

President, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour to address you today at the Commitment Plenary of the WHS on behalf of UNRWA and the 5.2 million Palestine Refugees we are proud to serve.

UNRWA is deeply committed to the principles and goals of the WHS and its call for action.

Firstly, because the Summit's goal of ensuring "**One Humanity**" encapsulates all of UNRWA's vital work to provide opportunity, hope and self-reliance to Palestine refugees and to ensure the dignity and worth of each individual of a vulnerable and deprived community which continues to suffer from an historic injustice.

Secondly, because UNRWA closely aligns itself to the **core responsibilities** set out in the Secretary General's "Agenda for Humanity". The realisation of these responsibilities in the context of Palestine refugees - the need to uphold the norms that safeguard humanity, leaving no-one behind, investing in humanity, changing people's needs and above all exercising political leadership to end the underlying conflict in accordance with international law and UN resolutions - are keys to making Palestine refugees' lives better and engendering hope for the future.

Thirdly, UNRWA has been motivated by the WHS to reflect on **the commitments** it can make to provide better quality services more efficiently and effectively to Palestine refugees within the framework of its UN mandate. I say this with the knowledge that UNRWA has set high standards in education, health and microfinance, earning the trust and the respect of our partners, including host governments and donors.

With unique abilities to **combine development and humanitarian operations** at scale in conflict and other settings, UNRWA is ready to share its experience since bringing these streams of support together is essential in today's world of unsolved conflicts and long displacements.

UNRWA has crafted an **ambitious set of commitments** in support of the WHS. Let me highlight just some of these:

Firstly, we have subscribed to the **Grand Bargain on Humanitarian Financing**. In this context we will continue to expand the use of cash based programming, already over 50%, in providing humanitarian assistance to poor and deprived Palestine refugees wherever they are located. We are streamlining management costs and are ready to work more transparently with donors on accountability. From our side, we seek donor understanding to provide greater multiyear financing and to reduce earmarking of financial contributions. This will help to make UNRWA more efficient and improve our services. We will also enhance engagement with Palestine refugees receiving aid to ensure that they take greater part in the decisions which affect them.

Secondly, we commit to ensuring that the **fundamental right to education** is realised for all 500,000 Palestine refugee children even during times of crises and conflict. In this context UNRWA will continue to innovate by developing techniques for educating children in situations of conflict. I invite you to visit our exhibition here "Developing Education on The Frontlines: the UNRWA approach" which displays some of these.

Thirdly, we commit to implementing the **Charter and Action Plan on Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action** and will ensure that its policy and strategic frameworks, including in relation to emergency preparedness and contingency plans, include provisions for the needs of persons with disabilities including for women and girls.

Fourthly, UNRWA commits to further its efforts to implement more effective emergency response strategies inspired by the principles of universal health coverage.

Fifthly, UNRWA will advocate with all relevant duty bearers and stakeholders for the **protection of Palestine refugees** through compliance with international law. We will liaise with relevant authorities to promote the protection of UNRWA personnel during conflict and strengthen (within the resources available) its safety and security policies and procedures for all staff.

In closing let me affirm again the **centrality of humanity** in UNRWA's work. I think of the young Palestine refugee children I have met such as Batoul and Ahed who have lost their families and home to conflict in Gaza and Syria. Both are now high achievers in UNRWA schools and building a future of dignity and self-reliance. Like countless other Palestine refugees children they rely on our support and we will not let them down. They must not be left behind.