



UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY
FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

PROGRAMME BUDGET
2024 – 2025

August 2023

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALO	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
ANC	Antenatal care
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CIPs	Camp improvement plans
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DIOS	Department of Internal Oversight Services
DLP	Digital Learning Platform
DP	Daily Paid
EA	Emergency Appeal
EiE	Education in emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESF	Education Science Faculty
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FESA	Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts
FHT	Family health team
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GBV	Gender-based violence
GES	Gender Equality Strategy
HQs	Headquarters
ICT4E	Information and Communication Technology for Education
ISC	Indirect support cost
IT	Information technology
JCP	Job Creation Programme
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
NCD	Non-communicable disease
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PB	Programme Budget
PHC	Primary health care
PMTF	Proxy-means testing formula
PNC	Post-natal care
PRS	Palestinian Refugees from Syria
PSEA	Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RB	Regular Budget
ReMOS	Resource Mobilization and Outreach Strategy
RSS	Relief and social services
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programme
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNBOA	United Nations Board of Auditors
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICC	United Nations International Computing Centre
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN-SWAP	UN-System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US\$	United States dollar
WHO	World Health Organization
XB	Extra Budgetary

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2024-25 BIENNIUM BUDGET

OVERALL ORIENTATION

- 1.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA or “the Agency”) was established within the United Nations (UN) system as a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) under resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 and became operational on 1 May 1950. Through this and subsequent resolutions, the Agency is responsible for the provision of assistance and protection to Palestine Refugees. Its mandate is renewed by the UNGA every three years, most recently through resolution 77/122 of 12 December 2022. Since starting operations, UNRWA has adapted and enhanced its programmes to meet the increasingly complex needs of Palestine Refugees and to provide them with a measure of protection and stability amid chronic instability in the region. The Agency is unique amongst UN organisations in its direct service delivery model and contribution to the welfare and human development of Palestine Refugees. UNRWA is the main provider of public-like basic services – education, health and relief and social services (RSS) – for the benefit of 5.9 million¹ registered Palestine refugees across the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.² The Agency stands ready to continue operations during the 2024-25 biennium in accordance with the mandate received from the UNGA; however chronic underfunding of the Programme Budget (PB) poses significant risks to its operational viability.
- 1.2 The UNRWA Commissioner-General reports directly to the UNGA. Overall advice and support regarding Agency programming are provided to the Commissioner-General by an Advisory Commission, currently comprised of 29 members and 4 observers, including representatives of UNRWA’s major donors and host countries.
- 1.3 The mission of the Agency is to help Palestine Refugees achieve their full potential in human development under the difficult circumstances in which they live. In line with this mission, and as defined in the UNRWA Strategic Plan 2023-28, the Agency works towards the following seven objectives: (i) Palestine Refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law; (ii) Palestine Refugees lead healthy lives; (iii) Palestine Refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education; (iv) Palestine Refugees have improved livelihood opportunities; (v) the most vulnerable Palestine Refugees have access to effective social assistance systems; (vi) Palestine Refugees are able to meet their basic human

¹ UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard, Quarter 2 2023, UNRWA, <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/relief-and-social-services/unrwa-registered-population-dashboard>

² All further reference to the West Bank in this document is to be read as including East Jerusalem.

needs of shelter, water and sanitation; and (vii) UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly.

- 1.4 To realize the seven objectives listed above, the Agency will maintain and strive to modernize, including through digitalization, the provision of protection, education, health, relief, microfinance and infrastructure and camp improvement services³ for the benefit of Palestine Refugees in its area of operations.
- 1.5 UNRWA directly contributes to 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across its five fields of operation to ensure that Palestine Refugees are not left behind. The Agency's contribution to the fulfillment of the SDGs is also reflected in its Strategic Plan 2023-28. Like the SDGs, the Strategic Plan recognizes that advancing human development for Palestine Refugees requires a multi-dimensional approach involving poverty alleviation, respect for human rights, access to quality health and educational services and actions to reduce inequality and promote economic empowerment.
- 1.6 UNRWA also provides emergency assistance to close to two million Palestine Refugees in acute distress as a result of occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the blockade of the Gaza Strip, armed conflict in Syria, economic collapse in Lebanon and Syria and the lingering socio-economic impacts of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the war in Ukraine across all fields of operation.⁴ The Agency assumes that this assistance will continue to be required during the 2024-25 biennium, while the ability to sustain this assistance at current levels will become increasingly challenging. UNRWA will also maintain services to Palestine Refugees and other persons displaced as a result of the 1967 and subsequent hostilities in accordance with relevant UNGA resolutions, including 2252 (ES-V), 74/84, and 73/93.
- 1.7 During the upcoming biennium, the Agency will expand and invest in its renewed and enhanced protection function, embedded within a human rights-based approach, with a view to meeting the needs of Palestine refugee women, children, persons with disabilities, youth and other vulnerable groups. These efforts will be informed by relevant resolutions of the UNGA, including paragraph 34 of resolution 77/122 and subsequent resolutions, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other applicable international instruments and best practice.
- 1.8 UNRWA is also committed to enhancing environmental sustainability in its operations and within the broader Palestine refugee community. To this end, the Agency will seek to ensure that its operations are delivered in an environmentally sustainable way and recognizes the key role it has to play in minimizing the negative environmental impact of its operations and in raising environmental awareness within Palestine refugee communities.
- 1.9 The modernization of UNRWA services will also be a priority in 2024 and 2025. By doing so, the Agency aims to improve the quality and accessibility of its services, broaden opportunities for Palestine Refugees and reinforce its status as a highly cost-efficient organization. A key element of the modernization drive

³ Infrastructure and camp improvement services are provided within refugee camps.

⁴ The caseload pertains to emergency food and/or cash assistance extended in 2022. For further information on the caseload of UNRWA services, please see: [UNRWA Statistics Bulletin](https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/unrwa-statistics-bulletin), <https://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/unrwa-statistics-bulletin>.

will include digitalization. Through its Digital Transformation Strategy for 2022-26,⁵ UNRWA will strengthen the quality of its delivery of registration, health, education and livelihood services by ensuring greater integration of programmes, faster delivery and increased access to information for refugees. The Agency will also increasingly digitalize the number of internal business processes and adopt digital tools to expand partnerships and strengthen advocacy.

CONTEXT

- 1.10 The Middle East is contending with multiple overlapping challenges, rooted in prolonged social and political instability and amplified by global economic, environmental and health shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact across the region, wiping out years of human development gains. It has compounded existing inequalities and socio-economic difficulties, with the poor and most vulnerable often disproportionately affected. The war in Ukraine has also resulted in further setbacks, precipitating major increases in fuel, food and basic living costs and placing a further strain on governments in the region already struggling to meet the needs of young and growing populations. During the 2024-25 biennium, living conditions for Palestine Refugees are expected to remain extremely precarious and unstable, with a high risk of further catastrophic shocks.
- 1.11 While a peaceful, comprehensive and durable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that includes a just and lasting resolution of the plight of Palestine Refugees seems unlikely during the coming biennium, the UN will remain actively engaged with all relevant actors in an effort to bring about peace.
- 1.12 During the current biennium, UNRWA's funding situation remained critical as demand for Agency services and the rising cost of operations again outpaced contributions, driven by economic constraints, high inflation, competing demands and regional and global geopolitical shifts. In 2022, critical operations were only sustained through the additional support of donors, UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) loans amounting to United States dollar (US\$) 30 million and the deferral of payments to suppliers from April onwards, which led UNRWA to carry forward approximately US\$ 75 million in liabilities to 2023.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- 1.13 During the 2024-25 biennium, the funding environment for the implementation of Agency operations is expected to remain tightly constrained. By way of mitigation, funding will be prioritized to ensure core services and programmes are delivered while the drive to maximize value for money will be continued. However, it must be emphasized that UNRWA has now reached the limits of its ability to use a combination of cost-control, austerity measures and debt to manage the chronic underfunding of its core PB. UNRWA will also continue to seek a predictable, sustainable, flexible and diversified funding base, as reflected in the Agency's Resource Mobilization and Outreach Strategy (ReMOS) for 2023-25, while pursuing discussions with donors and host countries on long term solutions towards a sustainable Agency.
- 1.14 The current cycle of complex emergencies, instability and, in some cases, unrest and conflict is expected to characterize the macro-environment throughout 2024-25. With growth in the number of refugees living in

⁵ UNRWA Digital Transformation Strategy (2022-2026), UNRWA, 2022,
https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_digital_transformation_strategy_jun_2023_update_-final.pdf.

poverty and the absence of a solution to the refugee question, demand for emergency assistance will persist, combined with a rising demand for core services.

- 1.15 It is expected that the State of Palestine will continue efforts to establish itself as a fully functioning and self-reliant State. It is assumed, however, that the resilience of the State of Palestine will continue to be tested by the blockade of the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the withholding of tax revenue due to the State of Palestine by the Government of Israel and the ongoing intra-Palestinian political division. As such, it is assumed that many Palestine Refugees will remain reliant on UNRWA services.
- 1.16 Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip will continue to face complex social and economic challenges brought about by the blockade and recurring cycles of conflict. Unemployment is expected to remain at over 40 per cent and the population will be pushed further into poverty. Security conditions are expected to remain highly volatile and environmental concerns, including an acute water shortage, and a chronic electricity deficit will continue to disrupt the daily lives of residents and inhibit access to healthcare, potable water and sanitation, and economic opportunities. In this context, the Agency will continue to provide near universal food assistance.
- 1.17 The West Bank is expected to remain under occupation. Israeli military operations and security incidents, including settler violence, are expected to remain a constant feature in the daily lives of Palestine Refugees. Furthermore, the demolition of Palestinian homes, forced evictions, internal displacement of Palestinians, the expansion of current settlements and establishment of new settlements, possibly through annexation of significant parts of the West Bank, are all expected to increase protection challenges faced by Palestine Refugees. High rates of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity are also likely to persist.
- 1.18 In Syria, despite active conflict subsiding in parts of the country, fighting is expected to continue and the threat from explosive remnants of war and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure is likely to continue to have devastating consequences for Palestine Refugees. In northwestern Syria, Palestine Refugees will additionally remain impacted by the damage to shelters and infrastructure caused by the earthquakes that struck in February 2023. These hardships are expected to be amplified under deteriorating economic conditions. Here, the expected loss of assets and livelihoods, fuel and electricity shortages and sharp fluctuations in commodity prices will dominate the daily lives of Palestine Refugees. Although there is an expectation that additional areas in Syria will become accessible for the spontaneous return of civilians, widespread damage to homes and infrastructure will require considerable reconstruction efforts. Protection risks are expected to continue and may increase in areas of spontaneous return in relation to civil documentation, housing, land and property rights and general protection issues.
- 1.19 The socio-economic and political crisis that began in Lebanon in 2019 is expected to continue. As a result, Palestine Refugees, already among the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the country, are projected to continue to endure very high rates of poverty, unemployment and difficulty in accessing food, fuel and other basic goods and services, which may heighten the risk of tension and violence in Palestine refugee camps, including increased incidents of violence against UNRWA staff and installations. Lebanon's stability is also expected to remain adversely affected by the ongoing conflict in Syria and the 805,000

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-registered refugees from Syria that the nation is hosting.⁶

- 1.20 Jordan will continue to host millions of refugees from Palestine, Syria and Iraq. While the country is expected to continue to enjoy strong and steady levels of peace and security, its economic growth is expected to remain constrained by a stubbornly high unemployment rate, especially for women and youth. Restricted access to some public services and livelihood opportunities is also expected to continue for approximately 178,000 ex-Gazans who do not possess Jordanian citizenship and 2,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) without legal status in the country.⁷
- 1.21 The lingering economic, social, health and educational consequences associated with COVID-19 are expected to exacerbate the human development crisis faced by Palestine Refugees. Levels of food insecurity and poverty are high and increasing, including in refugee camps, and unemployment rates, especially among women and youth, have risen sharply. Despite Palestine Refugees having strong human capital because of the education and health structures provided by the Agency and host authorities, the majority of refugees do not have access to the full range of assets required to achieve sustainable livelihoods.
- 1.22 Palestine Refugees are likely to face continuing protection threats from armed conflict, violence and civil unrest in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank. The vulnerability of different groups, including women, children and persons with disabilities, to violence and abuse is expected to increase. Prolonged political and socio-economic instability, coupled with repeated and widespread violations of human rights, will continue to have significant adverse effects on the human development and wellbeing of Palestine Refugees, including in relation to their mental health.

BUDGET STRUCTURE / ASSUMPTIONS

- 1.23 The Agency's funding portals, including the PB, Projects and Emergency Appeals (EA), are aligned with Strategic Plan 2023-28 and the Agency Unified Framework Structure used for the 2024-25 biennium.
- 1.24 In compliance with Regulation 9.2 of the UNRWA updated Financial Regulations, International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) compliance), effective 1 January 2012, however, the biennium budget is presented on a modified cash basis. For internal management purposes, the annual operational budget is also structured to reflect the modified cash basis budget as well as the accrual budgeting based on the updated income forecast.
- 1.25 In its resolution 3331 B (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the UNGA decided that, with effect from 1 January 1975, expenses for the salaries of international staff in the service of UNRWA, which would otherwise have been charged to voluntary contributions, should be financed by the Regular Budget (RB) of the UN for the duration of the Agency's mandate (see Figure 1).

6 Operational Data Portal: Syria Regional Refugee Response, UNHCR, 31 March 2023, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>.

7 The rights and privileges of ex-Gazans have expanded in recent years to include, in accordance with Cabinet Decision: (i) No. 13,454 (2016), an exemption from work permit fees, any other stamps and service fees for ex-Gazans with permanent residence in Jordan; (ii) No. 1,887 (2017), the right to obtain a driving licence and to own up to two private cars as well as the right to obtain a temporary passport for either two or five years; and (iii) No. 2181 (2019), the right for ex-Gazans with permanent residence in Jordan to own an apartment or house on land not exceeding 1,000 square metres.

- 1.26 In its resolution A/RES/77/122 of 15 December 2022, the UNGA decided to consider a gradual increase in the UN RB allocation to the Agency that would, in addition to covering international staff requirements, in accordance with resolution 3331 B (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, be utilizable to support expenses for operational costs related to executive and administrative management functions of the Agency, and invited the Secretary-General, accordingly, to submit proposals for consideration by the relevant committees at its seventy-eighth session.
- 1.27 UNRWA's operational planning and budgeting process focuses on the delivery of its sub-programme structure to identify detailed activities and associated budget and expenditure within programmes under the aforementioned funding portals. The purpose of the sub-sub-programme structure is to:
- a) display applicable programmatic strategic objectives;
 - b) ensure consistency in use of sub-sub-programme structure;
 - c) establish donor interventions within the programme structure; and
 - d) provide a holistic view of the Agency resources and needs.
- 1.28 Consistent with the 2023-28 Strategic Plan, a growth factor of 3.8 per cent will be assumed for the planning purposes. This will be applied according to the different needs and requirements of the fields and departments, not across the board. This does not preclude further adjustments - upwards or downwards – at or subsequent to the approval stage. The 3.8 per cent growth factor is designed to allow for the continuation of services and operations at current levels, with space for increases in different areas; e.g. annual step increment, expected increases due to salary survey, severance cash payout, regularization of daily paid (DP) contracts, changes to group medical insurance policy, programmatic norms identified in the strategic plan including updated education (class-formation for teachers and other educational cadre), health (medical and paramedical staff), and RSS staffing norms (social workers), hospitalization norms, Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) norms, increases in medical supplies prices, costs associated with software licenses, running costs linked to the modernization of registration system, and other initial costs related to the kick-off assessment of new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.
- 1.29 The biennium budget reflects total requirements for: (i) the PB, inclusive of 3.8 per cent natural growth per annum for 2024 and 2025 which is aligned with the 2023-28 Strategic Plan; (ii) projects, based on a list of prioritized projects; and (iii) in-kind donations, based on income trends. Due to fluid nature of humanitarian crises, EA budgets are not part of this document.

The following pages contain summary tables:

Figure 1

UNRWA's Organisational Chart by Field Office / HQ Department.

Table 1-1

Summary of 2024–25 Agency-Wide Total Budget by Objective

Table 1-2

Summary of 2024–25 Agency-Wide Total Budget by Programme

Table 1-3 and Figure 1-3

PB Requirements 2024-25 by Field Office / HQ

Table 1-4 and Figure 1-4

PB Requirements 2024-25 by Resources

Table 1-5 and Figure 1-5

2024 Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office / HQ

Table 1-6 and Figure 1-6

2025 Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office / HQ

Table 1-7 and Figure 1-7

Biennium Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office / HQ

Figure 1: UNRWA's Organizational Chart by Field Office / HQ Department
Organisational structure and post distribution for the biennium 2024-2025

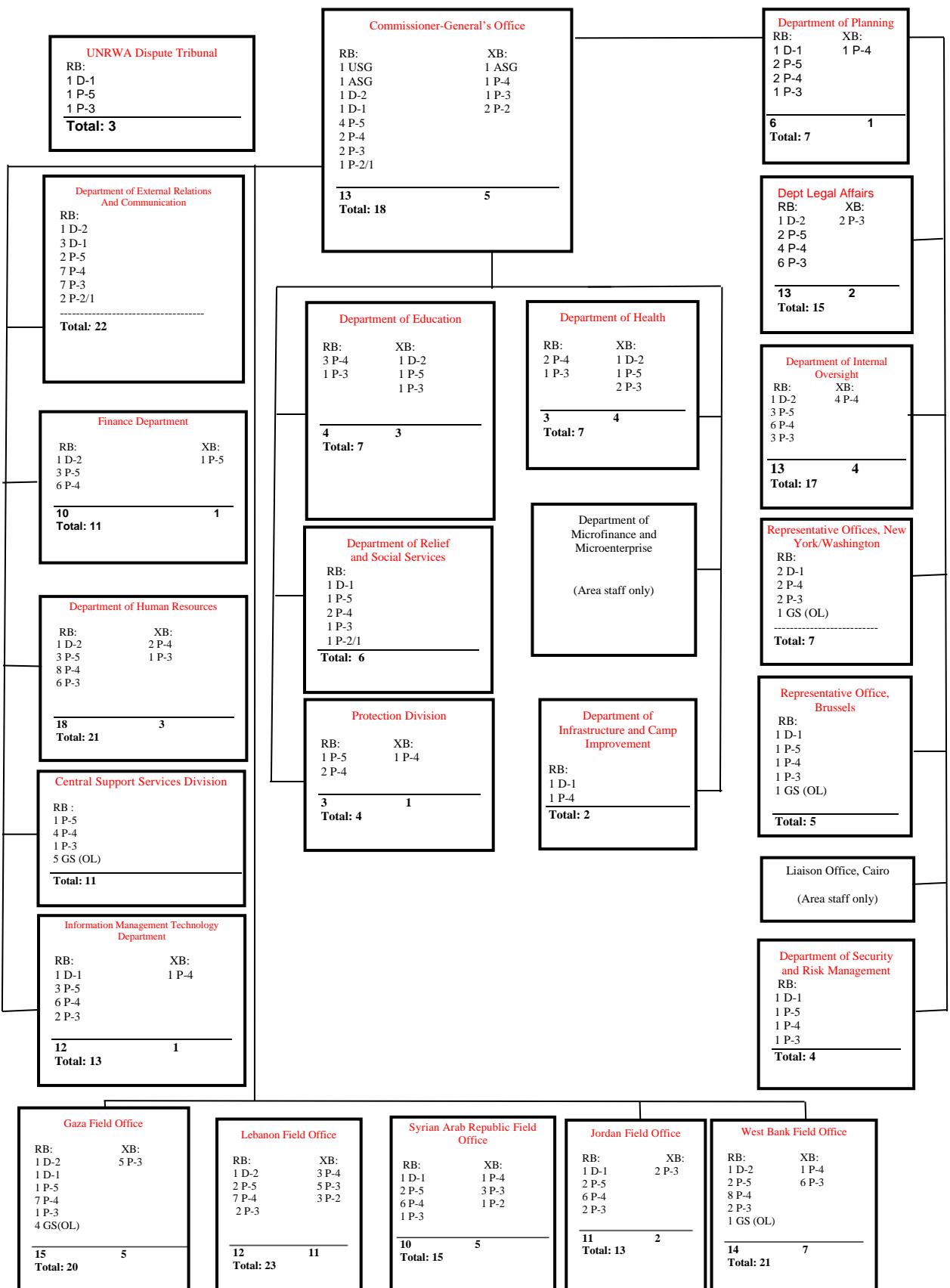


TABLE 1-1 Biennium Budget 2024-2025
Summary of 2024-25 Agency Wide Total Budget by Objective
(US\$ '000s)

Objective	2024 Fiscal Year					2025 Fiscal Year					2024-2025 Biennium				
	Programme Budget			Project		Programme Budget			Project		Programme Budget			Project	
	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total
Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	5,788	-	5,788	7,862	13,650	5,858	-	5,858	8,411	14,269	11,646	-	11,646	16,274	27,920
Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	143,170	6,275	149,445	6,898	156,344	150,323	6,651	156,975	5,400	162,375	293,493	12,926	306,420	12,298	318,718
Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	476,297	3,853	480,150	14,068	494,218	496,572	4,084	500,656	5,483	506,139	972,870	7,937	980,807	19,550	1,000,357
Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	22,007	-	22,007	2,125	24,132	22,893	-	22,893	2,075	24,968	44,900	-	44,900	4,200	49,100
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system	52,493	-	52,493	3,437	55,930	54,195	-	54,195	-	54,195	106,688	-	106,688	3,437	110,125
Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	26,218	-	26,218	127,666	153,884	27,096	-	27,096	60,214	87,311	53,314	-	53,314	187,880	241,194
UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	154,250	359	154,609	94,495	249,103	156,734	380	157,114	65,628	222,743	310,984	739	311,723	160,123	471,846
Total Resource Requirements	880,224	10,487	890,711	256,552	1,147,262	913,672	11,116	924,787	147,211	1,071,999	1,793,896	21,602	1,815,498	403,763	2,219,261

TABLE 1-2 Biennium Budget 2024-2025
Summary of 2024-25 Agency Wide Total Budget by Programme
(US\$ '000s)

Programme	2024 Fiscal Year						2025 Fiscal Year						2024-2025 Biennium					
	Programme Budget			Project			Programme Budget			Project			Programme Budget			Project		
	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total	Cash	In Kind	Total	Budget	Total	Budget	Total	
Education Programme	506,318	3,853	510,171	16,193	526,364	527,577	4,084	531,661	7,558	539,219	1,033,895	7,937	1,041,832	23,750	1,065,583			
Health Programme	147,363	6,592	153,955	9,440	163,395	154,614	6,988	161,601	5,600	167,201	301,976	13,580	315,556	15,040	330,596			
Relief & Social Services Programme	57,823	-	57,823	7,645	65,468	60,102	-	60,102	4,000	64,102	117,925	-	117,925	11,645	129,570			
Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme	35,189	30	35,218	181,604	216,822	35,609	32	35,641	87,245	122,886	70,798	62	70,859	268,849	339,708			
Protection Programme	4,545	-	4,545	7,862	12,408	4,656	-	4,656	8,411	13,068	9,202	-	9,202	16,274	25,475			
Executive Direction	41,036	-	41,036	8,748	49,784	41,858	-	41,858	11,750	53,608	82,894	-	82,894	20,498	103,392			
Support Departments	87,950	12	87,962	25,060	113,022	89,256	12	89,268	22,647	111,916	177,206	24	177,230	47,707	224,937			
Total Resource Requirements	880,224	10,487	890,711	256,552	1,147,262	913,672	11,116	924,787	147,211	1,071,999	1,793,896	21,602	1,815,498	403,763	2,219,261			

TABLE 1-3 PB Requirements by Field Office / HQ, 2022-25
 (Cash, US\$'000s)

Field/HQs	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Gaza	300,846	332,194	349,194	364,159
Lebanon	108,174	125,309	128,695	133,352
Syria	46,634	53,708	55,518	57,099
Jordan	139,602	148,151	153,079	159,658
West Bank	118,492	125,735	129,578	133,315
Headquarters	59,455	62,903	64,160	66,089
Total Resource Requirements	773,203	848,000	880,224	913,672

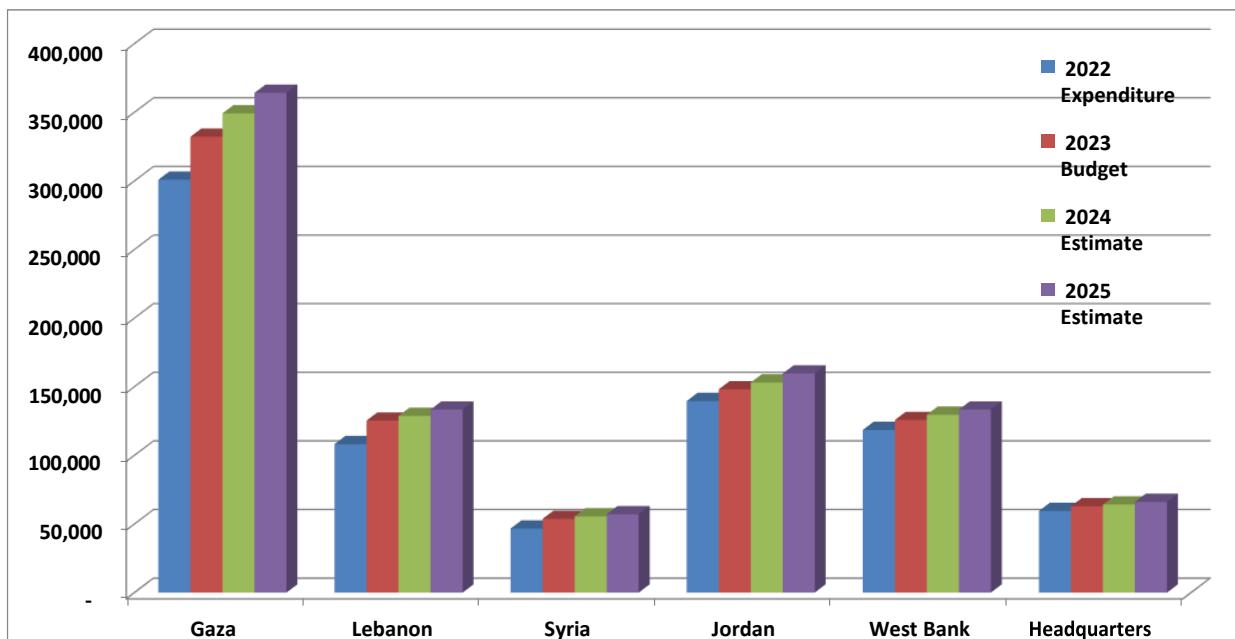


TABLE 1-4 PB Requirements by Resources, 2022-25
 (Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
International Staff	34,953	43,315	43,315	44,317
Area Staff	606,495	649,655	677,294	705,214
Sub-total Staff Cost	641,448	692,970	720,608	749,532
Operational Costs				
Supplies	35,901	35,752	38,091	40,311
Utilities	5,930	5,840	6,013	6,083
Maintenance of Premises	2,540	7,919	8,397	8,551
Rental of Premises	2,609	2,837	3,003	3,058
Equipment	6,623	5,293	5,379	5,426
Training	368	402	403	405
Travel	1,191	1,424	1,427	1,436
Admin Support Services	3,836	4,124	4,167	4,197
Consultancy Services	2,736	4,146	4,163	4,193
Hospital Services	29,703	34,195	34,393	35,200
Miscellaneous Services	10,152	13,497	14,907	15,086
Subsidies to Hardship Cases	29,736	39,428	39,153	40,072
Third Parities Subsidies	2,351	2,398	2,408	2,423
Other Subsidies	246	264	218	223
Cost Recovery	(2,167)	(2,489)	(2,507)	(2,523)
Sub-total Operational Cost	131,755	155,030	159,616	164,140
Total Resources Requirements	773,203	848,000	880,224	913,672

Figure 1-4 PB Requirements 2024-25 by Resources
(Cash, US\$'000s)

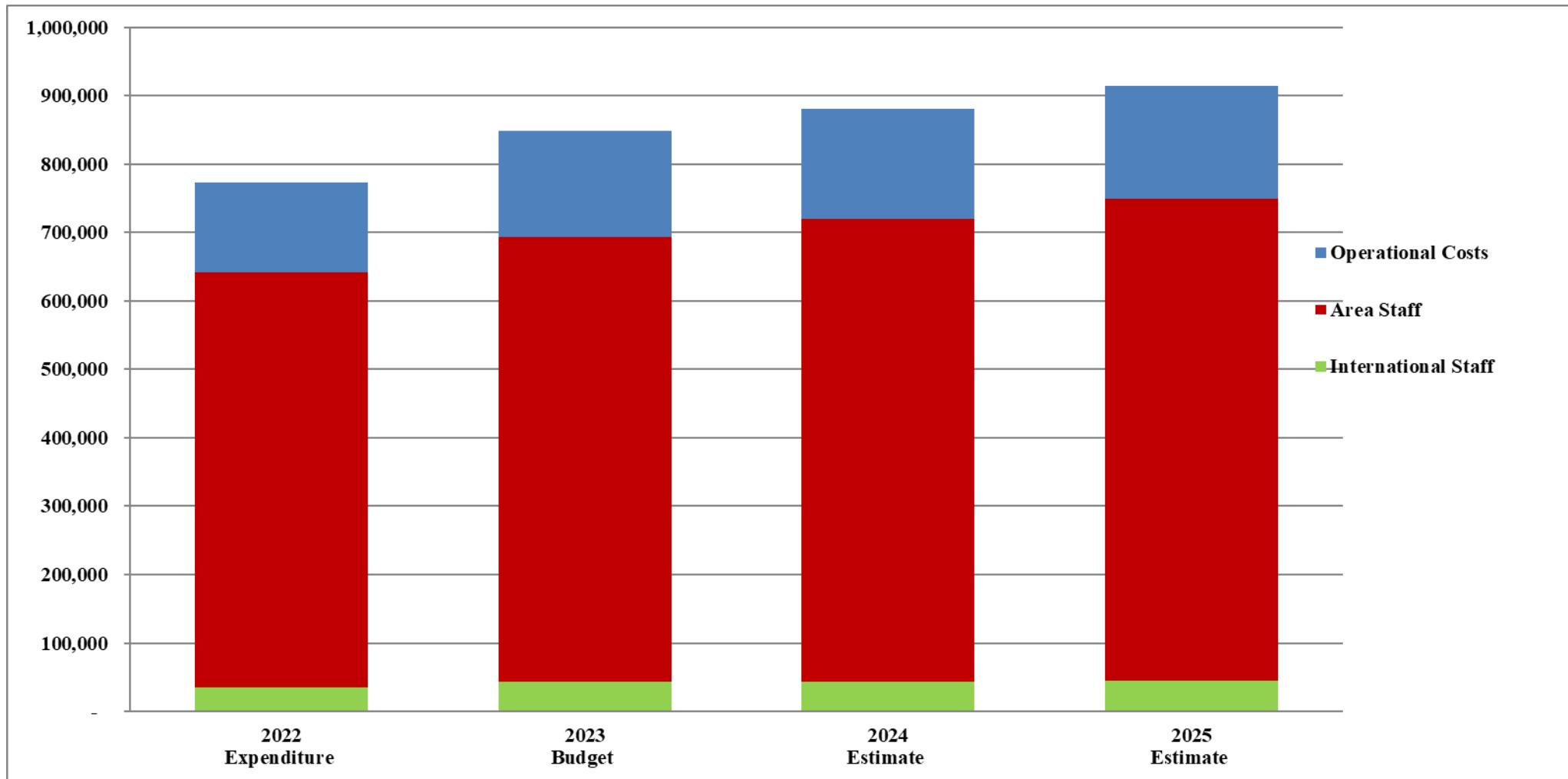


TABLE 1-5 2024 Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office and HQ
 (US\$'000s)

Objective	Gaza	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan	West Bank	HQ	Total
Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	-	-	-	404	-	7,458	7,862
Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	-	5,400	-	-	-	1,498	6,898
Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	-	-	-	-	-	14,068	14,068
Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	-	-	-	2,125	-	-	2,125
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system	-	-	-	-	-	3,437	3,437
Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	55,118	29,500	11,000	13,626	17,000	1,422	127,666
UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	39,686	3,000	4,602	-	7,000	40,207	94,495
Grand Total	94,804	37,900	15,602	16,155	24,000	68,090	256,552

Figure 1-5 2024 Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office and HQ

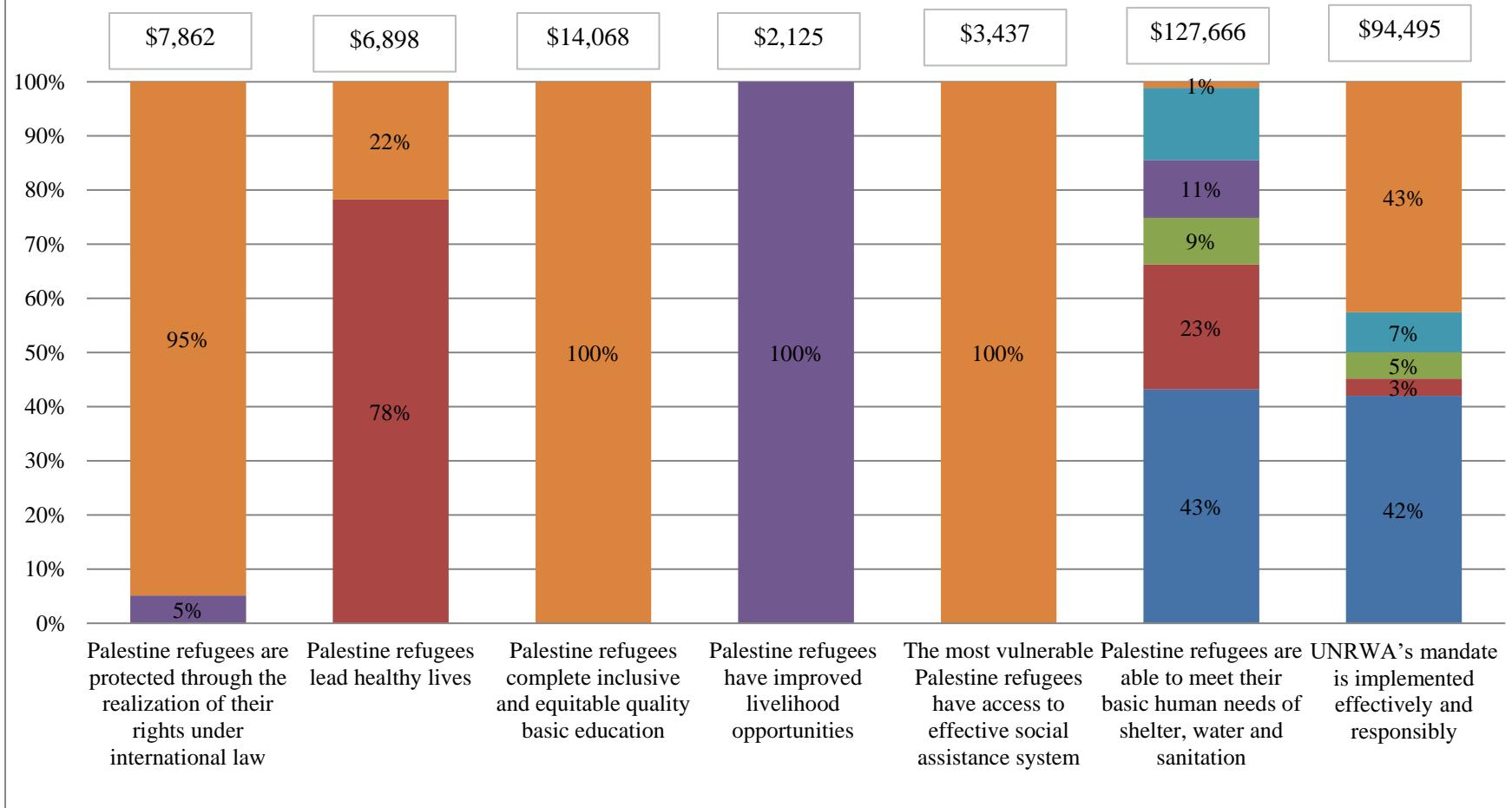


TABLE 1-6 2025 Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office and HQ
 (US\$'000s)

Objective	Gaza	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan	West Bank	HQ	Total
Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	-	-	-	954	-	7,458	8,411
Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	-	5,400	-	-	-	-	5,400
Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	-	-	-	-	-	5,483	5,483
Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	-	-	-	2,075	-	-	2,075
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	6,025	12,000	11,000	13,068	17,000	1,122	60,214
UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	18,031	3,000	350	-	6,000	38,247	65,628
Grand Total	24,056	20,400	11,350	16,096	23,000	52,309	147,211

Figure 1-6 2025 Projects Budget by Objective by Field Office and HQs

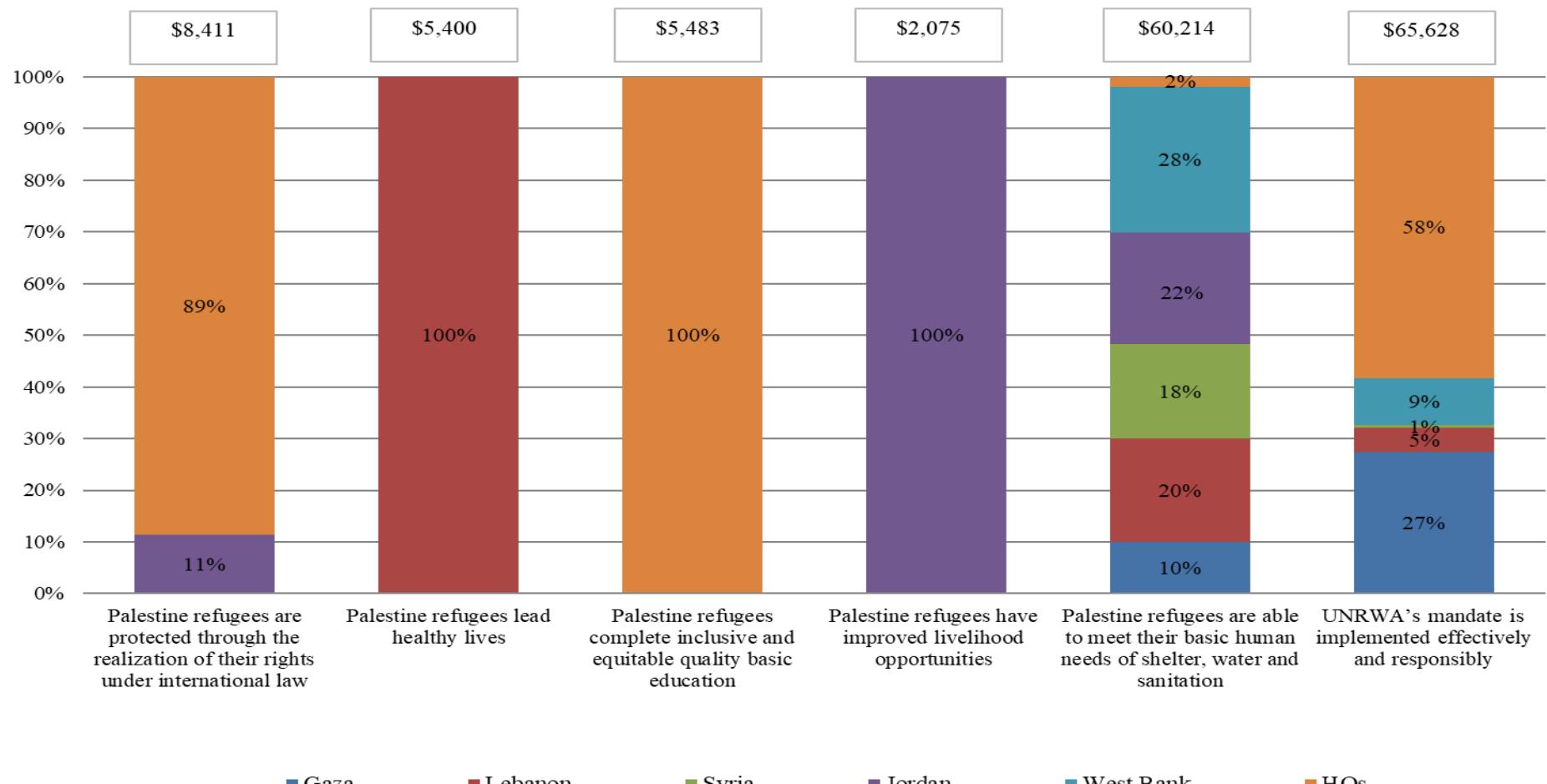
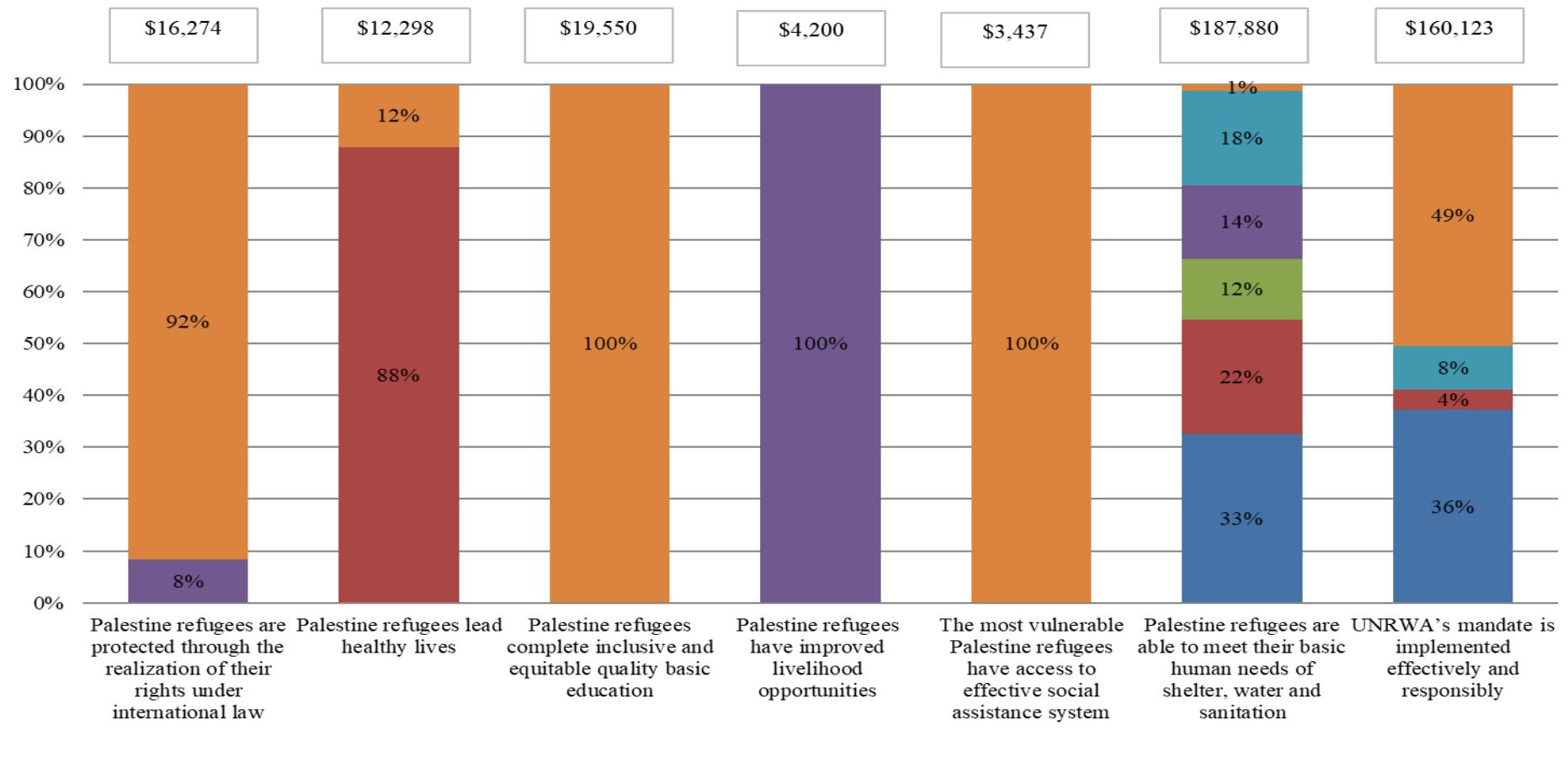


TABLE 1-7 Biennium Projects Budget by Objective, Field Office and HQ
 (US\$'000s)

Objective	Gaza	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan	West Bank	HQ	Total
Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	-	-	-	1,358	-	14,916	16,274
Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	-	10,800	-	-	-	1,498	12,298
Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	-	-	-	-	-	19,550	19,550
Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	-	-	-	4,200	-	-	4,200
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system	-	-	-	-	-	3,437	3,437
Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	61,143	41,500	22,000	26,694	34,000	2,543	187,880
UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	57,717	6,000	4,952	-	13,000	78,454	160,123
Grand Total	118,860	58,300	26,952	32,252	47,000	120,399	403,763

Figure 1-7 Biennium Projects Budget by Objective by Field Office and HQs



HUMAN RESOURCES

- 1.30 In compliance with resolution 3331B (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, international staff posts are funded from the UNRB. Through the 2022 and 2023 fascicle budgets, UNGA granted an additional 43 posts and 16 posts, respectively, to bring the total approved posts to 217 posts. The total number of approved posts will remain the same in 2024 (Table 1-8 below).
- 1.31 As of 30 June 2023, 55 international staff posts are funded from extra budgetary (XB) resources, including: (i) two posts funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); (ii) two posts funded by the World Health Organization (WHO); and (iii) one post funded by the Provident Fund. (Table 1-8 below)

TABLE 1-8 International Staffing Requirements 2024-25

Post Grade	UN RB	XB Resources
A) Professional and above		
USG	1	-
ASG	1	1
D2	9	2
D1	16	-
P5	38	3
P4	92	15
P3	44	28
P2/P1	4	6
Sub-total (A)	205	55
B) General Services		
Sub-total (B)	12	-
Total (A+B)	217	55

- 1.32 UNRWA's PB activities are delivered principally by more than 30,000 posts including different contract modalities, chiefly fixed-term posts, DP contracts and a small number of limited duration contracts. The Agency seeks to maintain service norms and standards whilst serving the growing population of students in schools, and patients seeking primary health care (PHC). Due to the financial crisis, the Agency has applied and will continue to apply the zero-growth principle on the workforce, except for the programmatic norms stated above under para 1.28, to match with the budget ceiling (Tables 1-9 and 1-10).

TABLE 1-9 Approved Workforce as of 1 January 2023 by Programme, Field and HQ

Programme	Gaza	Lebanon	Syria	Jordan	W/ Bank	HQ	Total
Education Programme	10,944	1,884	2,214	5,093	2,427	40	22,602
Health Programme	1,135	338	349	669	695	11	3,197
Relief & Social Services Programme	194	108	85	102	160	8	657
Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme	337	214	99	216	215	48	1,129
Protection Programme	-	7	5	-	-	1	13
Executive Direction	47	46	25	64	75	81	338
Support Departments	607	284	234	286	402	277	2,090
Grand Total	13,264	2,881	3,011	6,430	3,974	466	30,026

TABLE 1-10 Approved Workforce as of 1 January 2023 by Objective, Field and HQ

Objective	Gaza	Lebanon	SAR	Jordan	W/ Bank	HQ	Total
Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law	8	9	6	5	18	1	47
Palestine refugees lead healthy lives	1,118	320	336	659	672	-	3,105
Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education	10,717	1,733	2,078	4,784	2,220	-	21,532
Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities	191	114	104	245	186	8	848
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system	155	84	70	91	135	-	535
Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation	276	192	85	201	193	3	950
UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly	799	429	332	445	550	454	3,009
Grand Total	13,264	2,881	3,011	6,430	3,974	466	30,026

FINANCIAL SITUATION AND UPDATE

- 1.33 Except for 217 international staff posts funded by the UNGA through the UNRB, UNRWA operations are supported through voluntary contributions. In this regard, the Agency receives funding through: (i) a PB fund that supports core operations (including recurrent staff and non-staff costs), including education, health, infrastructure and camp improvement, RSS, protection and support systems and structures; (ii) EAs for humanitarian interventions; and (iii) specific, time-bound projects that improve services without increasing recurrent costs.
- 1.34 Some 91 per cent of UNRWA's core funding is provided on the basis of voluntary contributions and the remaining nine per cent is received from UNRB (six per cent), and indirect support costs (ISC) and interest earned (three per cent). Despite the generosity of donors, this funding model has led to repeated liquidity crises, an ongoing struggle to reach and maintain service delivery standards and norms, the degradation of Agency installations, including health centres and schools and, in relation to staffing, an increased vacancy rate and reliance on short-term contracts, job creation programme and consultants to fulfil core functions.
- 1.35 In 2022, resource mobilization efforts yielded a total pledged amount US\$ 699 million for the core PB against planned expenditure of US\$ 817 million. In addition to the UN RB (US\$ 35 million) and in-kind contributions (US\$ 17 million), the Agency's PB received income from other sources, such as ISC, the receipt of pledges made in previous years, foreign exchange gains, value-added tax reimbursements and the repayment of advances.
- 1.36 Through its 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan EA, the Agency sought US\$ 365 million. Many donors responded generously, although pledges only covered 40.3 per cent (US\$ 147.2 million) of funding needs. In the oPt, UNRWA appealed for US\$ 406.2 million, and pledges reached 40.7 per cent (US\$ 165.2 million) by the end of the year. Some US\$ 106.9 million was also pledged for projects, corresponding to 55.4 per cent of funding needs of US\$ 193.0 million.
- 1.37 The Agency's funding situation, which has steadily deteriorated over the past several years, remained critical in 2022. While funding increased compared to previous years, it remained at the level of 2013, despite the rising demand for Agency services and higher costs of operations. The Agency began 2022 with US\$ 62 million in liabilities carried forward from 2021 and initially operated on the basis of a 90 per cent allocation of the approved PB. Expenditure was controlled through strict vacancy management and reductions in non-staff expenditure. Non-critical payments to suppliers were deferred month-on-month from April onwards to manage cash requirements and critical operations were only maintained through CERF loans. Overall, UNRWA carried forward US\$ 75 million in liabilities to 2023. The Agency's total PB requirements for 2023 are US\$ 848 million and, as at the end of June 2023, some US\$ 200 million is still required to sustain services and pay all salaries beyond September 2023 with no carry forward of liabilities to 2024. (Table 1-11 below).
- 1.38 The projects budget for 2023 is estimated at US\$ 250 million, with an income forecast of US\$ 108 million (Table 1-11 below).

Table 1-11 Budget Gap Status of the Agency's PB and projects - 2023
(US\$ million)

	PB	Projects
Income Forecast	722	108
Budget	848	250
Budget Gap*	(126)	(142)

* 2023 Budget gap excludes US\$ 75 million carried forward liabilities from 2022.

2024-25 FUNDING STATUS

- 1.39 Current projections of income and expenditure, shown in Table 1-12, indicate a budget gap for the Programme Cash Budget of US\$ 67 million and US\$ 63 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively. This shortfall results from forecast income (based on indicative estimates from donors, including multi-year agreements, UN assessed contribution, ISCs and estimated interest income) of US\$ 813 million and US\$ 851 million (excluding in-kind donation), when compared to budgeted expenditures of US\$ 880 million and US\$ 914 million in 2024 and 2025, respectively. Without additional contributions, the Agency will not be able to fully implement its budgeted needs in 2024 and 2025. These projections do not consider a possible carryover of liabilities and debts from one year to the other.

Table 1-12 Expected Budget Gap Status of Agency - PB 2024-2025
(US\$ million)

	2024	2025
Income Forecast	813	851
PB	880	914
Budget Gap	(67)	(63)

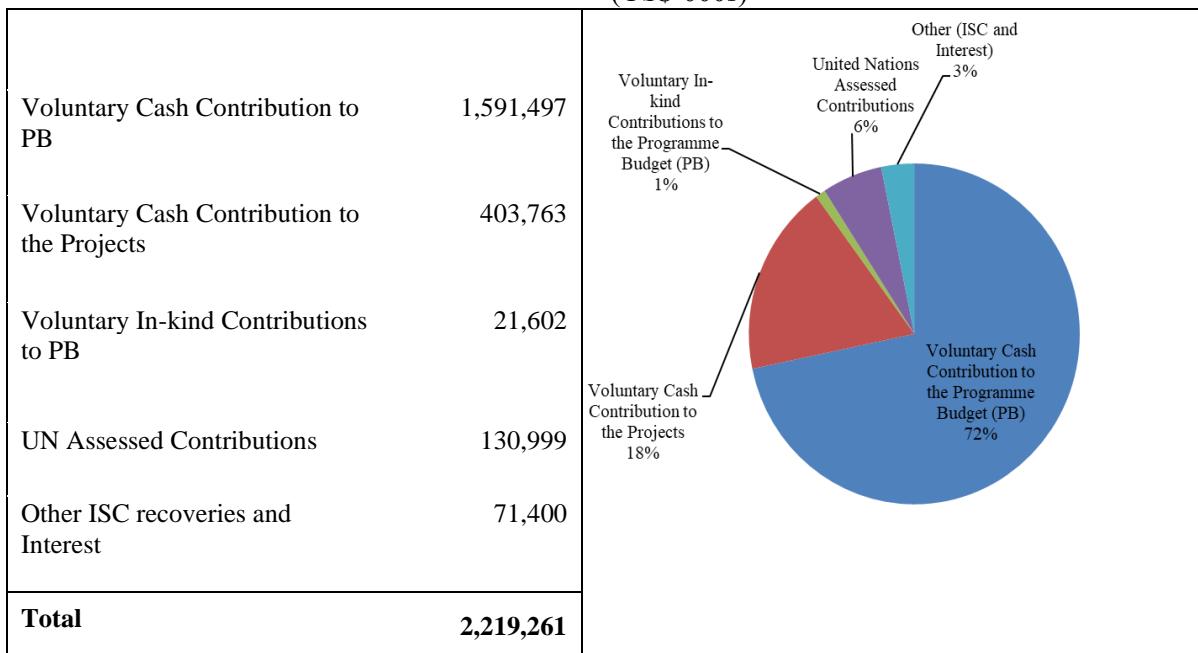
1.40 PB income forecasts, by donor for 2024 and 2025 appear in Table 1-13:

**Table 1-13 PB Income Forecast – 2024-25
(US\$'000s)**

Donor	2024	2025
USA	228,630	235,489
EU	103,534	106,640
Germany	38,484	39,639
Sweden	58,455	60,209
UK	14,779	15,223
Saudi Arabia	27,810	28,644
Netherlands	21,302	21,941
Switzerland	24,534	25,270
Canada	19,603	20,192
France	24,884	25,631
Denmark	16,222	16,708
Norway	23,225	23,922
Japan	4,475	4,610
Turkey	10,300	10,609
Belgium (including Flanders)	8,422	8,675
Italy	7,526	7,752
Qatar	10,815	11,139
Spain (Including Regional Governments)	8,684	8,945
Australia	14,212	14,638
Kuwait (including Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development)	12,360	12,731
Other donor income	41,733	42,985
In-kind	10,487	11,116
Sub Total	730,478	752,707
UN Assessed	57,701	73,298
ISC	35,000	35,000
Interest	700	700
Grand Total	823,879	861,704

1.41 Table/Figure 1-14 below shows the expected sources of funding in support of the Agency's total budget estimates for 2024 and 2025, including through the PB, projects and in-kind contributions.

**Table/Figure 1-14 Budget Funding – 2024-25
(US\$'000s)**



1.42 The UN RB funding of 217 international posts and operational cost for sub programme 7, accounts for six per cent of the total annual budget, while three per cent of forecast income is derived from the following sources:

- Interest and miscellaneous income including ISCs of US\$ 71.4 million annually; and
- Funding of six staff posts (two international and four area staff posts) by UNESCO and four posts (two international and two area staff posts) by the WHO to the education and health programmes, respectively.

1.43 Voluntary contributions from *inter alia* UN Member States, multilateral institutions, international financial institutions, the private sector, and high wealth individuals will be requested to cover approximately 91 per cent of the total budget for 2024-25, of which 72 per cent will be requested as cash contributions to the PB, 18 per cent as cash contributions to earmarked projects and 1 per cent as in-kind contributions.

1.44 Insufficient funding of UNRWA's operations will have the following impact:

- In the immediate/short-term, the Agency's services provided to Palestine Refugees will be further stretched. Access to UNRWA services for the most vulnerable Palestine Refugees, including children, persons with disabilities and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), may be reduced. The number of students in classrooms will increase. Less teaching/instruction materials will be available for educational and training facilities, jeopardizing the chances of effectively delivering the curricula and realizing the livelihood opportunities for young Palestine Refugees. Doctor-patient ratios will increase and consultation times between doctors and patients will reduce. The accuracy of diagnoses and quality of treatment will be reduced. UNRWA will be unable to provide essential (lifesaving) non-communicable

- disease (NCD) medicines. Less money will be available for hospitalization cover to ensure the provision of life-saving interventions. Fewer abject poor refugees will receive assistance and fewer substandard shelters will be rehabilitated/reconstructed. The availability of potable water, sanitation and infrastructure services in camps will be reduced. Installations and environmental infrastructure will be inadequately maintained and will become dangerous for refugees. Vehicles will be inadequately maintained and become dangerous for staff and refugees. Financial exposure to liability will increase.
- b. In the short/medium term: Palestine Refugees and Agency staff will be exposed to greater protection risks. School attendance rates will fall. Student pass-rates in schools will decrease. Dropouts will increase and survival rates (the number of students completing basic education) will decrease. Unit education costs will increase. Student achievement levels will stagnate or decrease. Patients will be provided with less access to preventative health care. The cost of treatment interventions (medications, hospital care, etc.) will increase. Vaccination rates will be reduced. Reproductive health for women will suffer. Maternal malnutrition resulting from poor health care will aggravate the risk of child mortality and malnutrition. Child malnutrition will raise the risk of poor performance in school. Limited care provisions and the unavailability of medicines will contribute to critically disabling complications. Refugees will become subject to water and sanitation related diseases.
- c. In the medium/long term: Unemployment, underemployment, poverty, and food insecurity rates/levels will increase at a faster pace. Mean and expected years of schooling will reduce, as will overall life expectancy at birth. The chance of involvement in dangerous behavior (e.g., crime, substance abuse, militant activity) will increase.
- 1.45 Underfunding will not only impact the Agency's operations in meeting the needs of Palestine Refugees and increase despair and hopelessness among the refugee population, but also has the potential to increase the burden on the already-strained public services of host authorities. The unpredictability and unsustainability of the Agency's funding, combined with a lack of working capital (which has, due to several successive years of underfunding, been exhausted), results in an inability to plan programmatic/operational change with certainty. Because the Agency provides government-like services, it has very limited ability to rapidly adjust its programming to match available resources. The majority of UNRWA's costs are staff costs which are fixed. Any change to the workforce through re-training and redeployment, or through termination/separation requires additional funding. UNRWA no longer has any working capital, which not only challenges the Agency's ability to ensure the continuity of services from one year to the next, but also limits its cost effectiveness and capacity to make changes in its operations. The unpredictability and unsustainability of UNRWA's funding has resulted in significantly more time being spent by senior management of the Agency to mobilize the funding required to avoid a suspension or cessation of operations. Finally, and just as importantly as any of the above, at a time of great instability in the Middle East, the short- and medium-term impact of service reductions by UNRWA will likely result in significant additional insecurity for host countries and the wider region.
- 1.46 It is incumbent on all Member States of the UN to provide the financial and political support needed to enable UNRWA to fulfil its mandate for so long as a solution to the plight of Palestine Refugees remains elusive. Sufficient, predictable, flexible and sustainable (for the duration of UNRWA's mandate) funding for UNRWA's operations is critical while long term solutions are urgently needed towards a more sustainable Agency.

CHAPTER II

SUB-PROGRAMME 1: PALESTINE REFUGEES ARE PROTECTED THROUGH THE REALIZATION OF THEIR RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 2.1 The protection of Palestine Refugees lies at the core of UNRWA's mandate. The Agency recognizes that Palestine Refugees are best protected through the realization of their human rights, including to health, education, food, water, shelter, culture and non-discrimination. While the primary responsibility to protect and fulfil these rights lies with States, UNRWA plays a key role, both as a provider of core public-like services and as an advocate on behalf of the Palestine refugee population. For the Agency, protection is about putting Palestine Refugees at the centre of its work and ensuring that no one is left behind, using its mandate, resources and authority to directly support Palestine Refugees and encourage and support others who are responsible for protection to play their part. UNRWA applies a holistic approach to protection, in line with the Agency's Protection Strategic Framework, adopted in 2021, which defines three complementary approaches: (i) protection mainstreaming, which ensures that UNRWA services are safe, accessible and promote the dignity of Palestine Refugees; (ii) protection programming, which refers to activities undertaken to identify, prevent, mitigate or respond to protection risks; and (iii) protection advocacy and engagement with relevant duty bearers to ensure respect for the human rights of Palestine Refugees. Agency efforts to protect and promote Palestine refugee rights are aligned with SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).
- 2.2 UNRWA mainstreams protection in and throughout its service delivery by incorporating protection principles into programme strategies, policies, guidelines and emergency responses, ensuring programmes advance the rights of Palestine Refugees and respect the principle of do no harm, while applying an intersectional lens to vulnerability. Informed by the regular collection and analysis of disaggregated data across programmes, the Agency endeavours to deepen its understanding of existing and emerging protection risks faced by Palestine Refugees and ensures that those who are most at-risk benefit from available services through enhanced targeting and effective communication on services. Significant efforts are also expended in relation to developing the capacity of UNRWA staff on key protection issues, including on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), addressing GBV, the systematic identification of disability for the purpose of enhancing inclusion, addressing violence against children and safe identification and referral.
- 2.3 Direct preventative and remedial services are extended to Palestine Refugees at-risk or already experiencing threats to their protection, including legal assistance programmes for particularly vulnerable categories of Palestine Refugees in certain areas of operation. In 2019, the Agency commenced a reform of its social work system that provides limited but important case management services to individuals and families. Through this system, some 249 professional social workers and supervisors offer integrated and systematic support, prioritizing GBV, child protection and disability while managing other social issues such as depression, grief

and substance abuse. UNRWA's interventions are supported through a dedicated database, established in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

- 2.4 The Agency promotes the rights of Palestine Refugees under international law through monitoring and documentation of protection incidents and trends, and by engaging in targeted interventions with duty bearers and other external stakeholders on issues pertaining to potential violations of international human rights, international humanitarian law and international refugee law. This has included advocacy related to the impact of conflict, occupation and violence affecting Palestine Refugees in many fields; freedom of movement concerns, including issues of humanitarian access; legal status issues and other barriers to accessing public services and the labour market for ex-Gazans and some PRS in Jordan; rights of Palestine Refugees to work and to own property in Lebanon; the ongoing impact of the blockade of the Gaza Strip; and continued concerns in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem around the differential treatment of Palestinians through indiscriminate and excessive use of force, evictions and demolitions and settler violence. UNRWA also engages with and contributes to UN international human rights mechanisms to provide information and case studies on key protection and international law concerns and human rights violations affecting Palestine Refugees in its fields of operation.
- 2.5 In support of SDG 5 realization efforts, the Agency pursues gender mainstreaming at both the organizational culture and programmatic levels, guided by its Gender Equality Strategy (GES). UNRWA is committed to promoting the fundamental rights to equality amongst the sexes and eliminating all forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation against women, girls, men and boys. The Agency engages in advocacy with duty bearers to ensure that the safety of women and girls is improved in UNRWA's areas of operation, and that concrete actions are taken to address rights violations and eliminate all forms of discrimination. The Agency utilizes the annual assessment against UN-System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0) indicators to inform its progress toward gender equality.
- 2.6 UNRWA also retains responsibility for registering Palestine Refugees and others eligible people for its services. Individual registration records are organised under family ledgers and constitute the backbone for the management of all Agency services; the associated documentation materials are also an important archive of Palestine refugee history. As at mid-2023, UNRWA maintains active files of 5.9 million registered Palestine Refugees and approximately 750,000 other registered persons.⁸ The registration process is voluntary; life events, such as marriages, births, transfers and deaths, are recorded any time registered persons supply the Agency with relevant documents and request to update their family registration card.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 2.7 Across the region, Palestine Refugees face a profound development and protection crisis due to: (i) the impact of conflict, occupation and violence in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; (ii) movement limitations; (iii) deepening inequality and exclusion due to the socio-economic situation in all fields of UNRWA operation; (iv) the continued use of force, evictions and demolitions in the

⁸ 'Other registered persons' refer to those who, at the time of original registration, did not satisfy all of the UNRWA Palestine refugee criteria but were determined to have suffered significant loss or endured considerable hardship for reasons related to the conflict of 1948 in Palestine, and those who belong to the families of 'other registered persons'.

West Bank; and (v) restrictions and infringements on the rights of internally displaced persons in Syria and PRS residing in Jordan and Lebanon.

- 2.8 Many Palestine Refugees are unable to live in dignity due to their precarious legal status, restricted access to civil documentation and lack of enjoyment of rights, including in some instances, to work and access basic services. The vulnerability of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities to abuse, exploitation, and exclusion is also on the rise.
- 2.9 The Agency's protection function also remains constrained by its reliance on project funds, which brings instability to its staffing structure and hinders sustainable progress on strategic priorities. UNRWA will continue to strengthen its internal capacity to deliver on its protection mandate through the training of its frontline personnel, seeking enhanced accountability for protection across the Agency's programmes and fields in budgeting and planning processes, and supporting an overall shift towards a more rights-based approach.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 2.10 Capitalizing on the 2021 Protection Strategic Framework, during the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will continue to strengthen its protection function. To this end, protection aspects will be incorporated across all programmes and services and protection risks experienced by vulnerable Palestine Refugees will be mitigated through protection programming and advocacy and engagement with duty bearers.
- 2.11 The Agency will continue to ensure that Palestine Refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity by systematically mainstreaming cross-cutting protection issues that contribute to the mitigation of risk and vulnerability, including gender, disability and age across its systems, processes and methodologies. Through a combination of training and the provision of technical support, the Agency will enhance efforts to ensure that: (i) all personnel understand who is at risk and the consequences associated with inaction; (ii) all personnel have the capacity to design and deliver services that incorporate protection principles; and (iii) UNRWA systems are better aligned to harmonize the collection, analysis and use of data to monitor access, identify risk, strengthen understanding of vulnerabilities and inform programming. The efficacy of these efforts will be gauged through the implementation of biennial internal protection alignment reviews and quarterly integrated assessments of installations.
- 2.12 The Agency will also seek to expand its direct preventative and remedial protection services provided to Palestine Refugees. UNRWA will enhance its engagement with Palestine refugee communities on protection issues through consultation and participation to prevent and/or reduce refugees' exposure to protection risks as well as support community-based protection organizations. In support of the Agency's case management system, social work reform will continue, notably with regard to certification and skills improvement among social workers and supervisors, and the consolidation of internal and external referral mechanisms.
- 2.13 Advocacy for the respect and protection for the rights of Palestine Refugees under international law will carry on through monitoring and documentation of protection incidents and trends, and regular, engagement with the relevant duty bearers on potential violations of international human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law. During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will strengthen its protection monitoring and documentation system that will: (i) enable the timely analysis of protection risks and trends; (ii) prioritize factual and impartial reporting; and (iii) tailor engagement to reflect different operating contexts. Emphasis will be placed on effective engagement with duty bearers to bring about impactful and meaningful change for Palestine Refugees. UNRWA

will also strengthen its cooperation with influencing actors to raise awareness and build consensus on human rights solutions. Engagement with the international human rights system will also be maintained on key international law and protection issues and trends affecting Palestine Refugees, further to the Agency's 2011 Framework for Effective Engagement with the International Human Rights System.

- 2.14 In 2024, UNRWA will launch an updated GES to guide its gender interventions. The Strategy will recommit the Agency to promoting the fundamental rights of equality amongst the sexes and eliminating all forms of discrimination, violence and exploitation. UNRWA will advance gender equality by ensuring that its services are equally accessible to and inclusive of women, men, girls and boys, and directly address their needs and priorities, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups such as female-headed households and women and girls with disabilities. A holistic range of gender programming will continue to be offered, including: (i) comprehensive information and services on reproductive health rights, maternal health and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases; (ii) an expanded clinical care service for GBV survivors and targeted mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); and (iii) skills development and livelihood support for women and girls. Advocacy will also be strengthened with duty bearers to ensure that the safety of women and girls is improved in the Agency's areas of operation.
- 2.15 During the biennium, UNRWA will make further progress to modernize its Refugee Registration Information System. This will be achieved through the introduction of a digital identity verification process that will reduce the risk of identity fraud, safeguard services to those eligible and in need and facilitate better planning and programming. Use of the e-UNRWA platform, launched in early 2023, will also be promoted. This platform allows Palestine Refugees to register from anywhere, ensuring that the right to register is protected, irrespective of the need for Agency services. In addition, an e-archive project for the preservation and accessibility of Palestine refugee family files will be initiated.
- 2.16 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:
- (a) Palestine Refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity;
 - (b) The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine Refugees are met through preventative and remedial action;
 - (c) Duty bearers respect, protect and fulfil the rights of Palestine Refugees under international law; and
 - (d) Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: Palestine Refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law				
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures		
			2024-25	2022-23
Palestine Refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity	Percentage of Agency-wide protection mainstreaming recommendations from internal protection alignment reviews fully implemented	Target	65.0 ⁹	73.5 ¹⁰
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	66.7 ¹¹
The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine Refugees are met through preventative and remedial action	Number of individuals provided with social work interventions through case management	Target	6,350	N/A
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	4,291
Duty bearers respect, protect and fulfil the rights of Palestine Refugees under international law	Number of protection advocacy interventions targeting duty bearers	Target	N/A ¹²	N/A
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	882
Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality	Percentage of female technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates employed within one year of graduation	Target	84.04	68.58
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	71.66

9 The target implementation rate relates to recommendations made following the protection alignment reviews conducted in 2022 planned to be fully implemented by the end of 2024.

10 The target implementation rate relates to recommendations made following the protection alignment reviews conducted in 2019.

11 The actual implementation rate relates to recommendations made following the protection alignment reviews conducted in 2019 that were fully implemented by the end of 2022.

12 A target is not set for this indicator as the number of protection advocacy interventions is influenced by the number of protection concerns that arise during the year.

Table 2-1 Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law

Resource Requirements by Objective
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Palestine refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity	1,243	1,202
B. The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine refugees are met through preventative and remedial action	4,540	4,651
C. Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality	5	5
Total Programme Budget	5,788	5,858
Project Budget	7,862	8,411
Grand Total	13,650	14,269

A. Palestine refugees have access to UNRWA services in safety and dignity

Output	2024	2025
UNRWA services, systems and installations are better aligned with protection standards and humanitarian principles	1,095	1,048
Eligible persons have access to UNRWA registration services	148	153
Total	1,243	1,202

B. The protection needs of vulnerable and at-risk Palestine refugees are met through preventative and remedial action

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugees receive direct preventative and remedial protection services	4,540	4,651
Total	4,540	4,651

C. Palestine refugee women and girls are empowered and have access to services that contribute to gender equality

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugee women have access to services that contribute to the realization of their sexual and reproduction health and reproductive rights	5	5
Total	5	5

Table 2-2 Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law

PB Requirements by Resources (Cash, US\$'000s)				
	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
International Staff	2,512	3,356	3,356	3,435
Area Staff	918	1,345	1,519	1,488
Sub-total Staff Cost	3,430	4,701	4,875	4,923
Operational Costs				
Supplies	25	29	32	32
Equipment	19	7	7	7
Training	3	27	28	28
Travel	17	24	24	25
Admin Support Services	5	14	15	16
Consultancy Services	138	292	292	299
Miscellaneous Services	6	511	515	528
Sub-total Operational Cost	212	904	913	935
Total Staff and Operational Cost	3,643	5,605	5,788	5,858
Projects	7,249	7,689	7,862	8,411
Grand Total	10,892	13,293	13,650	14,269

Table 2-3 Palestine refugees are protected through the realization of their rights under international law

Project List (US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Building a more protective environment for Palestine refugees: improving the identification and analysis of protection risks,	2,894	2,894
Enhancing the safety of children and promoting their participation in addressing violence	1,500	1,500
Implementation of a new UNRWA GES and strategic implementation framework / plan	2,000	2,000
Implementing the UN disability inclusion strategy and the new UNRWA disability inclusion policy	1,064	1,064
Protection and promotion of Palestine refugee rights	404	954
Total Projects Budget	7,862	8,411

CHAPTER III

SUB-PROGRAMME 2: PALESTINE REFUGEES LEAD HEALTHY LIVES

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 3.1 Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. It is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The right to health is a fundamental human right to which all individuals are entitled. It is also an instrumental element of sustainable development. Health is at the heart of a range of interconnected achievements and deprivations. In addition to the widely recognized link between health and economic growth, achievements in health are instrumental to cognitive development, educational outcomes, employment opportunities and income earning potential. Illness (physical and/or mental), malnourishment and other health deprivations often lead to deficits in other capabilities. At the household level, chronic illness, injury and death (family member) are considered to be among the major drivers of poverty. Health is also important to other aspects of sustainable development, including dignity, empowerment, security and general psychosocial well-being. It is also different from other dimensions of sustainable development in the sense that deprivations may be irreversible with corresponding and potentially permanent deprivations across multiple capabilities. Preventative health care is thus critical to protecting individuals from multi-faceted deprivations that could potentially threaten their overall well-being. UNRWA plays a critical role in protecting and promoting the right to health for Palestine Refugees. Since 1950, the Agency has provided universal, non-discriminatory access to PHC services to Palestine Refugees through a strategic partnership with the WHO, as well as targeted secondary and tertiary care. Agency efforts to support Palestine refugee health are aligned with SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).
- 3.2 In 2011, UNRWA began and progressively implemented a reform process based on the family health team (FHT) approach and the development of electronic medical records (e-Health). Fundamental to the FHT approach is a patient focus, centred on holistic, life-long and continuous care for the entire family and long-term patient/family-provider relationships. FHTs, comprised of doctors, nurses and auxiliary health staff, work together to provide comprehensive health services to families registered with them. This delivery model focuses not just on quality curative care but also on covering the full health spectrum, from protection and prevention to treatment, disease management and psychosocial well-being.
- 3.3 Maternal health services, including family planning, preconception and antenatal care (ANC) and delivery and post-natal care (PNC) are offered by the Agency to minimise the risk of maternal mortality. In 2022, UNRWA extended ANC to over 81,000 expectant mothers and just under 76,000 new mothers received from PNC. Comprehensive health care services are also provided to maintain and improve Palestine refugee children's health, including medical assessments of newborn children, periodic physical examinations, immunization,

growth monitoring and nutritional surveillance, the administration of micronutrient supplements, preventative oral health and referrals for specialized care. These services were utilized by almost 410,000 children aged five or under in 2022. In addition, through its School Health Programme, jointly implemented by the Agency's health and education programmes, UNRWA maintains regular medical examinations, hearing and dental screenings, de-worming and immunization for the approximately 540,000 students enrolled in its schools,

- 3.4 Since the 1990s, the burden of disease affecting Palestine Refugees has shifted to NCDs, due in part to an ageing population and sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles. The Agency has adopted a preventative strategy in relation to the treatment of NCDs, based on an approach that screens patients most likely to be at risk of contracting such diseases. Services provided to such patients include: (i) monitoring of blood pressure, plasma glucose, plasma lipids, kidney function and respiratory and cardiovascular systems; (ii) foot care for patients with diabetes mellitus; (iii) dispensing medication; and (iv) hospital referrals.
- 3.5 Reflecting changes in the health status of Palestine Refugees and aggravated by the difficult conditions in which they live, MHPSS has become a more prominent health service provided by UNRWA. In 2016, the Agency adopted the WHO's mental health gap action programme and, by 2022, all health centre staff had been trained in this area. MHPSS consultations are extended to all patients displaying need as well as targeted at-risk groups, including pregnant women and those with NCDs. Patients with more severe mental health issues are referred to psychosocial counsellors - available in some UNRWA health centres - or to externally contracted specialists, where available.
- 3.6 In addition to the provision of PHC, the Agency provides access to hospital care at heavily subsidized rates in governmental, private and non-governmental organization hospitals and also runs Qalqilya Hospital in the West Bank. In 2022, over 83,000 hospital admissions were supported. Eligibility is determined by access to alternative services, the medical urgency of the case and the economic status of patients. To control costs and protect access to hospital care for the most vulnerable, reforms were introduced in 2016, including the ongoing monitoring of referrals and expenditure and the use of a comprehensive electronic Hospitalization Management System, the expansion of which commenced in 2022 to all fields of operation.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 3.7 Recent years have seen an alarming rise in NCD prevalence in UNRWA's fields of operation, linked to an ageing population and sedentary lifestyle and behaviour, to the point that NCDs are now the main cause of death amongst Palestine Refugees. By the end of 2022, more than 305,000 Palestine Refugees were reported to have diabetes mellitus, hypertension or both and, in the same year, people living with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes mellitus and hypertension under the Agency's care represented approximately 15 per cent of total healthcare users. Palestine Refugees, particularly PRS, remain especially vulnerable to NCDs as those who have fled violence with limited resources often endure conditions of prolonged displacement and deepening poverty, and thus struggle to pursue healthy lifestyles. The increased burden of NCDs translates into higher health care costs for UNRWA as patients require long-term, ongoing treatment and management of their conditions.
- 3.8 Mental health is a growing concern globally, a trend mirrored by the increasing prevalence of mental health and psychosocial distress among Palestine Refugees, aggravated by political instability, the occupation, increased

violence and deepening poverty rates in several fields of operation. Children, adolescents and GBV survivors are particularly vulnerable. In 2022, the Agency extended MHPSS consultations to almost 183,000 individuals, with over 35,000 receiving follow-up assistance, meaning almost one in five Palestine Refugees assessed needed psychosocial or mental health assistance, care or follow-up. Like NCDs, the treatment and management of MHPSS cases often require long-term support, leading to recurring costs for UNRWA.

- 3.9 Access to health care remains a challenge for Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria. Successive rounds of violence in the Gaza Strip have resulted in the damage and destruction of public health facilities while, in Syria, the public health care system has been degraded through twelve years of hostilities, with further damage to healthcare facilities in the north and north-west of the country caused by the February 2023 earthquakes. Due to internal displacement, many Palestine Refugees in Syria have lost access to established Agency health centres. In Lebanon, civil unrest and fuel shortages have created physical obstacles for refugees to access health care while skyrocketing inflation and shortages of some medicines have also impeded access to treatment.
- 3.10 Funding constraints have impacted UNRWA in the recruitment, replacement and training of health staff, hospitalization support and the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure. An analysis of the existing health staffing situation using WHO norms has indicated that the Agency's health staff face an extremely high workload, with almost all cadres being understaffed. Reflecting this, in 2022, the average doctor-patient consultation time in UNRWA health centres was just over three and a half minutes, significantly lower than the WHO norm of five minutes. The physical environment in health centres also has an impact on the quality of patient care and, in this regard, Agency health centres have suffered due to underfunding, set against increasing demand for services. In many cases, UNRWA health centres continue to be housed in old, deteriorated buildings that do not comply with protection requirements, including safety, accessibility and/or gender provisions, and do not incorporate environmental or greening practices.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 3.11 During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will continue to provide universally accessible PHC, based on the FHT approach, and access to hospital services will be maintained for those most in need.
- 3.12 Maternal health needs will be addressed through the systematic delivery of pre-conception, ante- and post-natal care and family planning services. In addition to continuing the Family Medicine Diploma, UNRWA plans to introduce a professional diploma in PHC that will be available for Agency nursing staff across all five fields of UNRWA operation. Furthermore, the Agency will remain focused on the provision of vaccinations, growth monitoring and nutrition, and high-quality child healthcare services. In coordination with the UNRWA education programme, school health will remain an entry point for the screening of childhood diseases and growth-related problems. This includes oral health, nutrition, eye care and hearing related problems that adversely affect learning. Health tutors in schools will also be trained on key health subjects such as hygiene, healthy lifestyles and sexual and reproductive health and rights, including in relation to GBV.
- 3.13 NCDs will be targeted through a three-pronged strategy, comprising: (i) disease surveillance; (ii) health promotion and prevention; and (iii) cost-effective interventions for NCD management. Preventative services will focus on school health activities, including situation analysis, training of health tutors, promoting healthy

- eating and the identification of risk factors among a young population. For patients with NCDs, attention will be given to regular check-ups and yearly follow-ups, improving treatment compliance and achieving good control rates.
- 3.14 MHPSS programming will be reinforced, particularly in the areas of child and adolescent mental health, suicide prevention and GBV. Counsellors at UNRWA health centres will work more closely with Agency social workers and schools to ensure a better coordinated approach to mental health needs. Cases identified by social workers or education staff needing medical intervention will be referred to health centres or externally for further management and feedback.
- 3.15 UNRWA will maintain its strong surveillance and response capacity to tackle communicable diseases. The Agency will remain actively engaged in infection prevention and control efforts, as the prevailing public health situation requires. The Agency will also participate in immunization campaigns, strengthen surveillance of emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases in close collaboration with the relevant host authorities, and maintain a continued supply of vaccines.
- 3.16 With increasing demand for hospitalization support across all five fields of operation, UNRWA will ensure that its limited resources are utilized to achieve best value for money. The roll out of the Hospitalization Management System to all fields of operation, which began in 2022, will be continued to better monitor and analyze hospitalization data and take timely and corrective action, where necessary, to contain expenditure. Management practices at the Agency-run Qalqilya Hospital in the West Bank will also be strengthened through training, the revision of standard operating procedures and the updating of medical and managerial practices to improve service quality.
- 3.17 During the 2024-25 biennium, UNRWA will ensure that its systems and structures continue to offer access to quality health services. The digitalization of PHC services will continue. In this regard, the e-Health system, established in 2011, will be replaced with a new electronic medical records system that is planned to be introduced in Agency health centres from the end of 2024. The new system will remedy performance lags, accessibility issues and security risks as well as integrating new modules on mental and oral health and GBV. UNRWA will also continue to enhance its mobile applications on NCDs and maternal and child health. Contingent on funding, health staffing norms, introduced in 2022 and based on WHO methodology, will be implemented to ensure fully staffed FHTs across all fields of operation. Health centres will also continue to be reconstructed and upgraded, as funding allows, which will include improving physical access for patients with disabilities.
- 3.18 The Agency will continue to encourage health care partnerships with others. Partnerships will be strengthened with host country Ministries of Health and UN entities for routine immunization and family planning commodities as well as with the WHO for technical advice and updating of technical instructions in line with global best practice. In addition, UNRWA will foster partnerships with academia for research in key areas such as NCDs, communicable diseases, mental health and health systems. The Agency will also strengthen partnerships with specialized hospitals and civil society organizations for the referral of complicated cases.
- 3.19 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:
- Maternal and child health of Palestine Refugees is improved;
 - Improved status of NCDs and mental health;

- (c) Improved status of communicable diseases and infection prevention and control; and
- (d) Palestine Refugees have improved access to quality health services.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: Palestine Refugees lead healthy lives			
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures	
		2024-25	2022-23
Maternal and child health of Palestine Refugees is improved	Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births	Target	20.0
		Estimate	-
		Actual	18.0
Improved status of NCDs and mental health	Percentage of diabetes mellitus patients under control	Target	33.7
		Estimate	-
		Actual	33.4
Improved status of communicable diseases and infection prevention and control	Percentage of children 18 months old that received all booster vaccines	Target	95.0
		Estimate	-
		Actual	98.8
Palestine Refugees have improved access to quality health services	Average consultation time per doctor	Target	4.00
		Estimate	-
		Actual	3.54

Table 3-1 Palestine refugees lead healthy lives
Resource Requirements by Objective
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Palestine refugees maternal and child health improved	734	803
B. Improved control status of NCDs and mental health	617	680
C. Palestine refugees access quality and safe health services	141,819	148,841
Total Programme Budget	143,170	150,323
Project Budget	6,898	5,400
Grand Total	150,069	155,723

A. Palestine refugees maternal and child health improved

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugee child growth and development is supported	734	803
Total	734	803

B. Improved control status of NCDs and mental health

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugees living with mental health conditions are screened and treated	617	680
Total	617	680

C. Palestine refugees access quality and safe health services

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugees have access to safe and accessible health facilities	1,982	1,946
Palestine refugees have access to essential medicines as per the UNRWA essential medicines list	9,167	9,457
Palestine refugees receive timely and quality medical consultation at UNRWA health centres	93,991	100,041
Palestine refugees requiring secondary and tertiary care have access to hospitals	36,678	37,397
Total	141,819	148,841

Table 3-2 Palestine refugees lead healthy lives

PB Requirements by Resources

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
Area Staff	71,220	75,532	82,797	87,091
Sub-total Staff Cost	71,220	75,532	82,797	87,091
Operational Costs				
Supplies	21,156	21,968	23,838	25,839
Utilities	480	383	415	425
Maintenance of Premises	138	501	544	556
Rental of Premises	157	195	212	217
Equipment	292	293	318	326
Training	-	1	1	1
Travel	4	12	13	13
Admin Support Services	171	235	255	261
Consultancy Services	184	183	198	203
Hospital Services	29,522	34,093	34,283	35,087
Miscellaneous Services	408	474	514	526
Other Subsidies	20	-	-	-
Cost Recovery	(209)	(200)	(217)	(222)
Sub-total Operational Cost	52,324	58,136	60,374	63,232
Total Staff and Operational Cost	123,544	133,668	143,170	150,323
Projects	9,877	9,895	6,898	5,400
Grand Total	133,421	143,564	150,069	155,723

**Table 3-3 Palestine refugees lead healthy lives
Project List**

(US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Medical hardship fund for Palestine refugees	5,400	5,400
Strengthening prevention and control of infectious diseases and (MHPSS) service delivery	801	-
Strengthening the technical competency of healthcare providers	697	-
Total Projects Budget	6,898	5,400

CHAPTER IV

SUB-PROGRAMME 3: PALESTINE REFUGEES COMPLETE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 4.1 Education is a basic human right and central to the human development process. It has personal and interpersonal dimensions, contributing to individual empowerment and the overall good of society. The right to education is a basic element of the international human rights framework and is enshrined in national legislation in almost all nations. UNRWA provides inclusive and quality education to Palestine Refugees in line with four dimensions of quality: (i) relevance, i.e., education that meets the needs of the community; (ii) effectiveness, i.e., education that results in learning; (iii) efficiency, i.e., optimal value for investment; and (iv) wellbeing and inclusion. A quality education system is one which is well prepared and more able to respond to – and ultimately recover from – crises. Through innovative approaches with existing and new structures and under severe funding constraints, the Agency has continued to deliver quality education during times of conflict and other crises. As at the end of the 2022-23 academic year, UNRWA delivers basic education to over 540,000 Palestine refugee children at 706 schools at no cost to students. The Agency provides nine years of elementary and preparatory education in all fields (up to 10th grade in Jordan) and secondary schooling in Lebanon. Students in UNRWA schools follow host authority curricula, as a good practice in education for displaced populations, which the Agency complements with its own materials on human rights. The UNRWA education programme is the largest in the Agency, both in terms of staff and budgetary allocations, accounting for 44 per cent of total expenditure and 70 per cent of all staff in 2022. UNRWA efforts in support of Palestine refugee education are aligned with SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).
- 4.2 The provision of quality education is at the heart of the Agency's approach to learning; ensuring that Palestine refugee students enrolled in its schools achieve their full potential to become confident, innovative, questioning, thoughtful and open-minded individuals, contributing to their communities locally and globally. To this end, measures have been put in place to professionalize teachers and enrich curricula to enhance students' competencies and life skills, ensuring equal opportunities and outcomes for boys and girls and strengthening support for students with disabilities. These measures include the introduction of teacher training on the 'Teacher Centred Approach / Critical Thinking Approach' which is designed to enable teachers to facilitate critical thinking and meaningful classroom discussions, a drive to ensure that all teachers are educated to at least undergraduate level and the continuing application of UNRWA's Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and Tolerance Policy and promotion of UN values and UNESCO standards throughout its teaching. Academic progress is monitored through triennial Agency-wide Assessment of Learning Outcomes (ALO) exams as well as ongoing School Quality Assurance assessments that evaluate student outcomes, student personal and social development, teaching and management in each school.

- 4.3 A commitment to inclusive education also runs through the UNRWA education system and is reflected in the Agency's Strategic Plan 2023-28. UNRWA actively works to ensure that all Palestine refugee students enrolled in its schools, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, social-economic status, health and psychosocial needs, have equal opportunity to learn and are supported to reach their full potential. Teachers and counsellors in Agency schools are trained to identify and respond appropriately to student needs, with targeted interventions for students with disabilities and severe health issues, with additional psychosocial needs, those who have experienced protection risks and those who are academically underperforming in standardized tests. The support offered is determined by the needs of individual students and is dependent on the availability of financial and specialized human resources, but can include the provision of assistive devices, catch-up classes, psychosocial counselling and, more generally, the upgrading of UNRWA schools to meet protection design standards, including ensuring physical access for students with disabilities and measures to improve the safety of school premises.
- 4.4 The Agency considers education as a priority, even during emergency situations. In this regard, UNRWA has been a pioneer in education in emergencies (EiE) programming and, through this approach, has ensured that Palestine refugee children are able to access quality education and learning opportunities in times of crisis, conflict and social unrest. The EiE approach adopts a multi-strand approach to ensure that the response is holistic and meets the needs of children, teachers and parents through: (i) ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for Palestine refugee children and youth, one that supports their physical and emotional wellbeing; (ii) relevant and quality teaching and learning, including alternative methods of teaching and learning in times of crisis; and (iii) ensuring parental, community and student engagement to support the quality and continuation of EiE. These strands are underpinned by enhanced data collection and communication systems. To support learning continuity and during the COVID-19 related school closures, in April 2021, the Agency launched its Digital Learning Platform (DLP), developed in partnership with Microsoft, where curated digital resources are uploaded and made accessible to teachers and students unable to access in-person learning.
- 4.5 Integral to the Agency's education system is evidence-based policy, planning and decision making at all levels. To this end, UNRWA has developed an Agency-wide Education Management Information System (EMIS) that was launched in the 2016-17 academic year. The EMIS student module was fully operationalized in 2017-18, followed by the introduction of a staffing module in 2019-20. System enhancements and staff capacity building efforts are currently taking place to strengthen its efficacy following an assessment of EMIS, undertaken in 2022.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 4.6 Until the onset of COVID-19, UNRWA consistently met or exceeded key outcome targets in relation to student repetition and survival rates and performed well on student performance indicators. The pandemic severely impacted student learning and support for two academic years, resulting in significant learning loss in all fields, despite the Agency's use of remote and blended modalities to maintain the learning process. ALO exams, held in October 2021, showed – consistent with global trends - a steep drop in the percentage of students meeting the minimum proficiency levels in the core subjects of Arabic and mathematics compared to results registered in 2016. Dropout rates have also increased following the return to in-person learning, with UNRWA teachers

reporting that children are experiencing pronounced difficulties in adapting back into classroom-based learning, exhibiting shortened attention spans, weakened communication skills and more frequent instances of disruptive behaviour. Teachers also have to contend with a broader spread of learning levels in classrooms, making it more difficult to cater to the academic needs of all students.

- 4.7 The psychosocial needs of students enrolled in Agency schools has also increased, a result of both the experience of COVID-19, including significant economic pressures on families, and, in some fields of operation, repeated cycles of conflict, occupation and unrest. In the Gaza Strip, for instance, almost one in two students enrolled in UNRWA schools suffer from trauma and require special attention.
- 4.8 The physical environment in which children learn is considered an important enabler for quality, inclusive and equitable education and can have a profound impact on student and educator outcomes. For students, school design can affect health, access for those with disabilities, behaviour, protection and overall learning performance. For educators, the physical environment can affect commitment, motivation and retention rates. Over the past several years, UNRWA school premises have suffered from under-resourcing and increasing demographic pressure. In some fields, they have incurred further deterioration due to conflict. Many school buildings are old, often dilapidated and some are not physically accessible for persons with disabilities and/or lack gender sensitive features. Although gradual upgrades of schools are under implementation, by the end of 2022, only 50 per cent of schools met the Agency's protection design standards for facilities.
- 4.9 Due to austerity measures and growth in the population eligible for UNRWA services, the Agency has absorbed additional students without any overall increase in the number of teachers, resulting in ever larger class sizes. In this regard, some 54 per cent of classes in UNRWA schools accommodate more than 40 students. Moreover, half of all schools operate on a double-shift basis, and many are housed in rented facilities. These are typically former residential premises rather than purpose-built schools and, as such, lack the physical spaces, lighting and ventilation needed to create an environment conducive to learning. Many schools also do not incorporate environmental or greening practices, resulting in missed opportunities for water, energy and material conservation.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 4.10 During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will continue to deliver high quality education services, strengthen conditions for improved student learning and enhance wellbeing and inclusion. This will be done with an emphasis on addressing student needs that have emerged as a result of COVID-19 and, in some fields, repeated cycles of conflict and unrest. Such needs include closing the learning gap, reducing dropout rates, resocializing students to classroom-based learning and responding to the growing psychosocial concerns of students.
- 4.11 UNRWA will endeavour to close the learning gap through: (i) the implementation of response plans, tailored to each unique field context, that include the adaptation of approaches to curricula implementation, introducing differentiated learning approaches for students who benefited from automatic grade promotion policies, catch-up classes and increased testing; (ii) embarking on a process to diagnose and analyze the learning loss crisis in order to determine its immediate and deeper causes; and (iii) the formulation and implementation of strategic-level education recovery plans, integrating a review of the curriculum, capacity-building for school principals

and teachers, enhanced protection and counselling support for vulnerable students and an expansion of recreational activities to enhance student motivation.

- 4.12 The Agency will continue the roll-out of its Information and Communication Technology for Education (ICT4E) Strategy, the implementation of which will help enrich the quality of teaching and learning, strengthen media and information literacy and make the UNRWA education system more resilient to future shocks. The ICT4E Strategy will seek to address the digital divide by: (i) facilitating access to devices for learning, teaching and/or educational management; (ii) improving access to internet connectivity; (iii) enhancing the curriculum, learning resources and communication through the strengthening of the Agency's existing DLP; and (iv) developing capacities for learning, teaching and management in the field of education technology.
- 4.13 The EMIS, class formation and other information system and planning processes will remain central to UNRWA's forecasting of educational needs and the identification of efficiencies. Based on the 2022 assessment of EMIS, the Agency will continue the implementation of a set of remedial measures to improve the use of the system by HQ, field, area and school-level staff in guiding education decision-making. In addition, the class formation process – a key cost driver – will be reviewed and further strengthened.
- 4.14 During the 2024-25 biennium, UNRWA will remain committed to student wellbeing and inclusion. Studies to determine the root causes of recent increases in dropout rates will be concluded and, based on the findings, targeted actions will be identified and implemented. The inclusive education approach will continue to be applied in all schools through the realization of the Agency's school health strategy, continued efforts to address violence in schools and strengthened psychosocial support (PSS) services. In this regard, where funding permits, efforts will be made to increase counselling support from the current norms of one counsellor for every 3,000 students to one counsellor for every 800 students. In addition, UNRWA will continue to invest in its education infrastructure by mobilizing resources to reduce the number of schools operating on a double-shift basis, absorb student increases and improve the compliance with protection standards. These efforts will provide a safe and conducive learning environment with accessibility for all, including those students with disabilities.
- 4.15 The Agency will maintain education services in extremely challenging environments. Drawing on lessons from COVID-19, and other emergencies, UNRWA will focus its EiE programme on supporting its field offices in disaster risk management, including emergency preparedness, response and mitigation. The Agency will also seek to mobilize additional resources to meet the increasing education and PSS needs, and work with partners to increase its response capacities. Digital technology, including the DLP, will also be considered to support learning continuity in times of crises in addition to having prepositioned EiE items, such as self-learning kits, school bags and back to school kits, available for distribution in cases of emergencies. The monitoring of EiE needs and interventions will also be strengthened as part of EMIS.
- 4.16 All of these efforts will be underpinned by a renewed drive for establishing and reinvigorating partnerships. The Agency will work with existing partners such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNICEF, Norwegian Refugee Council and Right to Play, and also seek new partners, including in the private sector, as well as the World Bank, Education Cannot Wait and Global Partnership for Education. Partnerships will be critical to sustain investments in information and communications technology and to support the expansion of MHPSS services. The Agency's Education Expert Advisory Group, which was

established in early 2022, will continue to provide strategic guidance to the sub-programme and will also be used to develop and deepen partnerships.

4.17 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:

- (a) Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills are improved; and
- (b) Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive, with their wellbeing ensured.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: Palestine Refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education				
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures		
		2024-25	2022-23¹³	
Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills are improved	Repetition rate (elementary)	Target	0.78	1.02
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	0.70
Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive, with their wellbeing ensured	Survival rate to the end of basic education	Target	95.88	95.18
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	95.78
	Drop-out rate (elementary)	Target	0.80	1.25
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	0.86

¹³ Targets and actuals under this column pertain to the 2021-22 academic year.

Table 4-1 Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education
Resource Requirements by Objective
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills improved	472,858	493,160
B. Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive with their wellbeing ensured	3,439	3,412
Total Programme Budget	476,297	496,572
Project Budget	14,068	5,483
Grand Total	490,365	502,055

A. Palestine refugee girls' and boys' learning outcomes and critical thinking skills improved

Output	2024	2025
Students have access to effective learning opportunities, including through digital resources	459,866	480,438
Teachers receive in-service professional development opportunities	12,992	12,723
Total	472,858	493,160

B. Palestine refugee girls and boys learn in an environment that is safe and inclusive with their wellbeing ensured

Output	2024	2025
Support services are provided to students in need	3,439	3,412
Total	3,439	3,412

Table 4-2 Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education

PB Requirements by Resources

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
Area Staff	419,707	451,815	463,060	483,025
Sub-total Staff Cost	419,707	451,815	463,060	483,025
Operational Costs				
Supplies	1,863	3,091	3,354	3,433
Utilities	973	1,075	1,167	1,195
Maintenance of Premises	556	4,623	5,018	5,136
Rental of Premises	1,516	1,703	1,848	1,892
Equipment	1,053	464	503	515
Training	30	5	6	6
Travel	-	-	-	-
Admin Support Services	188	165	179	183
Miscellaneous Services	1,061	1,072	1,164	1,191
Subsidies to Hardship Cases	4	-	-	-
Other Subsidies	9	-	-	-
Cost Recovery	(4)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Sub-total Operational Cost	7,249	12,196	13,237	13,547
Total Staff and Operational Cost	426,956	464,010	476,297	496,572
Projects	18,047	12,205	14,068	5,483
Grand Total	445,003	476,215	490,365	502,055

Table 4-3 Palestine refugees complete inclusive and equitable quality basic education

Project List (US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
EiE for Palestine refugee children	2,750	1,375
Enhancing employability of young Palestine refugees	1,949	1,200
Expanding access to digital learning opportunities	8,515	2,908
Promoting the quality implementation of host curricula, ensuring alignment with UN values	200	-
Strengthening human rights, non-violent conflict resolution and tolerance (HRCRT) and supporting the continuous professional development (CPD) programme for teachers in UNRWA schools	654	-
Total Projects Budget	14,068	5,483

CHAPTER V

SUB-PROGRAMME 4: PALESTINE REFUGEES HAVE IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 5.1 Livelihoods comprise everything that people need to secure a means of living. This includes their skills, knowledge, health and ability to work, as well as the social legal, natural, physical and financial resources at their disposal. A person's ability to secure and sustain a livelihood is also shaped by a myriad of political, social, economic and environmental factors, ranging from macroeconomic policy and labour markets to gender norms, land ownership policies and legal constraints to accessing markets and professions. Employment opens up a range of opportunities to gain needed resources by empowering people economically and socially and is one of the primary means to mitigate poverty, build human dignity, recover from conflict and promote human development. UNRWA contributes to livelihood opportunities for Palestine Refugees in three ways: (i) direct interventions through its programmes; (ii) indirectly, by employing Palestine Refugees in its own operations, including shelter and infrastructure and camp improvement works; and (iii) advocacy with host governments and local economic actors to promote and support Palestine refugee access to employment. Agency efforts in support of strengthened livelihood opportunities are aligned with SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).
- 5.2 Through its TVET programme, UNRWA empowers Palestine refugee youth by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to find work. The Agency runs eight TVET centres that provide a range of courses, including: (i) one and two-year trade (vocational) courses for students who have completed preparatory education; (ii) two-year semi-professional courses for students who have completed secondary education; and (iii) short-term courses. As well as offering a range of specializations in response to local market needs, (e.g., construction, plumbing, auto electrical, electronics, mobile phone maintenance, hairdressing, fashion design, accounting, nursing and physiotherapy), TVET programming also equips students with soft skills and provides career guidance and placements to enhance their employability. In 2022, just over 8,000 students were enrolled in UNRWA TVET centres. The poorest students are prioritized for admission, with just over a third of enrolled students in 2022 coming from families eligible for the Agency's SSNP. Also in 2022, the graduate employment rate stood at 79 per cent.¹⁴
- 5.3 In addition, the Agency runs two teacher training faculties, the Education Science Faculty (ESF) in the West Bank and the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Arts (FESA) in Jordan. Both institutes provide undergraduate degree-level education for Palestine refugee students. In 2022, 2,051 students were enrolled in the ESF and the FESA and, as in UNRWA TVET centres, just over a third of these were from the poorest Palestine refugee

¹⁴ The graduation employment rate relates to students who graduated from the preceding academic year.

families. Graduates from the ESF and FESA enjoy strong career prospects – in 2022, some 88.2 per cent were employed within one year of graduation.¹⁵

- 5.4 The Agency also offers microfinance services in all fields of operation except Lebanon. Through a network of 24 branch offices in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and the West Bank, the UNRWA microfinance programme extends credit and complementary financial services to households, entrepreneurs and small-business owners. These services help create and sustain jobs, decrease unemployment, reduce poverty, economically empower women and youth and provide income generating and asset-building opportunities for Palestine Refugees and other proximate poor and marginal groups. Palestine Refugees, women and youth are prioritized as loan recipients, with specific loan products on offer to them. In 2022, 32,517 loans, with a total value of nearly US\$ 32 million, were issued. Of these, 15,990 loans, valued at just under US\$ 17 million, were issued to Palestine Refugees, some 15,492 loans, valued at over US\$ 13 million, were disbursed to women and 8,333 loans, valued in excess of US\$ 8 million, were extended to youth, aged 18-30.
- 5.5 Agency infrastructure and camp improvement works contribute to community demand for construction materials while generating employment opportunities for camp residents. In 2022, camp improvement works provided by UNRWA were valued at US\$ 42 million and created 2,074 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.¹⁶ The works included a range of interventions, including the planning, design, construction and rehabilitation of Agency facilities, shelters, schools, health centres and infrastructure works.
- 5.6 UNRWA also provides specific livelihood initiatives targeted at the Gaza Strip, owing to the protracted blockade that has severely limited the generation of jobs through the private sector and driven widespread poverty. The Agency's Job Creation Programme (JCP) extends short-term employment opportunities to Palestine Refugees, prioritizing youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. In addition, in 2019, UNRWA established an Information Technology (IT) Service Centre, which, in the four years of operation, has become the largest IT employer in the Gaza Strip with more than 100 highly skilled staff working on projects for the Agency and other UN entities via a partnership with the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC).
- 5.7 In addition to these programmatic interventions, UNRWA is one of the largest employers of Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Providing employment opportunities with the Agency is not a strategic objective in and of itself, however, it is important to recognize that the salaries paid by UNRWA do not just ensure continued quality of services to refugees, but also represent an injection of income into refugee and other local communities. By employing around 30,000 full-time Area staff (more than half of whom are women), approximately 150,000 people directly benefit from Agency salaries while many more benefit indirectly.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 5.8 Palestine Refugees face a number of constraints in building sustainable livelihoods. Despite refugees having strong human capital as a result of the education and health structures provided by UNRWA and host authorities,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ FTEs are defined as the total hours worked by all employed persons divided by the average number of hours actually worked in full-time jobs.

the majority do not have access to the full range of assets – social, natural, physical and financial capital – required for sustainable livelihoods.

- 5.9 Employment conditions remain extremely difficult for Palestine Refugees and have deteriorated over the last decade, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria. Lebanon and Syria have been beset by deep and protracted economic crises, with Palestine Refugees in both fields facing widespread unemployment. The loss of assets and livelihoods, shortages of fuel and electricity and relentless increases in basic living costs further exacerbate the situation. In the Gaza Strip, the level of joblessness has exceeded 45 per cent every year since 2018, one of the highest recorded rates anywhere in the world. In the West Bank, unemployment has languished at just over 13 per cent. High unemployment rates also persist in Jordan, despite slight improvements in the past two years, and stood at around 22 per cent in 2022.
- 5.10 A key challenge facing economies is the creation of sufficient jobs to absorb an increasing number of new entrants into the labour market. Across the Agency's fields of operation, different structural barriers inhibit Palestine refugee integration into labour markets. Those in camps are particularly vulnerable to unemployment and have limited access to market-relevant skills. In Lebanon, Palestine Refugees face additional barriers to employment and remain legally barred from a number of syndicated professions and, in Jordan, the access of ex-Gazans and some PRS to the labour market is also restricted. In line with trends across the region, rates of labour force participation amongst women are particularly low.
- 5.11 Market conditions for the UNRWA microfinance programme remain challenging. Following the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme adopted a conservative approach by reducing lending to new clients and restricting disbursements to clients with a good credit history. This helped to improve the operational self-sustainability rate of the programme from 66 per cent in 2020 to 114 per cent in 2022. Performance across fields is, however, unequal, with severe economic conditions in the Gaza Strip and Syria constraining performance. These difficult operating conditions are anticipated to continue throughout the 2024–25 biennium.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 5.12 Livelihood opportunities for Palestine Refugees in all fields of Agency operation are likely to remain constrained by the challenges outlined above. UNRWA will seek to address these challenges by focusing on the dual outcomes of: (i) improving the livelihood capacities of Palestine Refugees; and (ii) strengthening Palestine refugee income generation and work opportunities. The Agency will expand its work on livelihoods and employability, with a focus on women and youth, the latter to be guided by an organization-wide vision on adolescent and youth programming which will be launched in 2024. The UNRWA Digital Transformation Strategy and environmental sustainability commitments also provide specific opportunities for employment generation and will serve as the basis for the introduction of new microfinance loan products.
- 5.13 Through the full implementation of its TVET strategy, the Agency will regularly review the relevance of its courses against labour market needs and develop more market-relevant curricula, with a strong focus on life and entrepreneurship skills as well as placement and career guidance. Linkages between training centres and employers will be strengthened to actively involve them in shaping courses, identifying skills mismatch and facilitating the transition from education to employment. Courses will be introduced in two key growth areas,

namely the green economy, incorporating training on renewable and solar energy, electric and hybrid vehicles, and digital technology, encompassing skills development in e-commerce, digital marketing, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. A new online training platform will also be developed to strengthen TVET access for the most vulnerable, and long-term partnerships with private companies for apprenticeships and on-the-job training will be explored. UNRWA will also further explore cost-sharing options with potential employers and seek to maintain the scholarships currently offered for Palestine Refugees to access higher education.

- 5.14 The ESF and FESA will continue to play important roles in the development of teachers who will benefit not only Palestine refugee students in Agency schools, but also those enrolled in public and private education institutions in all five fields of operation. UNRWA will also strive to increase the enrollment of vulnerable refugees into both faculties.
- 5.15 The microfinance programme will remain committed to providing Palestine Refugees and other marginalized groups with livelihood improvement opportunities through consumer and housing loans. These products will be made available to working class and low-income households to help constitute assets or pay for education, health care and unexpected one-time expenditures. Housing loans will be offered to families with no access to mortgage facilities, helping them to improve, expand or acquire housing. Dedicated loan offerings will remain available to Palestine Refugees in Syria, including those returning to Husseiniyeh, Sbeineh and Yarmouk camps. Existing lending products will also be adapted to serve the digital and gig economies and to meet e-commerce needs. Furthermore, the programme's internal processes, business models and client interactions will continue to be digitalized to increase efficiency and become more responsive to client needs.
- 5.16 Participation in the preparation and implementation of infrastructure and camp improvement works will continue to enhance Palestine Refugees' capabilities for increased livelihood opportunities. This will be done through both formal and informal training, including in the areas of negotiation skills, communications, project management and conflict resolution. Furthermore, and contingent on adequate project funding, the Agency will continue to create livelihood opportunities through its construction works. Where possible, UNRWA will seek to increase the proportion of Palestine Refugees involved in such interventions. These interventions will include the planning, design, construction and rehabilitation of Agency facilities, shelters, schools, health centres and other infrastructure works and will generate seasonal and daily employment for Palestine Refugees and demand for construction materials from local suppliers. The JCP in the Gaza Strip will also be maintained.
- 5.17 UNRWA will also continue to enhance livelihood opportunities for Palestine Refugees through collaboration with international, national and local partners. Through its IT Service Centre, the Agency will enhance its existing partnership with the UNICC to provide IT resource augmentation services to the entire UN family. This will create further employment opportunities, especially for women and youth. Advocacy with host governments and economic actors will continue to promote and support Palestine refugee access to employment opportunities and their right to work. This includes in relation to formal legal barriers faced by Palestine Refugees in Lebanon. Through its procurement activities, UNRWA will also continue to actively favour local contractors, where applicable, particularly those that employ Palestine Refugees.
- 5.18 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:
 - (a) Palestine Refugees' livelihood capacities improved; and

- (b) Palestine Refugees' income generation and work opportunities improved.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: Palestine Refugees have improved livelihood opportunities			
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures	
		2024-25	2022-23
Palestine Refugees' livelihood capacities improved	Percentage of TVET graduates employed within one year of graduation	Target	79.11
		Estimate	-
		Actual	78.98 ¹⁷
Palestine Refugees' income generation and work opportunities improved	Percentage of loans disbursed to Palestine Refugees	Target	47.0
		Estimate	-
		Actual	49.2
	Number of FTEs generated through infrastructure and camp improvement works	Target	2,270
		Estimate	-
		Actual	2,074

¹⁷ The percentage of TVET graduates employed within one year of graduation relates to students who graduated from the 2020-21 academic year.

Table 5-1 Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities
Resource Requirements by Objective
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Palestine refugees' livelihood capacities improved	21,679	22,497
B. Palestine refugees income generation and work opportunities improved	328	396
Total Programme Budget	22,007	22,893
Project Budget	2,125	2,075
Grand Total	24,132	24,968

A. Palestine refugees' livelihood capacities improved

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugee youth receive technical and vocational education and training	15,163	15,873
Palestine refugee youth receive teacher training	6,326	6,425
Palestine refugees participate in informal work skills capacity building opportunities	191	199
Total	21,679	22,497

B. Palestine refugees income generation and work opportunities improved

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugees receive paid job creation opportunities	328	396
Total	328	396

Table 5-2 Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities

PB Requirements by Resources

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
Area Staff	18,013	18,742	18,992	19,807
Sub-total Staff Cost	18,013	18,742	18,992	19,807
Operational Costs				
Supplies	1,601	1,777	1,927	1,972
Utilities	411	440	477	489
Maintenance of Premises	59	248	269	275
Rental of Premises	10	6	7	7
Equipment	77	27	30	30
Training	2	-	-	-
Travel	1	27	29	30
Admin Support Services	91	57	61	63
Consultancy Services	2	13	14	14
Miscellaneous Services	85	103	111	114
Subsidies to Hardship Cases	34	11	11	11
Other Subsidies	-	80	87	89
Cost Recovery	(163)	(8)	(8)	(9)
Sub-total Operational Cost	2,210	2,780	3,015	3,086
Total Staff and Operational Cost	20,224	21,522	22,007	22,893
Projects	2,397	4,179	2,125	2,075
Grand Total	22,621	25,701	24,132	24,968

Table 5-3 Palestine refugees have improved livelihood opportunities

Project List (US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Enhancing job readiness and employment opportunities: transforming technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with a focus on gender equality and disability inclusion	2,125	2,075
Total Projects Budget	2,125	2,075

CHAPTER VI

SUB-PROGRAMME 5: THE MOST VULNERABLE PALESTINE REFUGEES HAVE ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 6.1 Social assistance systems are critical for helping the most vulnerable individuals and families meet basic needs, manage risks and cope with shocks and crises. They also allow families to support and invest in their health, wellbeing and education. UNRWA has a critical role to play in providing social assistance to Palestine Refugees, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria, due to the significantly depressed economic situation. Poverty rates exceed 80 per cent in these three fields, suggesting that assistance should be provided to the vast majority of the population to alleviate severe pressures on household economies. Multiplier effects of providing near universal assistance offer relief for wider populations, including hosts who may be equally affected, and can contribute to market stability. The Agency will continue to provide predominantly cash based assistance to refugees in need of social assistance, with emergency food distributions continuing in the Gaza Strip and Syria due to prevailing market conditions, linked to the availability and price of basic commodities. UNRWA's efforts in providing access to effective social assistance for the most vulnerable Palestine Refugees are aligned with SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 (zero hunger).
- 6.2 Annually, the Agency provides food and cash assistance to approximately 1.9 million Palestine Refugees in need of social assistance. Support is provided under two interventions: (i) a SSNP that contributes to poverty mitigation, funded by through the UNRWA PB, which reached over 325,000 recipients in 2022; and (ii) emergency programming for victims of humanitarian crisis, through which 1.8 million Palestine Refugees were assisted in the same year. Although the value of social transfers does not cover all basic needs, they represent a lifeline for the most vulnerable.
- 6.3 The SSNP aims to mitigate poverty and food insecurity among poor refugees, with the abject poor prioritized for assistance.¹⁸ The programme provides a range of social transfers, including a basic food basket, cash transfers and/or electronic cash vouchers (e-cards). In Jordan, Lebanon and the West Bank, the SSNP targets Palestine Refugees using a proxy-means testing formula (PMTF), which has been in place since 2011.¹⁹ However, in fields with exceptionally high levels of poverty, the application of the PMTF becomes ineffective given the programme's resource constraints, time intensiveness of the assessment process and the sometimes inaccessible locations of recipient populations. As such, in Syria and the Gaza Strip, universal social assistance is extended to the registered population through emergency funding, with the SSNP refocused in 2019 and 2022,

18 UNRWA defines those in a state of abject poverty as individuals who cannot meet their basic food needs.

19 To accurately measure household poverty status among Palestine Refugees, the PMTF assesses a variety of indicators, including housing conditions, demographics, education, health, attachment to the labour force and household assets.

respectively, to provide supplementary assistance to those refugees who are unable to generate income irrespective of the economic situation. Groups targeted under this vulnerability-based criteria include the elderly and households headed by women, youth and persons with disabilities.

- 6.4 Under emergency programming, UNRWA provides food and cash assistance to Palestine Refugees impacted by the blockade of the Gaza Strip, occupation in the West Bank, hostilities in Syria, socio-economic crisis in Lebanon and pronounced hardship as a result of COVID-19. In 2022, the Agency distributed food baskets to over 1.1 million Palestine Refugees in the Gaza Strip which satisfied 80 per cent of daily calorific needs as well as food parcels, food vouchers and cash assistance to some 60,000 refugees in the West Bank assessed to be food insecure or vulnerable to protection threats. In Syria, emergency programming offers universal food and cash assistance, providing critical, adaptive and immediate support to approximately 416,000 conflict-affected Palestine Refugees and constitutes a minimum basic social assistance floor in a field with a very high poverty rate. Cash assistance is also extended to just under 130,000 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon to cope with the impact of the severe socio-economic crisis in country, as well as to 30,000 PRS displaced to Lebanon and just under 20,000 PRS in Jordan.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 6.5 Poverty amongst Palestine Refugees remains high and is growing. Rising food and fuel prices have impacted all UNRWA fields of operation due to their high dependency on imports of basic food commodities. The situation is further exacerbated by the high share of disposable income spent on food,²⁰ elevated levels of currency depreciation in Lebanon and Syria and increasing energy prices in all fields.
- 6.6 Where poverty levels are continuously increasing and reaching near universal levels, the overwhelming majority of the population is impacted by economic and social distress. In Syria, employment is no safeguard from poverty – there is a large contingent of working poor, due to extreme losses in the purchasing power of salaries as a result of the devaluation of the local currency; in the Gaza Strip, the lack of a productive economic sector and viable market make income generation elusive. Lebanon is on a path towards a similar scenario given the combination severe economic, financial and political crises, which disproportionately affect Palestine Refugees, an already severely marginalized population.
- 6.7 The Agency remains unable to mitigate poverty and food insecurity for all poor and vulnerable Palestine Refugees due to funding constraints. The SSNP's intake ceiling has been frozen since April 2013, severely limiting the introduction of new cases. Furthermore, although the programme aims to ensure social transfers equivalent to at least 50 per cent of minimum survival-level food expenditure ('absolute poverty line'), only in the Gaza Strip and Syria has this been achieved.²¹ In all other fields, the transfer value is far below the recommended level and, in 2022, ranged from 20.4 per cent in Jordan to 23.3 per cent in the West Bank. The value of these social transfers has been further eroded in recent years by high rates of inflation in all fields.

20 UNRWA High frequency crisis monitoring surveys.

21 In 2022, the social transfer value in the Gaza Strip and Syria was 50.0 and 60.3 per cent of the absolute poverty line, respectively.

6.8 In the face of constraints affecting the SSNP, many poor Palestine Refugees register for national assistance programmes and seek support from other charitable organizations. However, some Palestine Refugees – such as Palestine Refugees in Lebanon and ex-Gazans in Jordan – are excluded from accessing host country schemes and remain exceptionally vulnerable. Negative coping strategies, such as selling belongings or eating less, have increasingly been adopted by some refugees. Others resort to eating poor quality food, which has a number of health implications, including diabetes and obesity.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 6.9 During the 2024-25 biennium, UNRWA will continue to extend social transfers through the SSNP to the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the Palestine refugee population. In all fields, the Agency will seek to better align its cash assistance transfer levels with specific household expenditure needs. In Jordan and the West Bank, the targeting of assistance will continue to be determined through PMTF assessments, but opportunities to align the SSNP more closely with host government social protection programmes will be sought to: (i) offer targeting and transfer value equivalency; (ii) prevent duplicative coverage; and (iii) in the case of Jordan, include populations excluded by host country programmes. In Syria and the Gaza Strip, where very high poverty levels are expected to persist, the targeting of SSNP assistance will remain based on identified vulnerable categories amongst the Palestine refugee population (high dependency ratio within a family and long-term support needs) and will continue to be accompanied by a universal ultra-basic assistance floor for all registered Palestine Refugees. In these fields, the vulnerability criteria will continue to be refined, based on demographically available data from UNRWA's registration system, including female headed households, families with disabled members and families with children under five. In Lebanon, where poverty rates have dramatically increased since the onset of the socio-economic crisis in 2019, the existing SSNP caseload, determined through PMTF assessments, will be maintained and supplemented by EA-funded multi-purpose cash assistance to the most vulnerable Palestine Refugees.
- 6.10 The Agency will aim to mobilise sufficient resources to ensure that emergency social transfers continue to be disbursed to all Palestine Refugees in need. Demand for emergency food and cash assistance is anticipated to increase due to an expected continuation of the dire conditions in Syria and the Gaza Strip, continued displacement of PRS in Lebanon and Jordan as well as the possible worsening of the economic situation in Lebanon. UNRWA will maintain regular situation monitoring in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria that will, if conditions remain static or further deteriorate, provide evidence for programme adjustments. In addition, post-distribution monitoring surveys will be implemented on a biannual basis in all fields to track the economic situation affecting Palestine Refugees and inform as to the effectiveness and relevance of relief assistance interventions.
- 6.11 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:
- Poverty amongst Palestine Refugees is alleviated.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: The most vulnerable Palestine Refugees have access to effective social assistance			
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures	
		2024-25	2022-23
Poverty amongst Palestine Refugees is alleviated	Percentage of abject poverty line bridged through UNRWA social transfers	Target	50.00
		Estimate	-
		Actual	30.34

Table 6-1 The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system

Resource Requirements by Objective (Cash, US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Poverty amongst the most vulnerable Palestine refugees is alleviated	52,493	54,195
Total Programme Budget	52,493	54,195
Project Budget	3,437	-
Grand Total	55,930	54,195

A. Poverty amongst the most vulnerable Palestine refugees is alleviated

Output	2024	2025
The most vulnerable Palestine refugees receive social assistance to meet their basic food needs	52,493	54,195
Total	52,493	54,195

Table 6-2 The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system

PB Requirements by Resources

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
Area Staff	11,239	11,239	12,246	13,004
Sub-total Staff Cost	11,239	11,239	12,246	13,004
Operational Costs				
Supplies	86	109	119	122
Utilities	4	1	2	2
Maintenance of Premises	3	149	162	165
Rental of Premises	59	34	37	38
Equipment	69	87	95	97
Training	3	3	3	3
Admin Support Services	8	14	15	15
Consultancy Services	-	1	1	1
Hospital Services	160	102	110	113
Miscellaneous Services	341	281	305	312
Subsidies to Hardship Cases	29,095	39,142	39,142	40,060
Third Parities Subsidies	112	116	126	129
Other Subsidies	176	121	131	134
Sub-total Operational Cost	30,118	40,160	40,247	41,191
Total Staff and Operational Cost	41,357	51,399	52,493	54,195
Projects	8,024	2,216	3,437	-
Grand Total	49,381	53,615	55,930	54,195

Table 6-3 The most vulnerable Palestine refugees have access to effective social assistance system

Project List (US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Strengthening psychosocial resilience through social work interventions	658	-
Sustaining the roll-out and implementation of e-UNRWA services	1,779	-
Upgrading the RRIS and its integration with the UNRWA EMIS and e-Health	1,000	-
Total Projects Budget	3,437	-

CHAPTER VII

SUB-PROGRAMME 6: PALESTINE REFUGEES ARE ABLE TO MEET THEIR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OF SHELTER, WATER AND SANITATION

CURRENT OPERATIONS

- 7.1 Adequate housing, access to safe water and sanitation are basic needs that are fundamental to human dignity. Adequate housing encompasses individual Palestine refugee shelters and homes as well as the overall built environment in which refugees live. This includes basic environmental infrastructure and utilities, such as water supplies, sanitation and waste management services. UNRWA contributes to these basic needs through its shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction interventions, camp improvement plans (CIPs) and environmental services. These are centred in the 58 official camps where Palestine Refugees reside across the five fields of Agency operation, as well as in unofficial camps in Jordan and Syria and in some areas adjacent to camps. In post-conflict situations, shelter rehabilitation and reconstruction are provided both in and outside camps. UNRWA does not administer or manage camps but supports public services within them, where needed, appropriate and possible. Agency efforts in support of meeting the shelter, water and sanitation needs of Palestine Refugees are aligned with SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).
- 7.2 At the individual and family level, UNRWA assesses and rehabilitates substandard shelters. This includes homes with asbestos roofing, poor ventilation and dampness and shelters that are overcrowded or unsuitable for persons with special needs. The Agency also repairs and reconstructs homes destroyed during emergencies, including conflicts. In recent years, UNRWA's approach to shelter rehabilitation has evolved to include a greater level of participation from Palestine Refugees. This is done through the promotion of the self-help approach, whereby families are engaged in the rehabilitation of their own shelters, including the design, planning and construction phases, with financial and technical support and supervision provided by the Agency. This approach not only enhances local ownership but also reduces rehabilitation costs by approximately seven per cent.
- 7.3 More comprehensive camp improvement planning takes place through a participatory approach whereby community members lead the process and identify priorities. Since 2007, UNRWA has completed CIPs in ten camps across four fields of operation. These have resulted in the construction of public spaces and recreational areas, upgrading of environmental infrastructure, greening initiatives and improvements to urban economic space and road networks.
- 7.4 Although responsibility for the provision of public services within camps resides with host authorities, the Agency supports Palestine refugee access to potable water and basic sanitation. UNRWA does so through the maintenance of environmental health infrastructure, provision of sanitation services and the planning, design

and construction of sewerage, drainage and water supply network upgrades. These efforts have led to all shelters in camps being connected to Agency, municipal or other basic water supply networks and almost 94 per cent of all shelters in camps being connected to sewerage networks.

- 7.5 Guided under its Environmental Sustainability Policy (2022), UNRWA has taken steps to combat climate change in relation to its own operations and its impact on refugees' living environment. Greening technologies and renewable energy sources are increasingly incorporated into construction works, including photovoltaic panels, energy efficient equipment, solar water heaters and water harvesting systems. Energy efficient design features are also integrated into construction and maintenance works, such as double walling and double glazing. The Agency is committed to environmental sustainability and minimizing the risk of negative environmental effects due to its construction and rehabilitation works. The UNRWA Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), introduced in 2022, establishes clear procedures, methodologies and systematic processes for the environmental and social management of all construction and maintenance projects.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

- 7.6 Conditions in the 58 official camps where Palestine Refugees live have deteriorated considerably. Over a period of more than 70 years, they have developed into complex and diverse living environments and are amongst the most densely populated urban environments anywhere in the world. Camps are characterized by high concentrations of poverty, with residents typically enduring worse health and education outcomes than non-camp refugees.
- 7.7 Addressing these needs remains challenging. Urban planning and integrated infrastructure development in camps have largely been non-existent or at best, haphazard. Each field of operation and even individual camps hold very specific characteristics such as political contexts, refugees' needs and host authority legal frameworks. With urbanization continuing at a rapid pace, many refugee camps are approaching a tipping point. In the future, any planning or architectural interventions may become increasingly difficult and costly, if not urgently addressed.
- 7.8 Access to safe water remains problematic in Palestine refugee camps. Although almost all shelters in official camps are connected to public networks, in 2022, only 43 per cent of these had an optimum water supply. The quantity of water and the quality of the networks, especially in relation to the supply of clean water, remains a significant challenge due to: (i) increasing over-crowdedness, with demand exceeding the capacity of infrastructure systems; (ii) ageing networks, leading to possible cross-contaminations between water supply and sewerage networks; (iii) the application of informal technical measures (such as private pumps and additional connections); and (iv) a lack of available water resources. As a result, Palestine Refugees in many camps rely on private vendors for drinking water which presents a financial cost that the most impoverished cannot afford.
- 7.9 Sanitation-related communicable disease outbreaks remain a potential risk in some refugee camps – particularly those affected by conflict and deepening poverty. This risk is caused by insufficient network capacity and ageing infrastructure, planning and design gaps in relation to some networks, lack of wastewater treatment and standing wastewater near camps that provide breeding grounds for mosquitoes. To underline this risk, in 2022, a cholera outbreak was reported in one camp in Lebanon and three camps in Syria, resulting in 155 suspected cases and six confirmed cases among Palestine Refugees.

7.10 There remains a critical need for investment to improve shelters, public spaces, social facilities, environmental infrastructure, sanitation services and solid waste management across all fields. This includes over 39,000 refugee families assessed to be living in sub-standard shelters. Recurrent conflicts have also extended the backlog of shelters requiring rehabilitation, with approximately 59,000 shelters in the Gaza Strip and 900 in Lebanon awaiting repair or reconstruction. No reliable estimates of the extent of shelter damage and destruction in Syria are available. Progress in rehabilitating substandard shelters is constrained by: (i) financial limitations; (ii) the security situation in Syria; (iii) the blockade of the Gaza Strip, which limits the delivery of construction materials; and (iv) deteriorating economic conditions and civil unrest in Lebanon.

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 7.11 UNRWA will continue to target the most vulnerable families for shelter rehabilitation, based on criteria that include safety, health, socio-economic status and vulnerability. During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will seek to rehabilitate around 830 substandard shelters and to progress the reconstruction of shelters destroyed in Nahr el-Bared camp in Lebanon in 2007 and during recent conflicts in the Gaza Strip. UNRWA will also commence planning for the rehabilitation of damaged shelters in Syria if the security situation allows. During shelter rehabilitation works, the Agency will ensure that the needs of families are considered in design works and implementation, including as relating to privacy, dignity, gender, special needs of persons with disabilities and social concerns. In this respect, the self-help approach will be further extended, supporting and empowering families to implement shelter works themselves, enhancing their sense of ownership and building their individual and collective capacities. This approach will typically be used for individual shelters and not for major rehousing projects or for those who cannot build their own shelters.
- 7.12 During the 2024-25 biennium, UNRWA will target two camps for comprehensive improvement through new CIPs, contingent on the receipt of adequate funding. Working in partnership with refugees, the Agency will continue to integrate protection measures, including gender, disability inclusion and child protection across the design, construction and maintenance of facilities and camp improvement works, such as the renovation of public spaces.
- 7.13 UNRWA will continue to ensure the basic needs of environmental health and environmental infrastructure, including a safe, equitable and sufficient quantity and quality of water and adequate sewerage, storm-water drainage and solid waste collection systems that meet minimum acceptable standards. In this regard, opportunities for more effective and efficient solid waste management will be explored, including through: (i) implementing the Agency's solid waste management framework and field-specific solid waste management strategies, developed in line with host government strategies; (ii) adopting solid waste management best practice at the camp level; and (iii) strengthening Palestine refugee awareness in the aforementioned areas. Furthermore, UNRWA will look to extend sewage network coverage using project funds.
- 7.14 The Agency also recognizes it has a key role to play in addressing environmental sustainability within the Palestine refugee community and an obligation to minimize the negative environmental impact of its own operations. In this regard, UNRWA is committed to mainstreaming and integrating its Environmental Sustainability Policy across all Agency operations and the ESMF into all planning, design, environmental infrastructure works and construction and rehabilitation practices. Here, the focus will be on energy efficiency, conserving natural resources and interacting with the environment responsibly in support health and wellbeing.

- 7.15 The Strategic Plan 2023-28 reflects the following expected accomplishments:
- Palestine Refugees residing in camps live in adequate and safe shelters; and
 - Palestine Refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Objective: Palestine Refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation			
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures	
		2024-25	2022-23
Palestine Refugees residing in camps live in adequate and safe shelters	Percentage of substandard shelters repaired or reconstructed	Target	16.9
		Estimate	-
		Actual	15.6
Palestine Refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions	Percentage of shelters connected to an official sewerage network	Target	95.0
		Estimate	-
		Actual	94.1

Table 7-1 Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation

Resource Requirements by Objective

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. Palestine refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions	26,218	27,096
Total Programme Budget	26,218	27,096
Project Budget	127,666	60,214
Grand Total	153,884	87,311

A. Palestine refugees residing in camps live in healthy and environmentally sustainable conditions

Output	2024	2025
Palestine refugees' shelters receive adequate potable water provision	4,086	4,351
Palestine refugee camps and shelters have adequate sewerage and wastewater provision	973	801
Palestine refugee camps have regular solid waste collection and disposal services	20,811	21,586
Palestine refugee camp improvement plans promote environmental sustainability and the protection of camp residents	348	358
Total	26,218	27,096

**Table 7-2 Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation
PB Requirements by Resources**
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
Area Staff	18,807	18,522	20,163	20,900
Sub-total Staff Cost	18,807	18,522	20,163	20,900
Operational Costs				
Supplies	2,295	2,418	2,623	2,685
Utilities	190	115	125	127
Maintenance of Premises	8	71	77	78
Rental of Premises	13	14	15	15
Equipment	57	130	141	145
Admin Support Services	12	13	14	15
Miscellaneous Services	2,545	2,813	3,053	3,125
Third Parities Subsidies	7	6	7	7
Sub-total Operational Cost	5,127	5,579	6,054	6,196
Total Staff and Operational Cost	23,935	24,101	26,218	27,096
Projects	24,543	117,789	127,666	60,214
Grand Total	48,477	141,890	153,884	87,311

Table 7-3 Palestine refugees are able to meet their basic human needs of shelter, water and sanitation

Project List (US\$'000s)	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Developing a camp information system	1,000	800
Ensuring UNRWA service provision in the West Bank through safe and sustainable facilities	10,000	10,000
Environmental health, solid waste management and shelter rehabilitation in Lebanon	10,500	12,000
Improved environmental sustainability in ten Palestine refugee camps in Jordan through modernized solid waste management operations	900	906
Improving the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Gaza through participatory camp improvement, infrastructure and assistance, including employment assistance, for vulnerable Palestine refugees	31,198	6,025
Knowledge development: improving capacity of UNRWA staff to implement the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Strategy and improve environmental sustainability (NBC) Reconstruction	322	322
Reconstruction and / or comprehensive maintenance of UNRWA facilities and the rehabilitation of shelters in urgent need	19,000	-
Reconstruction and rehabilitation of UNRWA installations in Syria	12,726	12,162
Rehabilitation of Palestine refugee shelters in Gaza	11,000	11,000
Rehabilitation of Palestine refugee shelters in the West Bank	23,921	-
Strengthening shelter services for the vulnerable: the development of shelter guidelines to address Palestine refugee protection and other needs	7,000	7,000
Total Projects Budget	100	-
	127,666	60,214

CHAPTER VIII

SUB-PROGRAMME 7: UNRWA'S MANDATE IS IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY AND RESPONSIBLY

MANAGEMENT SERVICES GOAL

- 8.1 Sub-programme 7 focuses on the management of UNRWA operations to ensure they are: (i) delivered in an effective, efficient and safe manner; (ii) transparent and accountable; and (iii) socially and environmentally sustainable. The outcomes outlined above are aligned with SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnership for the goals) and will be achieved by the following dedicated policy, programme, and support departments and divisions as well as through the strategic leadership, policy development, quality assurance and monitoring functions provided within core Agency programmes and field offices:
- i) Commissioner-General's Office
 - ii) Finance Department
 - iii) Department of Human Resources
 - iv) External Relations and Communications Department
 - v) Department of Internal Oversight Services (DIOS)
 - vi) Department of Legal Affairs
 - vii) UNRWA Dispute Tribunal
 - viii) Department of Planning
 - ix) Information Management Technology Department
 - x) Department of Security Risk Management
 - xi) Central Support Services Division, and
 - xii) Programme management of education, health, RSS, infrastructure and camp improvement, and protection
- 8.2 UNRWA's management priorities build on recent reforms, including the 2019-21 Management Initiatives, aimed at making the Agency more accountable, inclusive, transparent and agile, to better support programme delivery and strengthen strategic and policy functions. During the 2024-25 biennium, a long-term vision and plan of interconnected initiatives that will modernize, in the broadest sense, UNRWA management practices

and organizational culture will be enacted. These reforms will be led and coordinated by a Director of Strategic Positioning and Change, engaged at the end of 2022.

UNRWA OPERATIONS ARE DELIVERED EFFECTIVELY, EFFICIENTLY AND SAFELY

- 8.3 During the 2024-25 biennium and in line with the Agency's ReMOS, UNRWA will work towards a predictable, sustainable and diversified funding base that ensures sufficient resources to deliver on the Agency's mandate. Two dimensions will guide this approach: (i) deepening and broadening long term public and private partnerships based on trust, mutual accountability and transparency; and (ii) increasing the use of digital tools to develop new partnerships. As part of these efforts, the Agency will endeavour to create a stronger and more global "UNRWA brand" that reflects the successes and transformative impacts of the Agency's programmes, particularly education, in an effort to counter increasingly politicized attacks from detractors. This will be achieved through the: (i) proactive engagement of parliaments, civil society, think tanks, academia and public figures; and (ii) alignment of advocacy and fundraising campaigns. UNRWA will also continue to engage host countries and donors in finding long term solutions towards a sustainable Agency.
- 8.4 The safety and security of UNRWA personnel will remain critical to the Agency's ability to operate, particularly in fields impacted by conflict, where many - most notably UNRWA's 30,000 area staff - are on the front line of service delivery. To effectively manage security risks and respond to emerging threats, the Agency will integrate best practice into internal security risk management processes, through the systematic application of UN security management risk methodologies. This will allow UNRWA to ensure that programmes are delivered within accepted levels of security risk and that senior management are able to make risk informed decisions.
- 8.5 More broadly, to better manage complex geopolitical, conflict-related, humanitarian, operational, financial, environmental and reputational risks, the Agency will strengthen its enterprise risk management capacity and systems to develop a more comprehensive risk assessment and profile as the basis for a better understanding of the current context, immediate priorities and longer-term needs, as assessed against risks. Guided by the results of a 2022 comprehensive maturity assessment of UNRWA's risk management framework, this will be accomplished through enhanced risk awareness and robust internal controls and decision-making processes that will further facilitate the systematic identification, assessment, mitigation and treatment of risk.
- 8.6 With approximately 30,000 staff representing the Agency's primary asset and 80 per cent of its expenditure, it is critical that UNRWA has the right talent in the right places and at the right time to achieve its objectives. During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will continue to streamline and reinforce its human resources systems, structures and processes, focusing on organizational design, talent acquisition, career development and workforce/succession planning. In this regard, an increasing number of business processes will also be digitalized to improve efficiency. Furthermore, wellbeing activities will be maintained, guided by a People Strategy that will be developed during the biennium. Conflict resolution mechanisms, available to managers and staff, will also be strengthened, building on the Ombudsman Office, established in 2021, and the Leadership Dialogue initiative, launched in 2023.
- 8.7 UNRWA procurement practices will continue to seek best value for money and work in a fair, ethical and transparent manner. The Agency will implement these principles through: (i) the institution of sustainable procurement to enhance environmental sustainability and promote social progress (e.g., fair labour conditions,

workplace safety, gender equality and disability inclusion), economic development and resource efficiency, improving the quality of products and services over their lifecycle. UNRWA will also encourage UN vendors to comply with sustainable procurement requirements as an integral part of bidding processes; (ii) the digitalization of manually implemented procurement actions, to promote sustainability and enhance security while increasing transparency and ensuring value for money; (iii) strengthening internal procurement and stock handling and distribution procedures, including in the areas of warehousing and property management; and (iv) deepening cooperation with other UN entities to, inter alia, obtain volume discounts and achieve process or operational efficiencies to the greatest extent practicable.

UNRWA OPERATIONS ARE TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

- 8.8 The Agency's Department of Internal Oversight Services (DIOS) will continue to work in high-risk areas, focusing on: (i) internal audit dedicated to strengthened risk management, governance and internal controls through audit and advisory services in key areas. Audit coverage will be enhanced in key IT areas, including ERP, data protection and information governance and management; (ii) evaluations that strengthen accountability, learning and evidence-based decision making with a focus on improving the coverage and strategic relevance, quality, practice and methods of evaluation, whilst further enhancing the culture and capacity for independent evaluations; and (iii) fair and objective investigations of serious allegations of misconduct, including in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption. In addition, DIOS, the UNRWA Ethics Office as well as the Departments of Legal Affairs and Human Resources will continue to work together to support the prevention of misconduct, including sexual misconduct, neutrality breaches, fraud and corruption.
- 8.9 UNRWA's operations are anchored in the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The Agency's adherence to these principles is an essential condition for the effective implementation of its mandate and, to this end, UNRWA takes a zero-tolerance approach to their violation. Efforts to uphold all humanitarian principles will continue to be rooted in: (i) mandatory training for staff, including on how to address violations; (ii) a review of all textbooks to be introduced in Agency schools and a multilayered review of learning materials to be made available through the UNRWA DLP; (iii) due diligence reviews of all third parties, suppliers, partners and donors; and (iv) quarterly inspections of every Agency installation.
- 8.10 During the 2024-25 biennium, the Agency will remain committed to the further development and use of accountability to affected population structures and processes that facilitate: (i) information gathering and sharing, consultation and the participation of the most vulnerable to ensure that UNRWA is responsive to all Palestine refugee needs; (ii) safeguarding, including in relation to PSEA; (iii) the delivery of Agency programming in accordance with humanitarian principles; and (iv) the systematic engagement of Palestine refugee communities at set points during the annual programme cycle and as part of any change management processes.
- 8.11 UNRWA will continue to engage its inter-governmental Advisory Commission and enhance the ways in which it interacts with this body and its Sub-Committee, with a focus on: (i) improving its role as a platform for open,

constructive dialogue to better assist UNRWA senior management in delivering on the Agency's mandate; and (ii) engendering a deeper sense of collective responsibility and commitment to preserve UNRWA's agility and operational response for continued service delivery to Palestine Refugees.

UNRWA OPERATIONS ARE SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE

- 8.12 UNRWA is committed to promoting the rights of all Palestine Refugees – women, men, girls and boys – in its services and advocacy interventions, including by ensuring that Agency-wide policies, systems and processes are gender-sensitive. At the beginning of 2024, UNRWA's updated GES will be launched, which will reflect key strategic priorities – within the Agency and through its service delivery - and ensure alignment with international gender frameworks, norms and standards, including the UN-SWAP. Internally, the Agency will promote gender equality and women's empowerment through four key drivers: (i) a strengthened gender architecture and coordinating mechanisms; (ii) appropriate allocation and monitoring of financial resources for gender mainstreaming; (iii) leadership in bringing about changes to UNRWA's organizational culture and operations; and (iv) enhanced accountability through gender mainstreaming in audit and evaluation. A Women Advisory Forum, established in 2022, will be a key body to advance these drivers.
- 8.13 In line with the Agency's Disability Inclusion Policy (2022), UNRWA will also seek to address barriers to the full enjoyment of the rights of Palestine Refugees with disabilities, including through advocacy with duty bearers. To this end, the Agency will: (i) work in alignment with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy to accelerate disability inclusion; (ii) upgrade and harmonize its data systems and identification tools regarding disability, in line with global standards; (iii) ensure the systematic identification of disability through outreach and community engagement; (iv) meaningfully consult persons with disabilities; (v) work to strengthen disability inclusion in Agency planning and budgeting cycles, including through dedicated budget lines in support of reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of persons with disabilities; and (vi) support adapted service delivery modalities.
- 8.14 UNRWA has a key role to play in addressing environmental sustainability in Palestine refugee communities and an obligation to minimize the negative environmental impact of its own operations. The Agency's Environmental Sustainability Policy, promulgated in 2022, reflects the commitments, principles, implementation accountabilities and structures for environmental sustainability that will continue to be implemented during the 2024-25 biennium. Throughout, UNRWA will seek to strengthen environmental sustainability partnerships across Agency fields of operation, including with Palestine Refugees, host governments, the donor community, other UN entities, civil society and the private sector.

Objective: UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly				
Outcome	Indicator	Performance measures		
		2024-25	2022-23	
UNRWA operations are delivered effectively, efficiently and safely	Percentage of projects completed within the agreed time and budget	Target	100	100
		Estimate	-	-

		Actual	-	98.8
UNRWA operations are transparent and accountable	Implementation rate of DIOS audit recommendations	Target	80	80
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	90
UNRWA operations are socially and environmentally sustainable	Percentage of UN-SWAP indicators assessed as meeting or exceeding requirements	Target	56	69
		Estimate	-	-
		Actual	-	50

Table 8-1 UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly

Resource Requirements by Objective

(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
A. UNRWA operations are delivered effectively and efficiently	144,756	146,887
B. UNRWA operations are transparent and accountable	9,494	9,847
Total Programme Budget	154,250	156,734
Project Budget	94,495	65,628
Grand Total	248,745	222,362

A. UNRWA operations are delivered effectively and efficiently

Output	2024	2025
UNRWA security risk management measures, aligned with United Nation Security Management System policies, are fully implemented	13,319	13,581
Qualified staff are attracted to, recruited and retained by UNRWA	11,538	11,387
Goods, services and assets are procured, administered and maintained in an inclusive and timely manner	31,323	31,555
UNRWA programmes and projects are effectively managed	88,576	90,364
Total	144,756	146,887

B. UNRWA operations are transparent and accountable

Output	2024	2025
Independent oversight and assurance of UNRWA operations is strengthened	3,971	4,199
Feedback, complaints and concerns on UNRWA operations are responded to in a timely manner	5,523	5,648
Total	9,494	9,847

Table 8-2 UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly

PB Requirements by Resources
(Cash, US\$'000s)

	2022 Expenditure	2023 Budget	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Staff Costs				
International Staff	32,441	39,959	39,959	40,883
Area Staff	66,591	72,459	78,516	79,898
Sub-total Staff Cost	99,031	112,418	118,475	120,781
Operational Costs				
Supplies	8,875	6,358	6,197	6,228
Utilities	3,872	3,826	3,826	3,845
Maintenance of Premises	1,776	2,328	2,328	2,340
Rental of Premises	854	885	885	890
Equipment	5,056	4,284	4,284	4,305
Training	330	366	366	367
Travel	1,167	1,361	1,361	1,368
Admin Support Services	3,361	3,627	3,627	3,645
Consultancy Services	2,413	3,658	3,658	3,676
Hospital Services	21	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Services	5,706	8,244	9,244	9,290
Subsidies to Hardship Cases	602	275	-	-
Third Parities Subsidies	2,232	2,276	2,276	2,287
Other Subsidies	40	63	-	-
Cost Recovery	(1,791)	(2,278)	(2,278)	(2,290)
Sub-total Operational Cost	34,513	35,274	35,775	35,952
Total Staff and Operational Cost	133,544	147,692	154,250	156,734
Projects	24,170	95,792	94,495	65,628
Grand Total	157,714	243,484	248,745	222,362

Table 8-3 UNRWA's mandate is implemented effectively and responsibly
Project List
(USS\$'000s)

	2024 Estimate	2025 Estimate
Strengthening the managerial competency of healthcare providers	197	-
Creating a resilient health system through effective investment in quality healthcare and hospitalization support.	2,144	-
Enhancing accountability, learning and internal oversight capacity: strengthening the UNRWA evaluation function	250	250
Enhancing environmental sustainability of UNRWA fleet	9,600	9,600
Enhancing UNRWA capacity to effectively combat all forms of sexual misconduct	250	250
Historic refugee record e-Archive project	4,000	4,000
Implementing the UNRWA digital transformation strategy: central registry unit digitalization	100	-
Implementing the UNRWA digital transformation strategy: cybersecurity strategy implementation	4,000	4,000
Implementing the UNRWA digital transformation strategy: modernizing (ERP)	8,000	6,000
Implementing the UNRWA digital transformation strategy: the development and implementation of a ransomware strategy	1,180	1,000
Implementing the UNRWA digital transformation strategy: unified communications	450	450
Improving the well-being of UNRWA personnel through the provision of MHPSS	200	200
Installation of renewable energy systems in UNRWA facilities and strengthening (ICT4E) strategy implementation in Syria	4,252	-
Investments in enhanced fundraising and public outreach	7,000	11,000
Level 1 maintenance UNRWA-Amman Headquarters and development of central support services division dashboard for improved monitoring and reporting	1,070	1,070
Maintaining, upgrading and expanding UNRWA facilities and operations in the Gaza Strip	39,686	18,031
Maintenance and rehabilitation of UNRWA facilities in Lebanon	3,000	3,000
Renovating UNRWA-Amman Headquarters	500	527
Strengthening and mainstreaming UNRWA's engagement on accountability to affected populations	100	100
Strengthening DIOS capacity to implement the UNRWA anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy	100	-
Strengthening solid waste management in the West Bank	7,000	6,000
Strengthening the ethical and professional conduct of UNRWA staff	150	150
Strengthening UNRWA financial and planning processes	160	-
Strengthening UNRWA's capacity, expertise and accountability in administrative decision review and management effectiveness in early dispute resolution through the establishment of a decision review and management support cluster within the department of legal affairs	421	-
Strengthening UNRWA's enterprise risk management approach, systems and risk culture the development of a digitalized benchmarks and indicators system for ethics planning and monitoring	275	-
Towards a sustainable staff care system at UNRWA	202	-
Strengthening UNRWA financial and planning processes	208	-
Total Projects Budget	94,495	65,628

CHAPTER IX

UNITED NATIONS BOARD OF AUDITORS (UNBOA) RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Table 9-1 below illustrates the status of 49 recommendations in the UNBOA report for 2021. As of August 2023, 31 recommendations were implemented and 18 under implementation.

UNRWA's management is committed to implementing the recommendations, some of which require additional funding or require strategic intervention. Most of the recommendations indicated as under implementation are planned for completion in the fourth quarters of the 2023.

Table 9-1 Implementation Status of the UNBOA Recommendations for 2021

Department responsible	Total number of recommendations	Implemented	Not accepted	Overtaken by events	Under implementation
Executive Office	1	1	-	-	-
Central Support Services Division	9	8	-	-	1
Department of Education	1	-	-	-	1
Department of Finance	1	-	-	-	1
Department of Health	7	6	-	-	1
Department of Human Resources	3	2	-	-	1
Department of Information Management	8	4	-	-	4
Department of Microfinance	6	4	-	-	2
Department of Planning	2	-	-	-	2
Department of Relief and Social Services	10	5	-	-	5
Infrastructure and Camp Improvement	1	1	-	-	-
Total	49	31	0	0	18

CHAPTER X

WORKLOAD INDICATORS AND STATISTICS

Key workload indicators and statistics for each sub-programme are provided in Table 10-1 below to illustrate the magnitude of the task facing UNRWA in achieving its mission with respect to the provision of assistance to Palestine Refugees.

Table 10-1 Workload Indicators & Statistics

Sub-programme 1	2020	2021	2022
Registered refugees	5,703,521	5,792,907	5,889,633
Number of individuals provided with social work interventions	-	2,006	4,291

Sub-programme 2	2020	2021	2022
PHC facilities	140	140	140
Annual patient visits	5,798,904 ²²	7,000,706	7,869,919
Number of hospitalized patients	77,324	79,878	83,207
Number of NCD cases under care	283,584	291,333	305,851
Number of women in ANC	57,633	59,003	67,072
Number of women in PNC	70,484	69,895	75,978

Sub-programme 3	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Number of UNRWA schools	709	702	706
Total pupil enrollment	539,770	544,710	543,077

Sub-programme 4 (vocational training)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Vocational training center trainees	8,000	7,930	7,811
Students in enrolled ESF/FESA	2,009	2,076	2,051

Sub-programme 4 (microfinance)	2020	2021	2022
Number of microfinance branches	23	23	24
Total number of microfinance loans	21,339	29,111	32,517
Total value of microfinance loans (US\$)	16,463,292	25,415,575	31,530,808
Number of microfinance loans awarded to refugees	8,200	12,987	15,990
Number of microfinance loans to women	9,865	13,861	15,492
Number of microfinance loans to youth, aged 18-30 years	4,950	7,328	8,333
Number of microfinance loans awarded (cumulative)	571,003	600,114	632,631

Sub-programme 5	2020	2021	2022
Annual average number of SSNP beneficiaries assisted	390,443	398,044	325,180

²² In 2020, an additional 325,811 consultations were administered through medical hotlines in the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria and the West Bank as COVID-19 led to suspension of non-critical PHC services and limitations on in-person visits to Agency health centres for the most clinically vulnerable patients.

Total number of EA-served (cash or food) beneficiaries	2,197,147	1,748,265	1,800,042
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Sub-programme 6	2020	2021	2022
Number of official camps	58	58	58
Number of unofficial camps	10	10	10
Number of shelters rehabilitated - emergency	521	531	3,934
Total number of substandard shelters	39,911	39,387	38,840
Total number of substandard shelters rehabilitated/constructed (excl. emergency)	561	518	551
Shelters connected to water network (per cent)	100	100	100
Shelters connected to sewerage network (per cent)	93.7	93.90	94.10

Sub-programme 7	2020	2021	2022
Number of area staff, female	15,495	15,179	15,114
Number of area staff, male	13,068	12,673	12,429
Number of international staff, female	90	89	100
Number of international staff, male	103	103	113
Procurement value (US\$)	225,590,041	277,615,618	305,768,299
Procurement value of construction contract (US\$)	31,212,306	45,634,441	48,180,103
Procurement value of purchase orders contracts (US\$)	118,198,357	151,774,183	169,490,035
Procurement value of services contract (US\$)	76,179,378	80,206,994	88,098,161
Procurement value, PB (US\$)	84,898,383	83,167,817	99,629,940
Procurement value, external grants (projects, EA) (US\$)	140,691,657	194,447,801	206,138,359