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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

by

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before the Fourth Committee

of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Agenda Item 49: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugee in the Near East**

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(Check against delivery)

Madam Chair,

1. Thailand wishes to thank UNRWA for the briefing and, more importantly, for the untiring and selfless efforts on the ground where they are needed most.

2. UNRWA's words, actions and sacrifices remind us of its critical role in providing services and much needed assistance for, as well as protecting the rights and dignity of Palestine refugees.

3. Our thoughts and prayers are with those still carrying out their duties to provide the much-needed help to people suffering daily.

4. Our deepest condolences go to those personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice as they undertook, under very difficult circumstances, to alleviate the suffering and improving the livelihood of the Palestinian people.

Madam Chair,

5. The escalation of hostilities and violence in the Middle East is unprecedented. While the work of UNRWA is still keeping the torch of hope alive, we need to do much more, as we are very much in a race against time. I therefore wish to make the following three points.

6. First, ending violence and people's suffering must be our top and urgent priority.

7. We welcome the resolution adopted at the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly on "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations" last week. Its implementation is most critical to saving lives.

8. Thailand joins the calls and demands of the resolution for establishing an immediate humanitarian truce, full compliance with obligations under international law, and the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being illegally held captive, while demanding their safety, well-being and humane treatment.

9. All parties must comply with International Humanitarian Law as it is fundamental not just for putting an end to the situation, but also for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to enable UNRWA and other humanitarian workers to attend effectively to the needs of affected people.

10. Humanitarian assistance and basic necessities must be urgently provided, and full, immediate, safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access must be ensured. The plea made earlier by UNRWA on this matter should be heeded.

11. Every minute can cost or save lives. So every minute counts.

12. Second, we welcome the announcement of commitments and contributions in recent weeks to support the work of UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies in response to the needs from the recent violence in the Middle East.

13. But the additional support needs to be sustained.

14. UNRWA's budget from voluntary contributions has been falling far short of the needs for easing the already difficult humanitarian situation faced by Palestine refugees, even before the latest crisis. There have also been fluctuations and uncertainties in contributions as UNRWA faces financing challenges.

15. With the ongoing violence, the funding gap could grow even larger.

16. We commend UNRWA's effort to broaden and diversify its donor base, including the private sector and international financial institutions. While we hope that this approach will continue on all occasions possible, we encourage Member States and other partners to shore up their support to enable UNRWA to deliver aid with better efficiency and resilience.

17. For our part, Thailand has made a contribution of 80,000 US dollars for the Emergency Flash Appeal, in addition to the 200,000 US dollars multi-year pledge for 2022-2026. This contribution was just handed over to the UN side by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand in Bangkok earlier today.

18. This makes Thailand one of the regular contributors to UNRWA for the past 45 years. We will continue to do so in support for the livelihood of Palestine refugees.

19. Third and lastly, we need to renew our commitment to achieving peace in the Middle East.

20. The work of UNRWA is essential to the livelihood of Palestine refugees. But we cannot afford to have no ending in sight to the cause of their suffering.

21. The Middle East issue can only be resolved by peaceful means.

22. We reaffirm our support for genuine dialogue with a view to finding a mutually agreed peaceful solution to the issue, in accordance with the two-State solution, by which the states of Israel and Palestine, live side-by-side in peace and security, within secure and recognized borders, consistent with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

23. To this end, it is imperative that we take immediate steps to de-escalate the ongoing situation, refrain from further provocations and implement an immediate ceasefire.

24. In tandem with this, humanitarian assistance should be provided immediately and hostages should be released and returned safely at the earliest opportunity.

25. Let us begin a virtuous cycle of compassion and constructive action that will help end suffering as soon as possible. Let us always keep our sight on our shared goal of moving back to the path of peace.

Madam Chair,

26. Next year will mark UNRWA's 75th anniversary. Let us have achievements that will enable us to mark this anniversary with hope rather than despair.

27. Despite the darkness of the hour, we will always look for the light of day.

28. And, Madam Chair, UNRWA is an important source of that light. So Thailand will continue to do its part in supporting the Agency in its work, which we hope will help build momentum towards a sustaining peace anchored on human security and sustainable development.

29. Thank you, Madam Chair.
