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VISIT TO CANADA OF THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF
THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST
(UNRWA)

The Honourable Charles Lapointe, Minister of State (External Relations), announced today that Mr. Olof Rydbeck, Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) will visit Ottawa on April 28 and 29, 1983.

UNRWA is responsible, through humanitarian relief, health and education programmes for the welfare of 1.9 million Palestinian refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. UNRWA is funded through voluntary contributions from member states of the United Nations. Its financial requirements in 1983 will amount to about US \$206 million.

In addition to meeting with the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Mr. Rydbeck will be holding discussions with officials of the Department of External Affairs, and the Canadian International Development Agency concerning UNRWA's programmes, the situation of the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and future Canadian support for the Agency.

Since the inception of UNRWA in 1949, Canada has been a major contributor, reflecting the deep concern of the Government of Canada for the plight of the Palestinian refugees. In total contributions to UNRWA, Canada is the sixth largest donor, with US\$69.5 million contributed to the Agency since 1950.