

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(75) 549 final

Brussels, 29 October 1975

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

TO THE COUNCIL

CONCERNING EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO UNRWA

COM(75) 549 final

EXPOSE DES MOTIFS

1. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is in a grave financial crisis and has appealed to the Commission for Community assistance. This appeal has been strongly supported by the Government of Jordan, which has made an official approach to the Commission; further such representations are expected in the next few days.
  
2. UNRWA faces a deficit for 1975 of some \$13 million, and will have to reduce or even terminate its operations six weeks from now if further contributions are not found.
  
3. Great efforts have been made recently by UNRWA to increase its contribution income, especially from Arab states. Saudi Arabia has raised its contribution from \$ 1 m to \$ 11 m, and pledges have been made by other governments. On the political level, declarations of support have been made by Syria and the PLO; Jordan has been pursuing a vigorous campaign in support of the Agency.
  
4. Within the United Nations, the working group on the finances of UNRWA (in which certain member States participate) has made a special report calling attention to the serious situation. The current President of the General Assembly has made the following declaration : "Unless additional monetary contributions are made to "the agency in the immediate future it will face the tragic necessity "of reducing or even terminating its humanitarian services to the "Palestine refugees in the weeks to come. Any reduction in these "services would cause widespread human suffering and could produce "unforeseeable political consequences in the area. I urge you "to give this special report of the working group your careful "consideration and to draw the critical situation it describes to the "urgent attention of your governments. In our opinion time is of "the essence".

5. The Commission cannot propose any monetary contribution from Community funds in view of the current budgetary limitations. There is no possibility of repeating the special contribution made in 1974 of some \$ 7 m. in support of UNRWA's education programmes. However the Commission urges member states to consider most carefully the possibility of bilateral contributions.

6. It is therefore proposed that the appropriate Community response is a grant of additional food aid. As a result of events in Lebanon, UNRWA is being forced to make substantial purchases of flour in the Near-East, and has appealed to the Commission for an emergency grant of 5000 tons cereals in the form of wheat flour, for delivery cif Aqaba. This amount could be taken from the remaining reserves (13589 t) under the 1974-75 food aid programme, and could be financed from credits already provided for this purpose in the 1975 budget. The value at current world prices can be estimated at around three quarters of a million dollars.

7. In view of the real urgency, the Council is asked to decide very rapidly and if possible by 5 November 1975, so that delivery procedures can be put in hand at once.

#### DECISION PROPOSED

An additional 5000 tons of cereals is allocated to UNRWA as emergency food aid, to be taken from the reserve set up within the 1974-75 cereals scheme of implementation, for delivery cif.