



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-SIXTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

A56/58
22 May 2003

First report of Committee B

On the proposal of the Committee on Nominations,¹ Dr R. Constantinu (Romania), Mr So Se Pong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) were elected Vice-Chairmen, and Mrs C. Velasquez (Venezuela), Rapporteur.

Committee B held its first meeting on 22 May under the chairmanship of Mr L. Rokovada (Fiji).

It was decided to recommend to the Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly the adoption of the attached resolution relating to the following agenda item:

19. Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

¹ Document A56/54.

Agenda item 19

Health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine

The Fifty-sixth World Health Assembly,

Mindful of the basic principle established in the WHO Constitution, which affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security;

Recalling all its previous resolutions on the health conditions in the occupied Arab territories;

Recalling with appreciation the report of the Director-General¹ on the health conditions of and assistance to the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine;

Expressing its deep concern at the deterioration of the health conditions as a result of the Israeli military acts against the Palestinian people since 28 September 2000, acts such as firing on civilians, deliberate extra-judicial killing, which caused hundreds of deaths and tens of thousands of injuries among Palestinians, including a large number of children; imposition of siege on Palestinian areas, thus preventing medicines and food from reaching towns, villages and refugee camps, obstruction of the circulation of ambulances, injuring a number of ambulance crew members and denial of access of injured people to hospitals and health institutions, thus condemning them to death;

Expressing its grave concern at the continued acts of aggression which have caused large-scale death and injury among Palestinians, thus increasing the toll of casualties which have so far reached thousands killed and tens of thousands wounded since 28 September 2000;

Expressing its grave concern at the grave violations by the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories of international humanitarian law and international public law, as well as their adverse effects on public health;

Stressing the integrity of the entire occupied Palestinian territory and the importance of guaranteeing the freedom of movement of persons, medical products and goods within the Palestinian territory, including the removal of restrictions on the movement into and from East Jerusalem and the freedom of movement to and from the Palestinian territories, particularly for the wounded and sick;

Bearing in mind the adverse effects of the continued closure of the Palestinian territory on the health sector, particularly the children who have been prevented from receiving vaccination for over 20 months, leading to high risk of infectious diseases and epidemics among children, whereas vaccination and immunization against infectious diseases constitute a basic right of every child in the world;

Noting with deep anxiety and concern the deterioration resulting from the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians, including medical teams and its negative impact on

¹ Document A56/44.

health programmes, especially on mother-and-child related programmes, vaccination, reproductive health, family planning, epidemic control, school health, control of drinking-water safety, insect control, mental health and health education;

Expressing its deep concern at the serious deterioration of the economic situation in the Palestinian territory which has become a serious threat to the Palestinian health system, aggravated by the withholding by Israel of funds due to the Palestinian Authority, including health insurance income;

Affirming that the risks menacing public health are increasing as a result of the Israeli military incursions in the occupied Palestinian territories, imposition of closures and curfews on various areas, the refusal by Israel to honour the payment of taxes due to the Palestinian National Authority, the need to secure the resources necessary for assuring basic needs, prevention of every access to places such as education premises, markets and medical clinics, the decrease in the level of vaccinations, the complications imposed on patients suffering from chronic diseases such as cardiovascular conditions, cancer or kidney problems;

Affirming that the Israeli occupation prevents access of the Palestinian people to basic services, including health services;

Affirming that the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories undermines efforts to maintain public health and endangers people's security; and furthermore that its consequences will certainly have an adverse effect on public health;

Affirming the need to increase health support and assistance for Palestinian populations in the regions under the control of the Palestinian Authority and for the Arab populations in the occupied territories, including Palestinians and the population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

Reaffirming the right of Palestinian patients and medical staff to benefit from health facilities available in the Palestinian Health Institutions in occupied East Jerusalem;

Affirming the need to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and health assistance to the Arab populations in the occupied territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan;

Having considered the reports on health conditions of, and assistance to, the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, particularly the Director-General's report,¹

1. RECOGNIZES that the Israeli occupation is a serious health problem because of the serious threat it poses to the health and lives of Palestinian citizens;
2. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS the persistence of the Israeli acts of aggression against Palestinian towns and camps, which have resulted so far in the death and injury of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including women and children;
3. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS firing on ambulances and paramedical personnel by the Israel army of occupation, preventing ambulances and cars of the International Committee of the Red Cross from reaching the wounded and the dead to transport them to hospitals, thus leaving the wounded bleeding to death in the streets;

¹ Document A56/44.

4. AFFIRMS the need to support the efforts of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to continue to provide emergency services, deliver health and disease prevention programmes, receive further casualties in the future and deal with thousands of cases suffering from physical and mental disabilities;
5. CALLS on Israel to release all the funds due to the Palestinian Authority, including health insurance dues;
6. URGES Member States, intergovernmental, nongovernmental and regional organizations to extend urgent and generous assistance to bring about health development for the Palestinian people and meet its urgent humanitarian needs;
7. EXTENDS ITS THANKS AND APPRECIATION to the Director-General for her report¹ and for her continued efforts of providing necessary assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories;
8. STRONGLY DENOUNCES the refusal by the Israeli occupation authorities to allow the Director-General to visit the occupied Palestinian territories to undertake her missions in accordance with World Health Assembly resolutions;
9. REQUESTS the immediate institution of a fact-finding committee on the deterioration of the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and enable this committee to undertake its role in the soonest possible time;
10. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to take urgent steps in cooperation with Member States to support the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its efforts to overcome the current difficulties, in particular so as to guarantee the free movement of those responsible for health, patients, of health workers and of emergency services, and the normal provision of medical goods to Palestinian medical premises, including those in Jerusalem;
 - (2) to continue providing both the necessary technical assistance to support health programmes and projects for the Palestinian people and emergency humanitarian assistance to meet needs arising from the current crisis;
 - (3) to take the necessary steps and make the contracts needed to obtain funding from various sources including extrabudgetary sources, to meet the urgent health needs of the Palestinian people;
 - (4) to continue her efforts to implement the special health assistance programme, taking into consideration the health plan of the Palestinian people, and adapt it to the health needs of the Palestinian people;
 - (5) to report on the implementation of this resolution to the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly.

= = =

¹ Document A56/44.