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Unofficial Translation

**Statement by the Special Session
of the Council of the League of Arab States at Ministerial Level
on the impact of the financial crisis of UNRWA
Secretariat General Tuesday, 11th September 2018**

The Council of the League of Arab States at Ministerial Level convened a meeting on 11th September 2018, upon request of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan to discuss means of providing political and financial support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), so as to be able to address repercussions of its severe financial crisis.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Affairs, Mr. Ayman Al-Safadi has briefed his Arab brothers Foreign Ministers on the contacts and actions undertaken by the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, through constant coordination and ongoing support from brothers in the State of Palestine, the Arab Republic of Egypt, other Arab States and friendly countries, to reduce the budget deficit of the UNRWA, in light of the U.S. decision to halt funding the Agency, and to mobilize the international political and financial support, to continue performing its role and bear its responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees, as mandated by the United Nations.

The council has been briefed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, HE Dr. Riyad Al-Maliki, who warned of the danger of the U.S. decisions on "UNRWA", which represents a new attempt to liquidate the question of Palestine aimed at ending the role and mandate of UNRWA and to forfeit the right of return. The Council also called upon the international community to ensure providing the necessary, sufficient and sustainable financial resources to UNRWA's budget and activities to continue its mandate in providing basic services for the Palestinian refugees in all its operation areas, including East Jerusalem.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mr. Sameh Shokry expressed serious concern, in his remarks during the meeting, over the recent developments in the UNRWA and its serious impact on Palestinian refugees conditions, as a result of being subject to severe humanitarian and financial suffering, which requires mobilization of all parties to cooperate in addressing these problems and to find solutions to address the potential impacts of weakening the Agency and its pivotal role in improving the conditions of Palestinian refugees. The Egyptian Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of supporting UNRWA, noting the need not to prejudice the UNRWA's mandate, expressed Egypt's full support to pursue its mandate on the same basis and legitimacy, and called for the need to develop a plan to deal with the current crisis at the long term in order to sustainably address the financial deficit and the challenges of the Agency.

The Ministers denounced the U.S. decision to stop the funding of UNRWA and warned of the danger of the deficit continuation and exacerbation on the humanitarian situation of refugees. The Ministers emphasized the importance of continuing UNRWA's pivotal role to fulfill the vital and humanitarian needs of the Palestinian refugees, in accordance with its United Nations mandate, warning that any prejudice to its mandate or reduction of its services shall contribute to the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East.

The Ministers stressed that the continuation of UNRWA's duties performed for more than 5 million Palestinian refugee in its five areas of operation pursuant to its United Nations mandate is an international political, legal and moral responsibility, whereas the preservation of UNRWA's mandate means respecting the right of refugees to live in dignity and the right of about 550 thousand of Palestinian child refugee to go to schools, and constitutes an international confirmation that the question of Palestinian refugees is a final status issue that must be resolved on basis of international legitimacy resolutions, particularly Resolution 194 and the Arab Peace Initiative in a view to ensuring the refugees' right of return and compensation.

The Ministers agreed to continue discussing the issue in light of the international meeting outcomes and recommendations, called for by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and in coordination with the brothers from the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Palestine, and in cooperation with Sweden, Germany, Japan and the European Union and chaired by the Advisory Commission of UNRWA (Turkey), to undertake and implement the necessary procedures for enforcing the outcomes of the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on Supporting UNRWA, held in Rome, Italy on 15th March 2018, to continue the political actions carried out by Jordan, Egypt and all Arab States to ensure providing sustainable financial support that guarantees the continuation of UNRWA's duties according to its United Nations mandate and to mobilize the political support needed for this mandate.

The Ministers appreciated the international positions supporting the Agency and its role, and expressed gratitude to all the countries that have provided financial support of more than \$200 million as additional funding that reduced the financial deficit of this year from about \$ 417 million to about \$200 million, which allowed the opening of schools and continuation of providing services, reflected an unequivocal message that the world supports the continuation of the UNRWA's mandate, emphasized the vital and political rights of refugees and appreciated the efforts exerted by host countries, particularly Lebanon and Jordan.