in UNRWA’s management allowing for change and innovation to take hold and continue in the future, especially in programmatic areas. While the OD process formally comes to an end in 2009, its momentum and benefits will have to be sustained in the Agency far into the future.

165. UNRWA implemented a far-reaching organisational reform process to strengthen the Agency’s capacity to serve Palestine refugees effectively, with the support of donors and host authorities. The Organisational Development (OD) process has laid the foundations of a transformation in UNRWA’s management, allowing for change and innovation to take hold and continue in the future, especially in programmatic areas. While the OD process formally comes to an end in 2009, its momentum and benefits will have to be sustained in the Agency far into the future.

166. Key results and achievements of OD to date include: (i) a change in UNRWA’s organisational design to facilitate decentralisation of functions and processes, as well as delegation of decision-making authority to empowered managers; (ii) establishment of strategic-planning processes and programme cycle management, of which this MTS, the FIPs, HIPs and Programme Budgets are products; (iii) re-engineering of key processes to increase efficiency in programme delivery; and (iv) greater scope for innovation in programming in the Agency, as demonstrated by the Schools of Excellence Programme in Gaza and the Youth and Business Initiative in Syria. During the medium term, this momentum for change and innovation focused on programming approaches will intensify.

167. This Chapter highlights the elements of UNRWA’s institutional reforms - already achieved under OD, or planned - that will have the most direct impact on UNRWA’s ability to deliver the services and quality enhancements outlined in this strategy. These drivers of success are: renewed effort on resource mobilisation; application and embedding of the strategic planning process during three biennia; implementation of results-based budgeting which links resources to the strategy; improved arrangements for knowledge management and evaluation; completing the roll-out of human resource management reforms; and stronger risk management and accountability.

Resource mobilisation

168. With the exception of international staff posts funded by the General Assembly through assessed contributions, UNRWA operations, projects and emergency appeals are funded by the voluntary contributions of donors, around 15 of which provide the largest proportion of funding. Preparation for the MTS prompted the Agency to review its resource mobilisation approach, led by the Agency’s External Relations Department (ERD), in order to address funding constraints and to allow the Agency to implement the MTS.

169. UNRWA’s central objective for its resource mobilisation efforts is to attempt to bridge the funding gaps in the General Fund, Emergency and Projects budget, through more predictable, sufficient and sustainable funding flows. Special attention will be given to reducing the funding gap in the General Fund given the centrality of the General Fund to UNRWA’s core operations. One means to achieve this could be broadening UNRWA’s donor base to include a wider range of donors, including from the region. More systematic and coordinated presentation of UNRWA’s work and achievements to UNRWA’s external support base and other interested parties will also be key.

Strategic planning

170. In support of this main objective, stronger internal capacity to lead resource mobilisation activity will be needed. To achieve this UNRWA will optimise internal processes and capabilities that are needed to enhance short and medium term fundraising capacity and performance; and engage a wide range of UNRWA staff in fundraising and other resource mobilisation activity, to leverage increased joint effort within the Agency in support of resource mobilisation goals.

171. A key reform achieved under the OD initiative has been to institutionalise strategic planning in UNRWA. A significant and ambitious set of changes in the methods by which the Agency plans, assign resources to and implements its activities has taken place. The new planning processes are more comprehensive, embedded in the organisation, and more in line with UN
best practice on ‘programme cycle management’ than has been the case in UNRWA previously. As described in Chapter 2, the Agency embarked on a period of critical reflection and dialogue with stakeholders about UNRWA’s future direction during 2007. This was followed in 2008 with the first cycle of detailed needs-assessment at field level. The needs-assessments, along with the data and findings of significant studies on refugees’ living conditions, gave UNRWA a firm basis from which to set strategic direction for the medium term (represented by this MTS); and to prepare Field Implementation Plans (FIPs), Headquarters Implementation Plans (HIPs) and a two-year Programme Budget for the first biennium. The MTS and these additional plans should be seen as a package, with the MTS providing direction and strategy to the Agency as a whole, and the FIPs, HIPs and Programme Budget providing further detail on implementation, such as indicators, baselines and targets.

Implementing the MTS

172. It is through the FIPs, HIPs and two-year Programme Budgets that the MTS will be translated into action. All FIPs are based on the same human development goals and strategic objectives. The first of the FIPs, for 2010-2011 will come into effect at the start of the MTS period. Two further FIP cycles for 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 will also be based on the MTS. The core services of the Agency (see Chapter 2) are present in all FIPs, as are many of the second priority services, though the focus on these varies between fields. At field level, the Agency’s strategic objectives are the starting point for identifying specific ‘outcomes’ or results to be achieved during the biennium, and in turn the outputs and activities which will lead to the outcomes. Finally, the FIPs are based on resource envelopes for each field, using criteria related to human development indicators such as poverty and the number of refugees using certain services to determine resource levels. Gradually, as the Agency’s capacity to gather comprehensive, relevant data on the new indicator framework improves during the medium term, it will be possible to apply this resource allocation mechanism with increasing rigour, leading over time to more evidence-based and transparent allocation of resources in line with field realities.

173. Alongside the FIPs, the Agency will prepare 12 HIPs, one for each headquarters department, including UNRWA’s programme and support service departments. HIPs will be operational plans, containing objectives, indicators, and targets that make clear how an UNRWA headquarters department will provide the support necessary for the Agency to deliver the services and outputs included in the FIPs for each biennium. In some instances, change is needed in the focus and the processes required of headquarters departments in order to deliver the goals of OD and the Agency’s new programme strategic framework.

174. A new organisational design in UNRWA has also reinforced the strategic planning model. The design assigns UNRWA field offices clear responsibility for the planning, implementation and management of operations. Staff capacity for planning has been built during the preparation of the FIPs for the 2010-2011 biennium, through direct experience, but also as a result of intensive
staff training and guidance from UNRWA headquarters to support each stage of the cycle. This new capacity and expertise will make the process stronger in subsequent cycles. In addition, the organisational design gives programme departments responsibility for strategic and technical responses to identified needs as well as the role of setting standards, developing systems and tools, and monitoring performance against standards. The Programme Coordination and Support Unit (PCSU), based in headquarters, assists fields and programme departments in carrying out their respective roles.

175. Strategy preparation has involved many staff at every level of the organisation. At the start of the MTS period, relevant managers will be encouraged to take all necessary steps to communicate and reinforce understanding of the strategy - such as through training - especially among staff less directly involved in planning, so as to further increase ownership of the Agency’s direction and the changes it implies.

Results-based budgeting

176. The MTS, FIPs and HIPs for each biennium will be the basis for a two-year Programme Budget, the first of which will come into effect at the start of 2010. The Programme Budget will apply results-based budgeting in line with UN system reforms. The purpose of this innovation is to link resources directly to the Agency’s MTS. The previous budget coding, which was based on programme inputs, has been adapted so that it will be based on field level ‘outcomes’. Outcomes form the top level of the FIPs and are each linked to one of UNRWA’s 15 strategic objectives.

177. UNRWA has selected at least one indicator for each of the Agency’s 15 strategic objectives (see Annex 1). Gathering data on these indicators will enable the Agency to monitor and measure its impact overall, facilitating more accurate and evidence-based planning and more optimal resource allocation decisions (eg. adjusting the balance as needed between different strategic objectives) at Agency-level in the future. Several of the indicators are intended to generate data that has not been collected by UNRWA in the past, on the circumstances of the whole refugee population across all five fields. Attempting to measure the situation of all refugees - not only those currently using UNRWA services - and disaggregating certain indicators by gender are important innovations implicit in the framework. Programming in poverty reduction, health and education would in particular be improved as a result of better information on all refugees. In addition, the data will be a valuable resource to support UNRWA’s advocacy efforts on behalf of refugees with external partners, and for the purposes of planning in the event of a changed context.

178. FIPs will contain approximately 50 indicators at outcome level and a further 120 indicators against outputs, as well as baselines and targets where appropriate, facilitating monitoring and accountability for the Agency’s results and impact at field level. Over time, indicators at FIP level will also increase the ability of UNRWA field offices to make informed resource allocation decisions within their resource envelopes. Indicators at FIP level reflect the Agency-wide indicators at strategic objective level, but go beyond them as well, to ensure that every dimension of a strategic objective is captured within the monitoring framework. For example, an Agency-level indicator in the MTS that focuses on access, may be supplemented by further indicators at field level (in a FIP) that measure quality.

Knowledge management

Monitoring

179. The need for urgent action to improve data on refugees has become more apparent in recent field needs-assessments and planning for the first biennium. In some cases, this can be achieved through new strategic partnerships with external partners, including host authorities. Where data are not already available, the Agency will need to invest additional resources into collecting that data. Significant improvements during the first biennium in UNRWA’s data gathering (especially to establish baselines on some indicators), and in its monitoring and statistical capacity is therefore needed to facilitate measurement against the indicators at all levels, but especially strategic objective level. Baseline data is available to UNRWA for only a minority of indicators at strategic
180. Support for monitoring is being strengthened at HQ level, through additional capacity within the PCSU, by monitoring staff in the programme departments, and at field level through dedicated units of monitoring staff. With the right levels of investment, the benefits of the new framework and monitoring capacity will be realised during the second and third biennia of the MTS period.

**Management information systems**

181. Related, internal information systems are currently inadequate to support strategic planning and performance management. Immediate improvements in systems for tracking financial information have been made to enable managers to operate budgets assigned to them as part of OD’s decentralisation thrust. But these systems need to be consolidated and replaced by the proposed Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. ERP will provide more comprehensive, accurate and integrated information on cross-functional processes such as finance, procurement and human resources. The Agency needs this information to support planning and decision-making, to increase the transparency of activities, but also to assist with monitoring of performance, as described above. Over time, these benefits are expected to lead to enhanced operational effectiveness, and therefore improved quality of services to refugees which is the purpose of UNRWA’s MTS. The ERP is an ambitious project that will take much of the MTS period to complete.

**Strengthening Human Resources**

182. Better human resource (HR) management is also a key ingredient of success. UNRWA’s large local staff and its smaller complement of international staff are the Agency’s most vital resource. An ambitious agenda of reforms was started as part of OD to bring the Agency in line with HR best practice and to support the shift to decentralisation under OD. Some of these reforms are well underway, such as strengthening capacity at each field for human resource planning and management, so that aspects of HR management can be carried out by field offices directly.

183. Further HR reforms, to be implemented during the first part of the medium term period, are considered vital for strengthening UNRWA’s performance in programme delivery. First, the Agency will ensure that staff are deployed in line with Agency priorities by conducting a comprehensive staffing review of area staff. Second, staff will in future be appraised against a new competency-based performance management framework, which will enable strong performance to be recognised, poor performance addressed and staff to have personal objectives directly linked to the goals of the Agency. Third, UNRWA will take steps to ensure it can attract and retain the best staff through a classification and compensation reform that will streamline grading and remuneration for all staff. Fourth, some restructuring of posts at
field level will ensure that the right level of human resources, and grading of key area posts, is in place to support the stronger role of fields in planning and implementation in the medium term. Finally, high priority will be given to training and skills development at all levels, through a new training strategy that is based on a systematic assessment of training needs. Continued investment in leadership and management development will continue to be a focus of the training strategy.

Risk management
184. UNRWA is exposed to a broad and complex range of risks. These are risks from the external environment such as political instability; risks to programmes and operations such as those arising from underinvestment over time; and risks to UNRWA staff such as security. Risk management allows organisations to understand, evaluate and manage risk and thereby increase the prospects for achieving goals and objectives. UNRWA recognises the need for a greater focus on risk-management in the Agency, including determining acceptable levels of tolerance for certain risks. In view of this, and in line with strengthened emphasis on risk management within the UN as a whole, UNRWA has analysed the risks it faces and is putting in place a framework for risk-management. This will consist of risk mitigation and prevention measures as well as policies and tools to facilitate decision-making based on more systematic risk analysis than has been carried out in the past.

185. UNRWA faces a high level of security risk due to the volatile environment in several of its fields. UNRWA is committed to the highest standards of vigilance and action to minimise risk faced by staff. The Agency seeks the highest levels of compliance with the UN Department of Safety and Security's regulations for both international and area staff alike. And in line with UN-wide commitments to security, UNRWA will, in its programming and planning, take into account the principles of: (i) “no programme without security” by ensuring that the conditions under which programmes or projects will take place are properly appraised for their staff security implications, making use of the UN’s security risk management framework as appropriate; and (ii) “no security without resources”.

Evaluation
186. UNRWA aims to be an organisation that learns lessons from experience and uses learning to drive change and innovation in its operations. To foster this culture of learning, and to rectify past weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation, UNRWA has put in place a monitoring and evaluation policy and associated institutional arrangements to align the Agency with international best practice. Significant steps have already been taken in training staff on monitoring and evaluation as part of the introduction of the new programme cycle management approach described above. Major reviews of UNRWA’s health, education, and relief and social services programmes have also been commissioned to identify potential for improvement and innovation in the delivery of these services.

187. During the MTS period, UNRWA will ensure implementation of the monitoring and evaluation policy, through the recently established evaluation function in UNRWA headquarters, that will have dedicated resources and be independent of programmes. The evaluation function will commission and support external evaluations on issues of strategic relevance in line with the MTS, and will work to ensure that the findings of evaluations are used to drive learning, innovation, and better performance and accountability within the Agency. UNRWA will define appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that lessons from evaluation lead to appropriate follow-up action. The MTS and its framework of goals, objectives and indicators provides the basis for evaluation going forward.

Accountability
188. The reforms described in this Chapter provide key elements of a new culture of accountability being established in UNRWA to drive better results during the medium term. As the OD process is brought to a conclusion, these elements, and others such as changes in organisational design described in other UNRWA documents, are being formalised into a clear accountability framework. The framework will ensure that there is clear definition across the Agency of roles and responsibilities; delegated authority; and accountability of managers and senior staff for all major steps in operational, managerial and administrative processes.

189. High priority will be attached during the MTS period to reporting on, and accountability for, performance against the programme strategic framework (Annex 1). At outcome, output and activity level, contained in the FIPs, accountability for performance rests with the appropriate managers under the overall accountability of Field Directors. UNRWA will establish a regular pattern of stock-taking, as well as a biennial cycle of internal review by the Management Committee of performance against FIPs. The Agency will also monitor progress towards the 15 strategic objectives, by tracking the indicators selected for each objective. Achievement of all strategic objectives depends on: (i) the Agency’s
performance; (ii) sufficient resources being made available to the Agency by its donors; and (iii) external factors. When reporting on the programme strategic framework, UNRWA will highlight the impact of other factors as well as its own performance. In future, the programme strategic framework will provide the basis for the Commissioner-General’s reports to the General Assembly in line with mandated obligations. UNRWA will also share information with the Advisory Commission on progress at this level.

190. Taken together, the new accountability framework, and the reforms related to programme implementation outlined in this Chapter, provide a basis for stronger accountability at each level within UNRWA: accountability of the Agency as a whole to the community of donors from which it receives financial support; accountability of UNRWA staff for performance of their respective responsibilities; and ultimately accountability of UNRWA to the refugees it serves, for quality programmes and services.
**Annex 1: Programme strategic framework**

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<thead>
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<th>Goal 1</th>
<th>Goal 2</th>
<th>Goal 3</th>
<th>Goal 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A long and healthy life</strong></td>
<td><strong>Knowledge and skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>A decent standard of living</strong></td>
<td><strong>Human rights enjoyed to the fullest</strong></td>
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<td>SO 1: Ensure universal access to quality, comprehensive primary health care</td>
<td>SO 4: Ensure universal access to and coverage of basic education</td>
<td>SO 7: Reduce abject poverty</td>
<td>SO 12: Ensure service delivery meets the protection needs of beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Net enrolment rate of registered Palestine refugees in basic education</td>
<td><strong>Indicators:</strong> Level of poverty of the abject poor as defined by UNRWA RSS. Percentage of abject poor (as defined by UNRWA) of all registered Palestine refugees</td>
<td>Refer to indicators under SO 1, 4, 5, 6, and 11</td>
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<td>Percentage of registered Palestine refugees with access to health services. (The quality standard for health delivery will be defined by the end of the biennium 2010-11) (For the 2010-11 FIP only: percentage of marginalised reached using field definitions of marginalised)</td>
<td>(For the 2010-11 FIP only: (i) percentage of marginalised / underserved reached as defined by fields (ii) percentage of SEN children of all children enrolled)</td>
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<td>SO 2: Protect and promote family health</td>
<td>SO 5: Enhance education quality and outcomes against set standards</td>
<td>SO 8: Mitigate the effects of emergencies (both small-scale family emergencies and national crises) on individuals</td>
<td>SO 13: Safeguard and advance the rights of Palestine refugees by promoting respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law.</td>
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<td><strong>Indicators:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Student achievement levels against unified UNRWA tests</td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Percentage of affected registered Palestine refugees reached by emergency assistance (through UNRWA or other organisations)</td>
<td>Monitor, including through a biennial review of internationally recognised indicators, any progress in ensuring protection for Palestine refugees.</td>
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<td>Infant mortality rate</td>
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<td>Low birth weight rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baselines: Infant mortality: 22/1000 live births (2008)*</td>
<td>Baseline: Student achievement levels against unified UNRWA tests</td>
<td>Baseline: Percentage of affected registered Palestine refugees reached by emergency assistance (through UNRWA or other organisations)</td>
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<td>Low birth weight rate 6.1 per cent (2008)</td>
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<td>SO 3: Prevent and control diseases</td>
<td>SO 6: Improve access to education opportunities for learners with special educational needs</td>
<td>SO 9: Offer inclusive financial services and increased access to credit and savings facilities, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, youth and the poor</td>
<td>SO 14: Strengthen refugee capacity to formulate and implement sustainable social services in their communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Percentage of SEN children of all children enrolled</td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Social rating of UNRWA Microfinance Department</td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Number of people benefiting from CBO services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbreak of vector borne diseases</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of shelters with access to sewage infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of shelters with sustainable access to a drinking water source</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baselines: 85 per cent of camp shelters connected to sewage infrastructure 99.8 per cent of camp shelters connected to water source</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO 10: Improve employability</td>
<td>SO 11: Improve the urban environment through sustainable camp development and upgrading of substandard infrastructure and accommodation</td>
<td>SO 15: Ensure Palestine refugee registration and eligibility for UNRWA services are carried out in accordance with relevant international standards</td>
<td>Relevant UNRWA standards developed and monitored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Employment rate of technical and vocational training centre graduates</td>
<td><strong>Indicator:</strong> Percentage of critically substandard shelters rehabilitated, of all shelters in need of rehabilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline: 77.4 per cent of VTC graduates (2006/7)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*where not stated baselines are being established*
## Annex 2: Input standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Relevant International or UNRWA Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Education**        | **International**  
UNICEF Child-Friendly Schools norms for safe and violence-free schools  
Host country norms for contact, formal instructional time and curricula  
**UNRWA specific**  
Pupil-classroom ratio  
Pupil-teacher ratio  
Area per child                                                                                   |
|                      | **Health**  
WHO protocols on diagnosis and treatment  
WHO/CDG standard case definition for surveillance  
WHO health system coverage norms  
SPHERE standards for emergency situations  
**UNRWA specific**  
Technical instruction (TI) for clinical management  
TI for laboratory services  
Model formulary for essential medicines  
Standards for epidemiological surveillance  
Standards for mapping health data  
Standards for health infrastructure construction  
Workload standards for doctors and dentists                                                                                           |
|                      | **Emergencies**  
SPHERE standards for emergency situations (food aid, health, water/sanitation, shelter, non-food items  
**UNRWA specific**  
Poverty benchmarking for emergency social safety net support (food aid, cash assistance, temporary employment)                                                                                       |
|                      | **Infrastructure**  
British Standard 8110 for structural design  
USA Uniform Building Code for Seismic Resistance  
WHO minimum of 20 litres of water per person per day  
WHO standards for design of health centres  
Fire safety: The Building Regulation 2000 (SI 2000/2531) (UK)  
Accessibility: American with Disability Act (ADA), based on ANSI A117.1-1980  
**UNRWA specific**  
Specification for materials and testing                                                                                                     |
|                      | **Microfinance**  
International Finance Reporting Standards  
Annual External Audit  
Finance rating (tri-annually)  
Annual Impact Assessment Study  
**UNRWA specific**  
Social Performance management ratings                                                                                                       |
|                      | **Relief and Social Services**  
Convention (1951) and Protocol (1967) Relating to the Status of Refugees  
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)  
Portfolio Report Standards (CGAP)  
CBR: A strategy for rehabilitation, equalisation of opportunities, poverty reduction and social inclusion of people with disabilities. ILO, UNESCO and WHO.  
**UNRWA Specific**  
Field-specific abject and absolute poverty lines  
Host country social protection standards including benefit levels  
Standards for refugee registration process  
Social worker caseload norms                                                                                                           |
Annex 3: How the MTS is linked to implementation plans and the Programme Budget.

Context (external)
absence of a solution; UNRWA fields of operation; global factors; changes in refugee population; donor resources.

Drivers of success (internal)
Foundations laid by OD; strategic planning (programme cycle management); results-based budgeting; resources mobilisation strategy; knowledge management and monitoring; human resource reform; risk management; evaluation; accountability.

FIPs:
• Respond to needs assessments and host context
• Allocate resources envelopes in line with Agency level objectives priority and key themes in MTS
• Set outcomes and outputs, indicators and targets

1st biennium: focus on data gathering and establishing accountability framework

2nd biennium: FIPs and HIPs reflect lessons learnt and evaluations completed during first biennium

(end of) 3rd biennium: evaluation of MTS

Biennial review of performance against FIPs and HIPs

MTS 2010 - 2015
• Agency strategic direction
• Objectives & high level indicators
  • Priority services
  • Key themes
• Programme & field office priorities
• Drivers of success

Programme Budget (2 years)

FIPs 2010 - 11
HIPs 2010 - 11
FIPs 2012 - 13
HIPs 2012 - 13
FIPs 2014 - 15
HIPs 2014 - 15

Programme Budget (2 years)

Programme Budget (2 years)

programme budget 2 years

Drivers of success (internal)

* quality, vulnerable groups, gender, protection, environment, partnership, participation
1. Palestine Refugees ‘are persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. Palestine Refugees, and descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are eligible to register for UNRWA services. The Agency accepts new applications from persons who wish to be registered as Palestine Refugees. Once they are registered with UNRWA, persons in this category are referred to as Registered Refugees or as Registered Palestine Refugees’. The following additional groups are registered for the purposes of receiving UNRWA services, but are not counted as part of the official Registered Refugee population of the Agency: Jerusalem Poor and Gaza Poor; Frontier Villagers; Compromise Cases; Married to a Non-Refugee (MNR) family members; Non-refugee wives; Kalafah children. In addition, several groups that are not registered in UNRWA’s registration system are categorised as eligible to receive UNRWA services, including: persons displaced as a result of the 1967 and subsequent hostilities; persons identified by the CG as eligible to receive services; beneficiaries under Emergency programmes; recipients of UNRWA’s microfinance programme; UNRWA staff family members; non-registered persons living in refugee camps and communities. UNRWA (2006) Consolidated Eligibility and Registration Instructions, Department of Relief and Social Services.


7. Ex-Gazan refugees in Jordan are unable to access basic rights and services provided by the host government.


13. See UNRWA Field needs assessments, 2008.

14. The Regular Budget includes UNRWA’s General Fund and in kind contributions. It does not include Emergency contributions or project funding.


In 1948, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has been recognised as guaranteeing the right to education. The declaration states that: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory; education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial or religious groups…” The right to education has also been enshrined in a range of international conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social And Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), the Convention on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and more recently, the Convention On The Rights of The Child (CRC, 1989).


Overcrowded housing levels in camps were found to be 71 per cent in Lebanon, 73 per cent in SAR and 70 per cent in Jordan. IUED (2007) “The living conditions of the Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank; A Synthesis Report.”

UNRWA’s average across all fields is 256 per social worker.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two optional Protocols, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its two Optional Protocols, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, the Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Protocol, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the purposes of UNRWA and the MTS, “refugee law” refers to aspects of the framework of instruments, international practice and evolving principles that are applicable to ensuring the protection of Palestinians who have been recognized as refugees under UNRWA’s mandate. See also www.un.org/unrwa/publications/pubs07/UNRWA_pr_en.pdf

General Assembly A/Res/60/1. 2005 World Summit Outcome, para 119.

Drawing on UNHCR standards regarding refugee registration as appropriate.

Criteria for refugee registration are contained in UNRWA (2006) Consolidated Eligibility and Registration Instructions, Department of Relief and Social Services.

UNRWA Registration Statistical Bulletin, First Quarter 2008

“Any person with previous Palestinian nationality (except the Jew) before the date of May 14, 1948 residing in the Kingdom during the period from December 1947 to February 16 1954 is a Jordanian citizen”. Jordanian nationality law 1954
86. UNRWA Lebanon Field Needs Assessment, 2008
87. Illiteracy among males is 17 per cent compared to the national average of nine per cent.
88. UNRWA Syria draft FIP, December 2008
89. UNRWA Syria Field Needs Assessment, 2008
90. UNRWA Gaza Field Needs Assessment, 2008
91. “Quick-response Plan to restore critical services to refugees in Gaza”, January – September 2009, UNRWA
92. UNRWA briefing paper “Living levels, Poverty and Social Safety net assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory, 2007”, November 2008, and “Analysis of the poverty definitions, available statistical information and poverty patterns in the Palestinian territories – Gaza Strip”, UNRWA.
93. Relates to second half of 2007. “The Gaza Strip Labour Market in 2007”, UNRWA Briefing Paper, May 2008, Table 4.8. The surge in unemployment after mid-2007 was due to extraordinary circumstances: 1) PA employees not reporting to work per the directive of the PA leadership in Ramallah; 2) private sector worker displacement due to a lack of raw materials and fuels due to the intensified Israeli siege.
95. November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access
98. This includes refugees in isolated localities such as those surrounded by the ‘Barrier’ or in the ‘Seam Zone’, those close to checkpoints, or Bedouin encampments; vulnerable groups such as elderly, chronically sick, youth and women from isolated villages; women of reproductive age and children; and people exposed to violence and abuse. UNRWA West Bank Field Needs assessment, 2008.
100. IUED (2007) ‘The living conditions of the Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank: A Synthesis Report’
101. The Microfinance Department has been placed in the operational management cluster because of its nature as a going-concern.
102. Data to support some of the indicators will not be immediately available.
103. A review of international staff took place in 2008
105. Ibid.
107. UNRWA Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, May 2008

Glossary

CBO Community Based Organisation
CIIIP Camp Improvement and Infrastructure Programme
ECOSOC United Nations Economic and Social Council
EMF Environmental Management Framework
ERP Enterprise Resource Planning
FIP Field Implementation Plan
GF General Fund
HIP Headquarters Implementation Plan
LPDC Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee
MDG Millennium Development Goal
MNR Married to a Non-Refugee
MTS Medium Term Strategy
OD Organisational Development
oPt occupied Palestinian territory
OSSOs Operations Support Officers
PA Palestinian Authority
PCSU Programme Coordination and Support Unit
RRIS Refugee Registration Information System
SAR Syrian Arab Republic
SEN Special Educational Needs
SSN Social Safety Net
TVET Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USD United States Dollar
WB West Bank
WHO World Health Organisation