

the disquiet they felt about rumours concerning a discontinuance or diminution of UNRWA's services. Mr. Chairman, my Delegation also believes that the realization of peaceful conditions and the achievement of progress toward the resolution of the refugee problem will only come about if there is a general recognition of the rights of all members of the United Nations to exist and prosper.

Mr. Chairman, there are many aspects of the Commissioner-General's report which merit careful examination by this Committee. I should like to suggest that two separate but related problems mentioned in the report demand special attention. I am sure all members will agree that the Assembly accomplished a major aim last year by renewing UNRWA's mandate. As the question of the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA is not before the General Assembly this year, I hope, that in our debate we can concentrate on the operations of the Agency, rather than debate at length the origins of the refugee problem. Last year the General Assembly did not, unfortunately, take the opportunity to provide the Commissioner General with concrete instructions on how to deal with any short-fall that might occur in UNRWA's finances. Mr. Michelmore was faced with the possibility that owing to lack of revenue he might be forced to curtail UNRWA's operations without direction from the Assembly. It was only due to the efforts of Mr. Michelmore and the devotion of his staff as well as the generosity of a few countries that this was averted. Reference should also be made to the assistance extended by the host countries and by a few United Nations Specialized Agencies such as the World Health Organization and UNESCO. Although it is, I am sure, our common hope that UNRWA's financial requirements will be met, we cannot ignore the grave financial difficulties facing the Agency and the possibility that it may, despite all efforts, find itself in a situation in which a cut in its programme will be unavoidable. There is, of course, Mr. Chairman, one means whereby contributing countries could assist in meeting this difficulty. As the Committee is aware, during the last few years, UNRWA's budgetary deficits have been offset by withdrawals from the Agency's working capital. This has now fallen below the level required to finance continuing operations at the normal level during the first half of each year pending receipt of contributions. The problem would be considerably eased if governments gave priority to the payment of contributions to UNRWA's budget, so that the agency could get along with reduced working capital.

The second point which my Delegation believes demands special attention is the financial problem itself. In the past the financial burden of supporting UNRWA has been borne in the main by a relatively small number of countries.