



Geneva Conference 7-8 June 2004:

**Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of the
Palestine Refugees in the Near East:
Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA**

Biographies

Mr. Peter HANSEN (Commissioner-General, UNRWA)
Mr. Walter FUST (Ambassador / Director-General, SDC)

Mr. Martin GRIFFITHS (Moderator)
Dr. Hanan ASHRAWI (Panellist)
Dr. Amos ELON (Panellist)
Mr. Poul NIELSON (Panellist)
Mr. Adnan S. Abu ODEH (Panellist)

Mr. Walter FUST

Ambassador

Director-General of the Swiss Agency
for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Bern

Mr. Walter Fust, born in 1945 in Mosnang/St. Gallen, studied at St. Gallen University and graduated with a Master of Political Science. He entered the diplomatic service in 1975 and was assigned to Berne, Geneva, Baghdad and Tokyo. From 1976 to 1979 he was in charge of economic affairs at the Swiss Embassy in Baghdad. In 1979, he was transferred to Tokyo, responsible for economic, commercial and industrial affairs. In September 1983, he was appointed deputy head of the Integration Office, dealing with the Swiss government's relation with the European Community and the EFTA countries. From 1984 to 1986 he was appointed as personal adviser to Federal Councillor Dr. Kurt Furgler, Minister of Public Economy. In 1986, he was elected as Managing Director of the Swiss Office for Trade Promotion. From 1990 to August 1993 he served as Secretary General of the Ministry of the Interior.

Since September 1993 he is Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Mr. Fust is Chairman of the Board of the "Global Knowledge Partnership GKP", a network dealing with information and communication technologies (ICTs) for development. He is also a member of the U.N. ICT-Panel of Advisors.

Mr. Fust is married and has one daughter and two sons.

Martin Griffiths

Martin Griffiths is the founding Director of the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Before taking up this position in 1999 he served in the United Nations in Geneva, New York, the Great Lakes region, and finally in the Balkans where as UN Coordinator and Deputy to Kosovo's first UN Special Representative he helped to establish the UN Mission. In New York and Geneva he worked in the UN Secretariat's humanitarian office, latterly as Deputy to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Before joining the United Nations in 1994, Mr. Griffiths had been Chief Executive of ActionAid, a development NGO, and before that directed the Asian, Middle East and Latin American programmes of Save the Children Fund. In the nineteen-eighties he was a member of the UK Government's Diplomatic Service, serving in London and South Africa.

Mr. Griffiths is a qualified barrister and US attorney. He is married with one daughter and lives in Geneva.

Dr. Hanan ASHRAWI

Ashrawi, M.A., Ph.D., Hanan Mikhail is the Founder and Secretary General of the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy-MIFTAH, and an elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council for the Jerusalem District. Founder and board member of the National Coalition for Accountability and Integrity –AMAN, Dr. Ashrawi is also founder and Commissioner of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR) and served as its first Commissioner General. From 1996- 1998 she served as the Minister of Higher Education and Research. Dr. Ashrawi was also a member of the Political and Diplomatic Committees during the Intifada and the negotiations. In 1991, she was named Official Spokesperson of the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East Peace Process and a member of the Leadership committee.

Dr. Ashrawi holds a B.A. and an M.A. from the American University of Beirut and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. From 1973-95, Dr. Ashrawi was a faculty member of Birzeit University, held the positions of Dean, Faculty of Arts; Founder and Chairperson, Department of English; and Founder and Head of Birzeit University Legal Aid Committee/ Human Rights Documentation Project.

Throughout, Dr. Ashrawi has been an ardent advocate of human rights and gender issues and has made major contributions to peace making and nation building. She is the recipient of numerous international peace, human rights and democracy awards, such as the Olof Palme Award, Sydney Peace Prize, the Defender of Democracy Award, the Jane Addams International Women's Leadership Award, Distinguished Alumna Award of the University of Virginia Women's Center, and Distinguished Lifetime Achievements AUB Alumni.

She is also the author of many books, articles, poems and short stories on Palestinian politics, culture and literature. Her book This Side of Peace published by Simon & Schuster in 1995, gained world acclaim. She has been highly recognized for her work both in education and world affairs.

Dr. Ashrawi serves on the Advisory Board of several international and local organizations including the World Bank Middle East and North Africa (MENA), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the International Human Rights Council. She has also received several Honorary Doctorate Degrees from universities in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Arab World.

Dr. Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi is married to Emile Ashrawi and has two daughters, Amal and Zeina.

Dr. Amos ELON

Amos Elon, born 1926, is an independent writer. He is a former foreign correspondent (Washington, Paris, Bonn, Cairo) and political columnist of *Haaretz*. He studied law and history in Israel and England (Dr.Lit.h.c.). In Israel he was an early militant for withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian state. He frequently writes in the *New York Review of Books* on subjects connected with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His books, several of which also appeared in English, Arabic, French, Italian, Japanese, Danish, German, Japanese and Portuguese translations, include:

1968 JOURNEY THROUGH A HAUNTED LAND, THE NEW GERMANY

1971 THE ISRAELIS, FOUNDERS AND SONS

1974 BETWEEN ENEMIES, (with Sana Hassan) A Compassionate Dialogue
between an Egyptian and an Israeli.

1975 THEODOR HERZL, a biography.

1979 FLIGHT INTO EGYPT (a political travelogue)

1980 TIMETABLE (novel)

1988 A CERTAIN PANIC (political essays)

1989 JERUSALEM, BATTLEGROUND OF MEMORY

1996 FOUNDER, The First Rothschild and his time.

1997 A BLOOD-DIMMED TIDE, Dispatches from the Middle East. (Political
essays and reportage)

2002 THE PITY OF IT ALL, Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1746-1933

MR. POUL NIELSON

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Personal

Born 11 April 1943 in Copenhagen

In 1967 married to Anne-Marie Nielson – they have 3 children and 6 grandchildren

Education

East Meadow High School Diploma, Nassau County, New York 1961 (American Field Service exchange student).

Danish High School certificate 1963

Graduated in political science from Århus University 1972

Teaching activities

Visiting lecturer at the NATO Defence College in Rome on several occasions in the mid-seventies

External examiner at the Institute for Political Science in Århus 1978-79

Adviser at the management training institute at the Danish School of Administration 1985-86

Political career

Member/Chairman of the Social Democratic Party's Foreign Policy Committee 1965-79

National Chairman of the Social Democratic Students' organisation Frit Forum 1966-67

MP for the Social Democratic Party 1971-73, 1977-84 and since 1986

Delegate to the UN General Assembly 1972 and 1977

Member of the Inter Parliamentary Union in the seventies

Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council in the seventies

Chairman of the parliament's Trade and Industry Committee 1979

Minister for Energy 1979-82

Chairman of the Social Democratic Party's Committee on Energy Policy 1984-94

Member of the Nordic Council 1986-94

Minister for Development Co-operation 1994-99

Member of the European Commission in charge of Development and Humanitarian Aid since September 1999

Other positions

Member of the Council of the Danish Atlantic Treaty Association

Government official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1974-79 and 1984-85

Chairman of the European Movement in Denmark 1977-79

Member of the Board of the Danish Foreign Policy Society 1977-79 and 1986-94

Consultant in the Employees Capital Pension Fund 1986

Managing Director of LD Energi A/S 1988-94

Member of the Council of DONG A/S and Denerco K/S until 1994

Member of the Board of Danop I/S, Tarco A/S, Tarco Energi A/S and VestasDWT A/S until 1994

Chairman of the Board of Watergroup A/S and Vibrodens A/S until 1994

Works

"Powergame and Security" (co-author), 1969

"Socialdemocrats from 6 countries about the EC", 1972

"The Corporation Law and the wage earners", 1974

"Politicians and civil servants", 1987

Mr. Adnan S. Abu ODEH

Adnan S. Abu Odeh was born in Nablus, Palestine on 10 November 1933. Upon completing his studies and training in Amman's Teachers' Training College in 1954 he became a schoolteacher in Jordan.

In 1959 he graduated from the school of Arts at Damascus University in Syria and had a teaching job with the government of Kuwait.

In 1965 he joined Jordan's General Intelligence Department as a political analyst. Through Abu Odeh's new job late King Hussein of Jordan got to know him personally.

In September 1970 the King chose him to hold the portfolio of Culture and Information in the short-lived military cabinet he set up to restore Law and order which had deteriorated due to the chaotic activities of the Palestinian Fedayeen in the country.

Since then he had held a number of public positions in the government except for one year (1975-1976) when he became a fellow at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

King Hussein brought him closer to him in 1984, when he appointed him Minister of Court. In 1988 he became his Political Advisor and in 1991, the Chief of the Royal Court.

Mr. Abu Odeh was appointed Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, New York in 1992, and in 1995 he retired.

In September 1995 he became a senior fellow for one year at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington D.C. In 1997 he was hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for six months and by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. for four months.

King Abdullah II of Jordan appointed him his Political Advisor in 1999, and in 2000, Mr. Abu Odeh resigned his post.

In March 2004 he was elected to membership of the Board of Trustees of International Crisis Group (ICG) for a two-year term.

Mr. Abu Odeh is the author of two books: one in English (Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the M.E. Peace Process - USIP, Washington D.C. 1999) and the other in Arabic. He is also author of numerous articles published in a number of periodicals. One of them is (Two Capitals in An Undivided Jerusalem - Foreign Affairs, Spring 1992).