



The Group of 78
Le Groupe des 78

April 11, 2017

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau
Minister of International Development and La Francophonie
Ottawa, ON

Dear Madame Bibeau:

On behalf of the Group of 78, I would like to comment on the financial support that the Government of Canada is providing to the Palestinians, particularly through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

First, we wish to commend you and your colleagues for restoring funding last year to UNRWA after its reduction and elimination by the previous government. At the time, we urged the government of the day to maintain this vital support to a population that has suffered historic and chronic dislocation and deprivation. As you well know, Canada had been one of the top three funders of UNRWA's general fund since its creation nearly 60 years ago. To remove this support was, in our view, both unfair and unwise. Your restoration of support is therefore most welcome and we salute your action in doing so. It also underscores the importance of multilateral cooperation and the value of United Nations institutions and agencies in our complex global environment.

We would further, however, like to encourage the Canadian government to increase the level of assistance that has been provided. The total of \$25 million – \$20 million to education, health and social services, and \$5 million to the special appeal for the Syrian crisis – is still markedly below the \$30 million the Canada was contributing when the reversal on funding to UNRWA was implemented. The chronic condition of the Palestinian community, plus the added requirements created by the prolonged warfare in the region, plus increased costs of providing the same level of care and support all amount to a justifiably higher level of engagement. As valuable as your restoration of Canadian support is, more is required. Others have called for a \$35 million base level of support, which we endorse as a minimum. We urge you and your colleagues to move to this target in this fiscal year.

Again, we laud the leadership that you have shown and we look forward to other constructive actions for Canada's engagement toward peace and human well-being in this region.

With kind regards,
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Culpeper'.

Roy Culpeper, Chair: Group of 78