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*The Bulletin can be found in the United Nations Information System
on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) on the Internet at:
<http://unispal.un.org>*

I. SECRETARY-GENERAL REPORTS ON ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/125, the Secretary-General on 5 May 2010 submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its 2010 substantive session a report entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people" (A/65/77-E/2010/56). The summary and conclusions of the report, which covers the period from May 2009 to April 2010, are reproduced below:

Summary

During the period under review, the Palestinian Authority issued its governmental programme outlining a forward-looking agenda to further strengthen the institutions of a future Palestinian State. Security and institutional reforms continued to be important elements to implement this agenda. The United Nations re-oriented its work to support Palestinian State-building efforts as a critical complement to the continued response to humanitarian needs.

The overall socio-economic and political situation remained challenging, despite notable economic growth in the West Bank prompted by Palestinian efforts and Israel's easing of closure. Intensive efforts by the international community did not result in the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations or Palestinian unity. The political, administrative and economic rift continued to deepen between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Popular protests took place in the occupied Palestinian territory on a number of occasions. Donors disbursed approximately \$1.35 billion to finance the recurrent budget of the Palestinian Authority. In November 2009 the Government of Israel announced a partial restraint on construction in the West Bank settlements for 10 months, which, however, excluded East Jerusalem. In Gaza, the closure continued and contributed to de-

development and the erosion of the private sector. Key elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remained unfulfilled. Despite recent positive steps to allow the entry of materials for some United Nations projects and a limited variety of goods for the private sector, Gaza's needs remain largely unmet.

The present report describes efforts made by the United Nations agencies, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

...

VII. Conclusions

86. The operational context for the United Nations in the reporting period led to the re-orientation of its work to support Palestinian State-building efforts as a critical complement to the continued response to humanitarian needs. Humanitarian and development efforts are an essential component of the creation of a Palestinian State as part of the two-State solution, but are no substitute for the progress which must also be made on the political track. The United Nations will continue working towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), an

end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous

Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel.

II. UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE WEST BANK MOSQUE ATTACK

United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Secretary-General's Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, issued the following statement in Jerusalem on 6 May 2010:

I am deeply concerned at a fire service report that a blaze in a mosque on 4th May in the village of Lubban al Sharqiya in the West Bank was probably arson.

these attacks. It is vital that the Israeli Government impose the rule of law and that those responsible for such crimes are brought to justice.

There have been a number of attacks upon mosques in recent months, as well as violence against Palestinian property and individuals by extremist settlers. I condemn

Extremists from either side must not be allowed to set the agenda and undermine the vital efforts to renew negotiations.

III. SECRETARY-GENERAL WELCOMES START OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PROXIMITY TALKS

The following statement was issued on 9 May 2010 by the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (SG/SM/12882):

The Secretary-General is encouraged by the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian proximity talks. He commends the United States' initiative in this regard. The

Secretary-General hopes that the parties are able to make progress and move towards direct negotiations.

IV. QUARTET WELCOMES THE FIRST ROUND OF PROXIMITY TALKS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS

The following statement was issued on 11 May 2010 by the Quartet (press release SG/2159):

The Quartet welcomes the first round of proximity talks between Israelis and Palestinians. These talks are a significant step toward direct, bilateral negotiations and

comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with

Israel and its neighbours. The Quartet calls on the parties to pursue these talks in good faith and offers its support for their efforts. The Quartet calls on all concerned to

promote an atmosphere conducive to the talks and to act on the basis of previous agreements and obligations.

V. SPECIAL COORDINATOR FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS BRIEFS THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On 18 May 2010, the Security Council met to consider “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, briefed the Council on the latest developments in the region. The following are excerpts from the briefing (S/PV.6315).

...

With the start of the proximity talks, it is vital that positive actions be taken on the ground to build confidence in both Gaza and the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. I turn first to Gaza, where the Secretary-General has repeatedly called for a different and more positive strategy. The United Nations is seeking to be a catalyst for such an approach on the ground, within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

We continue to condemn acts of indiscriminate or excessive violence and to urge calm. Militants fired 12 indiscriminate rockets towards Israel, causing no injuries. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted 19 incursions and eight air strikes during the reporting period, injuring nine Palestinians and killing three. Seven Palestinians were killed and 13 injured in tunnel incidents under the border with Egypt. We continue to urge Palestinian unity on the basis of PLO principles. Despite recent efforts by independent Palestinian figures promoting reconciliation, Hamas continues to refuse the unity proposal that was mediated by

Egypt and accepted by other Palestinian factions.

We call for access to, and the release of, Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, who has been held in captivity for 47 months without third-party access. The resolution of this issue, and with it the release of a significant number of Palestinian prisoners, would be in the overwhelming interest of both Israel and the people of Gaza.

Above all, we stress the scale of the unmet needs of Gaza’s civilian population after nearly three years of closure and the heavy damage of Operation Cast Lead, and we urge an end to the Israeli closure of the Strip. While the Israeli Government continues its existing policy, I welcome initial steps that have been taken to ease the impact of Israel’s closure.

The package agreed between the Government of Israel and the Secretary-General in March is being implemented. The Tel el-Sultan water treatment project will be completed by the end of this month. Construction material began entering Gaza yesterday to begin the completion of 151

housing units at Khan Younis within 16 weeks. I received confirmation this morning that the essential wastewater treatment facility and pipeline at Khan Younis is now also fully approved.

Two thousand four hundred and sixty-nine truckloads entered Gaza between 11 April and 8 May. That represents a modest increase over the previous period, and there was a wider variety of items allowed in. The entry of wood, aluminium and, in particular, glass into Gaza on the private market has enabled a range of minor repairs. However, import levels are still only about one quarter of pre-June 2007 levels.

This can only be a beginning. Much more is needed. The United Nations, in close cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, is seeking larger and more strategic interventions to address needs in Gaza. These efforts enjoy strong support from Quartet and regional partners. We are in active dialogue with the Israeli authorities in pursuit of that objective. Defence Minister Barak confirmed to me last week that Israel will further engage the United Nations on the way ahead. I believe we must move forward with urgency on several fronts.

First, major water and sanitation interventions cannot wait. The aquifer underlying Gaza is collapsing and is expected to be completely unusable within two years. ...

Secondly, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) needs to build 100 schools in Gaza, starting with at least 15 straight away. The student population in UNRWA schools will have increased by 15,000 above the classroom capacity since the imposition of the closure in June 2007. Without new schools, UNRWA cannot meet

a rapidly expanding demand for quality education for the next generation of Gazans.

Thirdly, there are key construction needs in the health sector, along with needs for additional equipment. The Gaza power plant also requires a major servicing and the routine supply of spare parts to ensure continuous operation and a corresponding reduction in electricity cuts across the Strip. The first step in this regard will be to ensure that all material required for this servicing enters Gaza in the days ahead.

Fourthly, a significant increase in both the quantity and range of commercial traffic through legitimate crossings is required to restore market conditions. At present, the flourishing illegitimate tunnel trade permits smugglers and militants to control commerce. By contrast, international agencies and local contractors who wish to procure goods entering through legitimate crossings too often stand idle due to the Israeli closure. Yet, as we have seen with the recent imports of glass, restoring functioning market conditions is the way to meet needs, lower prices, combat smuggling and empower legitimate business activity.

I wish to note that Egypt opened Rafah crossing on 13 May for six days to enable the movement of persons on humanitarian grounds. I also note that Egypt continues its important efforts to combat weapons smuggling, including by installing metal sheeting along its border with Gaza. This only redoubles the importance of goods being able to enter Gaza through the legitimate crossing points.

Within the Gaza Strip, we condemn the extrajudicial execution by Hamas of two Palestinian prisoners on 15 April and a further three executions carried out today without presidential authority. We call on

Hamas not to carry out any further executions. Hamas demolished approximately 20 homes two days ago in Rafah, which it alleges were built illegally.

We are closely following developments on the ground in East Jerusalem. No demolition orders against Palestinian homes were implemented during the reporting period, despite official statements threatening further demolitions. No new settlements have been approved or tendered in East Jerusalem. Israel has also publicly stated that there will be no construction in the Ramat Shlomo settlement for two years. However, the Government continues to state its intention to build settlements in Jerusalem, and there is ongoing settlement activity. Construction in existing Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem — such as the start of work on 14 settler housing units within the Ras el-Amud neighbourhood — is particularly provocative. Marches by right-wing Israelis into East Jerusalem have also caused tensions, as have settler provocations and clashes in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem remain closed. I urge Israel to implement its Road Map obligations and respect international law in East Jerusalem. I stress the utmost importance of all parties showing restraint and responsibility in words and actions regarding Jerusalem.

In the remainder of the West Bank, no new tenders were issued or approvals given for construction of settler units during the reporting period, reflecting Israel's settlement restraint policy. Construction is ongoing due to approvals given prior to the restraint, or due to violations of the restraint policy by settlers. The Israeli Government is taking certain steps to address violations. ...

Both parties have responsibilities to act to maintain a secure environment, and security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority continues to be an important enabler of improvements in the West Bank. However, there are also worrying trends, in particular a rise in settler violence. Two mosques were vandalized, one in an arson attack by unidentified assailants on 4 May in a village between Nablus and Ramallah. The Israeli authorities condemned these incidents and ordered investigations, but no one has yet been held accountable. Following stone-throwing at Israeli vehicles on 13 May, a 15-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by unknown assailants believed to be Israelis — an incident that must be fully investigated. I strongly urge Israel to do more to combat violence by settler extremists.

By contrast, Israeli forces conducted a significantly increased number of incursions from the previous period, arresting 286 Palestinians and injuring 96 others. A militant was killed in an IDF operation on 26 April. Weekly demonstrations against the barrier continued, with Israeli security forces using live rounds, rubber-coated bullets and tear gas to disperse demonstrators. Following recent amendments to a 1969 Israeli military order that originally authorized the deportation of infiltrators from countries hostile to Israel, there are continuing concerns regarding the number of Palestinians who may be affected by the broad and unspecific terms of the order. The United Nations is closely monitoring its impact and continuing to seek clarifications.

...

Looking ahead, and building on earlier steps, reduced Israeli incursions and the further removal of obstacles to movement — which currently stand at 505 — would be very positive. It is equally important that certain security and development steps by the Palestinian Authority are now permitted in Area C. The United Nations also awaits an Israeli response to a \$5-million plan to address some of the most basic humanitarian needs in education, shelter and water and sanitation in Area C.

Let me also draw the Council's attention to certain funding concerns. Despite the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee's call on donors, only \$380 million have so far been provided to the Palestinian Authority out of the \$1.24 billion required for 2010. I urge increased support for the Palestinian Authority budget. Private sector growth is critical to sustainable economic growth, and in this regard I note that the second Palestine Investment Conference will take place on 2 and 3 June to facilitate and mobilize

investment in Palestinian businesses, including in the tourism sector.

UNRWA also faces a financial crisis that threatens the sustainability of essential operations throughout the region, from employing teachers and providing medical care to improving precarious camp conditions for Palestine refugees. Even after scaling back requirements to critical levels, UNRWA's deficit today amounts to \$90 million. I urge all those in a position to assist, in particular countries in the region, to provide additional support to UNRWA this year.

...

The search for Arab-Israeli peace must be comprehensive. We continue to value close engagement with Arab partners, which have a crucial role to play in supporting efforts on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

...

VI. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION DEMANDS AN END TO CLOSURES AFFECTING HEALTH IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

On 20 May 2010, the sixty-third World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization, at its seventh plenary meeting, adopted resolution WHA 63.2 entitled "Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan," reproduced below.

The Sixty-third World Health Assembly,

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

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

Recalling resolution EB124.R4, adopted by the Executive Board at its 124th session, on the grave health situation caused by Israeli military operations in the occupied

Palestinian territory, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip;

Taking note of the report of the Director-General on the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;

Noting with deep concern the findings in the report of the Director-General on the specialized health mission to the Gaza Strip;

Stressing the essential role of UNRWA in providing crucial health and education services in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in addressing the emergency needs in the Gaza Strip;

Expressing its concern at the deterioration of economic and health conditions as well as the humanitarian crisis resulting from the continued occupation and the severe restrictions imposed by Israel, the occupying power;

Expressing its deep concern also at the health crisis and rising levels of food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip;

Affirming the need to guarantee universal coverage of health services and to preserve the functions of the public health services in the occupied Palestinian territory;

Recognizing that the acute shortage of financial and medical resources in the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which is responsible for running and financing public health services, jeopardizes the access of the Palestinian population to curative and preventive services;

Affirming the right of Palestinian patients and medical staff to have access to the Palestinian health institutions in occupied east Jerusalem;

Deploring the incidents involving lack of respect and protection for Palestinian ambulances and medical personnel by the Israeli army, which have led to casualties among Palestinian medical personnel, as well as the restrictions on their movements imposed by Israel, the occupying power, in violation of international humanitarian law;

Affirming that the blockade is continuing and that the crossing points are not entirely and definitely opened, meaning that the crisis and suffering that started before the Israeli attack on the Strip are continuing, hindering the efforts of the Ministry of Health of the Palestinian Authority to reconstruct the establishments destroyed by the Israeli military operations by the end of 2008 and in 2009;

Expressing deep concern at the grave implications of the wall on the accessibility and quality of medical services received by the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem;

Expressing deep concern also at the serious implications for pregnant women and patients of restrictions on movement imposed by Israel on Palestinian ambulances and medical personnel,

1. DEMANDS that Israel, the occupying power:

(1) immediately put an end to the closure of the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly the closure of the crossing points of the occupied Gaza Strip that is

causing the serious shortage of medicines and medical supplies therein, and comply in this regard with the provisions of the Israeli Palestinian Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005;

(2) abandon its policies and measures that have led to the prevailing dire health conditions and severe food and fuel shortages in the Gaza Strip;

(3) comply with the Advisory Opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the wall which, inter alia, has grave implications for the accessibility and quality of medical services received by the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem;

(4) facilitate the access of Palestinian patients and medical staff to the Palestinian health institutions in occupied east Jerusalem and abroad;

(5) ensure unhindered and safe passage for Palestinian ambulances as well as respect and protection of medical personnel, in compliance with international humanitarian law;

(6) improve the living and medical conditions of Palestinian detainees, particularly children, women and patients, provide the detainees, who are suffering from serious medical conditions worsening every day, with the necessary medical treatment;

(7) facilitate the transit and entry of medicine and medical equipment to the occupied Palestinian territory;

(8) assume its responsibility with regard to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people and their daily access to humanitarian aid, including food and medicine, in compliance with international humanitarian law;

(9) halt immediately all its practices, policies and plans, including its policy of closure, that seriously affect the health conditions of civilians under occupation;

(10) respect and facilitate the mandate and work of UNRWA and other international organizations, and ensure the free movement of their staff and aid supplies;

2. URGES Member States and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations:

(1) to help overcome the health crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory by providing assistance to the Palestinian people;

(2) to help meet urgent health and humanitarian needs, as well as the important health-related needs for the medium and long term, identified in the report of the Director-General on the specialized health mission to the Gaza Strip;

(3) to call upon the international community to exert pressure on the Government of Israel, to lift the siege imposed on the occupied Gaza Strip in order to avoid a serious exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis therein, and to help lift the restrictions and obstacles imposed on the Palestinian people including the free movement of people and medical staff in the

occupied Palestinian territory, and to bring Israel to respect its legal and moral responsibilities, and ensure the full enjoyment of basic human rights for civilian populations in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in east Jerusalem;

(4) to remind Israel, the occupying power, to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, which is applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory including east Jerusalem;

(5) to call upon all international human rights organizations, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross, to intervene on an urgent and immediate basis vis-à-vis the occupying power, Israel, and compel it to provide adequate medical treatment to Palestinian prisoners and detainees who are suffering from serious medical conditions worsening every day, and urges civil society organizations to exercise pressure on the occupying power, Israel, to save the lives of detainees and ensure the immediate release of critical cases and to provide them with external treatment, and to allow Palestinian women prisoners to receive maternity care services and medical follow up during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum care, and to allow them to give birth in healthy and humanitarian conditions in the presence of their relatives and family members and immediately to release all children detained in Israeli prisons;

(6) to support and assist the Palestinian Ministry of Health in carrying out its duties, including running and financing public health services;

(7) to provide financial and technical support to the Palestinian public health and veterinary services;

3. EXPRESSES deep appreciation to the international donor community for their support of the Palestinian people in different fields, and urges donor countries and international health organizations to continue their efforts to ensure the provision of necessary political and financial support to enable the implementation of the 2008–2010 health plan of the Palestinian Authority and to create a suitable political environment to implement the plan with a view to putting an end to the occupation and establishing the state of Palestine as proposed by the Government of Palestine, which is working seriously to create the proper conditions for its implementation;

4. EXPRESSES its deep appreciation to the Director-General for her efforts to provide necessary assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and to the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

5. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to provide support to the Palestinian health and veterinary services including capacity building;

(2) to submit a fact-finding report on the health and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(3) to support the establishment of medical facilities and provide health-related technical assistance to the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(4) to continue providing necessary technical assistance in order to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people, including the handicapped and injured;

(5) to also provide support to the Palestinian health and veterinary services in preparing for unusual emergencies;

(6) to support the development of the health system in the occupied Palestinian territory, including development of human resources;

(7) to establish, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, an international committee of specialized medical teams to diagnose the serious health conditions of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and provide them with all necessary and urgent treatment in accordance with relevant international conventions and agreements;

(8) to make available the detailed report prepared by the specialized health mission to the Gaza Strip;

(9) to report on implementation of this resolution to the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly.

VII. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS VANDALISM AGAINST UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY REFUGEES (UNRWA) SUMMER GAMES FACILITY IN GAZA

On 23 May 2010 the following statement was issued by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the vandalism of an UNRWA summer games facility in Gaza:

The Secretary-General condemns the act of vandalism by intruders against an UNRWA summer games facility for children in Gaza. UNRWA's extensive summer games programmes offer a rare opportunity for relief from the deprivations and difficulties of everyday life in Gaza.

This action is an attempt to intimidate and harm the most defenceless in Gaza. The Secretary-General calls upon the de facto authorities to ensure the safety of the United Nations operations and to allow UNRWA to carry out its work unhindered.

VIII. UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE CONVENED IN ISTANBUL

Under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 25 and 26 May 2010. The theme of the Meeting was "Ending the occupation and establishing the Palestinian State". Following the Meeting, on 27 May 2010, the Committee convened the United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, the theme of which was "Jerusalem — The key to Israeli-Palestinian peace". The message to the International Meeting by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, as

delivered by Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (press release SG/SM/12913-GA/PAL/1164), and the concluding remarks by the organizers, are reproduced below.

Secretary-General's message

I send greetings to this United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

I thank the Government of Turkey for hosting this gathering. I value Turkey's active contribution to regional dialogue and preventive diplomacy, including its support for Israeli-Palestinian peace, Palestinian reconciliation, and comprehensive peace in the region.

I am pleased that, after a prolonged period of delay and setbacks, proximity talks are finally under way. I commend President [Mahmoud] Abbas and Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu on this step and urge them to engage on the core issues in earnest, with a view to moving to direct negotiations as soon as possible. I appreciate the active role being played by the United States and pledge my full support for this effort.

As talks proceed, we must work with the parties to ensure that further steps are taken to build mutual trust and more positive conditions on the ground. The parties must avoid provocations or breaches of the Road Map or international law, which will only create new crises of confidence. Israel must exercise particular restraint in East Jerusalem, where demolitions, evictions and settlement expansion should be halted. Jerusalem remains a permanent-status issue, vital to both parties, and a way should be found for the city to emerge from negotiations as the capital of both Israel and

Palestine, with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all. The Palestinian Authority, for its part, must continue its positive efforts in fulfilling Road Map commitments to build institutions and promote security, in the context of its widely supported State-building programme.

In Gaza, all actors should support measures to promote calm, end closure, prevent illicit weapons smuggling, and achieve Palestinian unity within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority and the commitments of the PLO. I am particularly concerned that the current closure creates unacceptable suffering, hurts forces of moderation and empowers extremists, and I call for the closure policy to end. I welcome the modest progress that has been achieved, with the Government of Israel facilitating a number of priority projects and widening the list of commercial goods allowed into Gaza. But so much more must be done and we will continue to press hard for this objective.

Finally, let us also recognize that prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace will be boosted by a favourable regional environment, including a comprehensive approach to peace – including support from all regional parties for Israeli-Palestinian talks, a resumed political track between Israel and Syria, and full realization of the potential of the Arab Peace Initiative. The United Nations remains committed to the end of the 1967 occupation, the creation of an independent Palestinian State, and a just, lasting and comprehensive regional peace, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, previous agreements, and international law.

In this spirit, I wish you fruitful discussions and a successful meeting.

Concluding Remarks by the Organizers

1. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process was convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Istanbul on 25 and 26 May 2010. Participating in the Meeting were internationally renowned experts, including Israeli and Palestinian, representatives of United Nations Members States and Observers, parliamentarians, representatives of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, representatives of civil society, academic institutions and the media.

2. The objective of the Meeting was to provide a forum for exchanging views on the current state of the peace process, and for discussing proposals, ideas and options on how to advance the Palestinian State-building agenda. The Meeting discussed, among other things, lessons learned from previous negotiations and other conflict situations; the role of third-party mediation; Jerusalem as a key to Israeli-Palestinian peace; the Palestinian Authority's programme of ending the occupation and establishing the Palestinian State; and the building of an international consensus for establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

3. The Organizers and the participants appreciated the opening remarks by the Foreign Minister of Turkey, H. E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, and associated themselves with his call for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They welcomed the message by

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his pledge to work with the parties towards building mutual trust and creating more positive conditions on the ground. The Organizers shared the assessment of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry, in his keynote presentation that there was no alternative to the two-State solution. For Palestinians, it was the only political way forward to genuine national self-determination and freedom, and the only framework to bring about the unity of the West Bank and Gaza, a resolution of the refugee issue and an end to the daily restrictions of occupation. For Israel, it provided for keeping its democratic character and its identity while gaining security and legitimacy in the region.

4. In the course of the Meeting, the participants reviewed the current international efforts aimed at resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The Organizers took note that participants cautiously welcomed the resumption of negotiations between the parties through the "proximity" talks mediated by the United States, and stressed the urgency of achieving tangible progress in improving the situation on the ground in order to create a climate favourable to negotiating all permanent status issues with a view to ending the occupation and establishing two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders. They were of the view that the parties must adhere to their commitments and obligations in line with international law and the Road Map and refrain from any provocative acts that might undermine the present opportunity. It was emphasized that the continued involvement of the international community was crucial for moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian

negotiations on all core issues. The Arab Peace Initiative remained an important element for advancing peace in the region and should be seized upon.

5. The Organizers took note with satisfaction of the exchange of views on lessons learned from previous efforts to arrive at a solution. It was emphasized that peace could not be imposed and that the parties must have the political will to reach agreement. Mediation would not succeed if it gave priority to the needs of one side over the other. The need to assure Israeli security and the achievement of the national rights of the Palestinian people were equally compelling. While the immediate focus should be on the Israeli-Palestinian process, it is imperative that the regional dimension of the conflict be addressed at the appropriate stage. It was important to set forth principles guiding negotiations based on international law, United Nations resolutions and signed agreements. However, broad and vague framework agreements would not work. Agreements needed to be precise and should include mechanisms for implementation and monitoring.

6. The Organizers shared the serious concern expressed by participants about Israeli actions on the ground that had prevented an earlier start of the talks and that were putting their continuation in jeopardy. They were alarmed by Israel's ongoing policy in East Jerusalem, which aimed at altering the legal status of the City and its physical, demographic and cultural character. They condemned the illegal expansion and consolidation of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem, as well as the illegal and provocative measures against Palestinian residents, including house demolitions, evictions, land confiscation and residency rights revocations. The Organizers

stressed that these acts constituted a clear violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions.

7. It was acknowledged that Jerusalem, sacred for Christians, Jews and Muslims worldwide, represented the common heritage of all humanity, and, therefore, Israeli actions with regard to the City's holy places were totally unacceptable. The Organizers emphasized that a negotiated agreement on the status of Jerusalem should take into account the political and religious concerns of all its inhabitants. Such an agreement should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the Palestinian people and peoples of all religions and nationalities. The Organizers also reiterated that any agreement that did not include East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian State would not lead to sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace.

8. The Organizers shared the serious concern voiced by numerous participants about Israel's settlement activities in the rest of the West Bank in violation of international humanitarian law, as well as Israel's Road Map obligations. The Organizers recalled that the Security Council had determined in resolution 465 (1980) that Israel's policy and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, constituted a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They noted the declared ten-month suspension of new settlement construction in the West Bank and called upon the Israeli Government to extend it indefinitely and also to extend it to

Occupied East Jerusalem in order to allow for serious negotiations on the permanent status issues to continue.

9. Alarm was expressed over the new Israeli military order that had come into effect last April, whereby any Palestinian residing in the West Bank could be labelled as an “infiltrator” and could be deported on orders of the Israeli military command. Several Palestinians had already been deported from the West Bank on the basis of these orders. The Organizers stressed that this constituted a grave breach of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They reminded that Israel was a High Contracting Party of the Convention and it had legal obligations as the occupying Power in the West Bank.

10. Speakers in the Meeting deplored the lack of any tangible improvement of the humanitarian, economic and social situation in the Gaza Strip. Due to the wilful blockage by Israel of materials for reconstruction efforts, three quarters of the damage inflicted on buildings and infrastructure during the Israeli military offensive on Gaza remained unrepaired. Water and sanitation infrastructure was in a state of collapse. As Gaza’s economy continued to be paralysed due to the blockade and commercial links severed, illegitimate economic activity, such as smuggling, prevailed. Speakers called for the immediate lifting of the blockade against the Gaza Strip.

11. The Organizers reaffirmed that Israel, the occupying Power, had to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, which obliges Israel, as a High Contracting Party, to protect the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation and

to act within the ambit of international law. The applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had been repeatedly confirmed by the Conference of the High Contracting Parties, as well as by the General Assembly, Security Council and the International Court of Justice. The Organizers deplored the collective punishment against people in the Gaza Strip and called for the opening of all crossings in accordance with the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005.

12. The Organizers stressed the importance of the two-year State-building plan put forward by Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in August 2009, entitled “Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State”, aimed at developing institutions and strengthening the foundation for the future State of Palestine. The Meeting was informed about a recent diplomatic initiative launched by the Palestinian Authority with a view to achieving international support for Palestinian statehood at the end of the scheduled implementation of the Fayyad Plan in August 2011. It was noted that nearly 100 countries had already recognized Palestine as a State, with the majority extending their recognition following the November 1988 Declaration of Statehood by the Palestinian National Council. The Organizers expressed full support for the Palestinian Authority’s diplomatic initiative and considered that the entire international community should be ready to recognize the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, including through a Security Council resolution, once statehood has been declared by the Palestinian Authority at the appropriate time.

13. The Organizers reiterated that there was no alternative to the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, based on international law and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions. Participants underlined that a crucial and indispensable condition for achieving a permanent settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was an end of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They also urged the Palestinian leadership, the leaders of all factions and all Palestinians to strive and work for national reconciliation as an essential condition for achieving a lasting solution of the question of Palestine and the establishment of a viable, contiguous, sovereign, and democratic Palestinian State.

14. The Organizers would like to commend the work of civil society organizations aimed at supporting Israelis and Palestinians in their quest for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the conflict. They acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the dedicated and courageous work of Turkish organizations in support of the Palestinian people, by implementing specific projects in the West Bank or aiming to break the Gaza blockade

to bring humanitarian aid to those in desperate need.

15. Many speakers commended the Committee for organizing international events, such as this one in Istanbul, which contributed to raising international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and contributed to mobilizing Governments and public opinion worldwide in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

16. The Organizers, on behalf of the participants, expressed their appreciation for the important role played by Turkey, a founding Member of the Committee, in the search for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in championing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They noted that the contribution of Turkey and other players in the region and beyond was crucial to achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians and for bringing stability to the Middle East. They also expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of Turkey and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting the Meeting, for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation, and for the generous hospitality extended to them.

IX. SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS KILLINGS AND INJURIES ON GAZA-BOUND BOAT CONVOY

The following is an excerpt from the Secretary-General's remarks to the media at the International Criminal Court Review Conference on 31 May 2010, including a statement on Gaza (press release SG/SM/12931).

...

In view of the seriousness of the situation which happened this morning, I would like, with the understanding of the

President of the International Criminal Court and the President of this Conference, to make a statement on that situation.

I am shocked by reports of killings and injuries of people on the boats carrying supplies for Gaza, apparently in international waters, in the early hours of this morning. I condemn this violence. We do not yet know the full facts yet. More than 10 people appeared to have been killed and many more wounded. It is vital that there is a full investigation to determine

exactly how this bloodshed took place. I believe Israel must urgently provide a full explanation. I have instructed my Special Coordinator, Robert Serry, and UNRWA Commissioner General Filippo Grandi, to actively engage on the ground in urging restraint and ensuring that no further harm is done and coordinating with all relevant parties.
