

17 January 2001

Original: English

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**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable  
Rights of the Palestinian People****Draft programme of work for 2001****I. Mandate of the Committee**

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the year 2001 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 55/52, 55/53 and 55/54 of 1 December 2000.
2. In its resolution 55/52 entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report<sup>1</sup>; requested it to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional NGOs in its work. The Assembly furthermore requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and expressed appreciation for the cooperation between the Commission and the Committee with regard to the modernization and preservation of the records of the Commission. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.
3. In its resolution 55/53, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continued to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, in



consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

4. In its resolution 55/54, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as might be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2000-2001, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme. The Assembly also requested the Department to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project, within existing resources and until the Bethlehem 2000 commemoration came to a close, including the preparation and dissemination of publications, audio-visual material and further development of the "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page.

## **II. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2001**

5. The Committee has reviewed the various aspects of its own programme of work and that of the Division for Palestinian Rights, as well as of the mandates governing them. The Committee is of the view that further adjustments in this programme are necessary in order to enhance its responsiveness to developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as to raise its effectiveness in promoting the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

6. In its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, the Committee reaffirmed its strong support for the peace process. The Committee stated that in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the two sides had travelled a long way. The negotiating process, which had begun at Madrid in 1991, had been difficult and challenging. The Committee observed that the parties were facing issues of paramount importance, not only for the Israelis and the Palestinians, but also for peace and security in the entire region of the Middle East. The Committee said it would continue to support the peacemaking efforts by the parties, assisted by the co-sponsors, until peace prevailed and the question of Palestine was solved on the basis of justice and international legitimacy. The Committee emphasized once again that more than 50 years after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the Palestinian people was yet to see the establishment of its own independent and sovereign State. In that context, the Committee reiterated its full support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State, and recalled the broad international support for Palestinian statehood.

7. The Committee is of the view that its programme of activities, mandated by the General Assembly, has continued to play a useful and positive role in heightening international awareness of the question of Palestine and in sensitizing public opinion in the various regions with respect to the relevant issues. The Committee will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in its activities in order to respond adequately and in a timely manner to the situation evolving on the ground and to developments in the peace process.

8. At this sensitive stage in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the Committee intends to continue to support the peace process through a variety of activities. In its work, the Committee will continue to emphasize issues relevant to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and statehood without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right of return. The Committee will also address some critical aspects of a Palestinian transition to statehood, including efforts at nation-building, international assistance in support of those efforts, as well as the economic and social development of the Palestinian people.

9. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/22 of 10 November 1999 and in light of the Assembly's consideration at its fifty-fifth session of agenda item 36, entitled "Bethlehem 2000", the Committee intends to continue to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee's position is that this important undertaking should not be abandoned by the international community and will require sustained international support, not only for the period of the millennial celebrations in Bethlehem, but also long after the celebrations come to a close. In addition, the Committee draws the attention of the international community to the urgency of providing varied assistance to other Palestinian municipalities throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

10. The Committee is of the view that the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in implementation of their respective mandates, should be strengthened. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/54, has requested the Department, inter alia, to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project through the preparation of publications, audio-visual material and the further development of the "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page. The Division will cooperate with the Department on this activity.

### **III. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights**

#### **A. Action by the Committee**

11. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and participate in relevant meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Committee will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to urgent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, requiring international action.

12. The Committee, through its Chairman, will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers this activity an important aspect of its effort to promote international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

13. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including NGOs, in the areas under its jurisdiction and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. Following the practice of the previous year, the Committee will continue to invite Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to meetings with members and observers of the Committee and the Secretariat, as required.

14. The Bureau of the Committee will continue its consultations with countries interested in the programme of work of the Committee, including members of the European Union, with a view to promoting understanding of its objectives and greater participation in its activities.

## **B. Meetings and conferences**

15. In response to the tense and volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the crucial stage reached in the peace negotiations, the Committee will focus the meetings programme on support for the peace process, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Palestinian nation- and institution-building, social and economic development and permanent status issues, as well as emergency needs of the Palestinian people. The Committee will strive to make its programme of meetings and conferences more reflective of the evolving situation, as well as forward-looking, and will continue to review and assess its effectiveness.

16. As authorized by the General Assembly, the Committee, in the past, has made adjustments in the programme in order to respond to new developments. In 2001, the Committee will continue to strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions, and the relevant Secretariat services, to limit costs of conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of its meetings and conferences.

17. The Committee will also continue to emphasize thematic events in the course of 2001, encouraging participation by additional countries and organizations, including those which have not so far engaged fully in the programme of work of the Committee. Accordingly, the Committee will organize the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. The Seminar will be held on 20 and 21 February at the United Nations Office at Vienna.

## **C. Cooperation with civil society**

### **Non-governmental organizations**

18. The role of civil society organizations in educating their respective constituencies about the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in mobilizing public support for the Palestinian cause remains very important. Aware of the challenges that lie ahead, the Committee is particularly appreciative of those

NGO contributions that are focused on mobilizing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights, as well as supporting the peace process and the work and objectives of the Committee. There is a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion and promoting national and international action in support of the peace process, the effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and of a just and lasting peace in the region. The Committee believes that, in 2001, NGOs should continue to focus their efforts on areas relevant to the permanent status issues, namely Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and borders. The Committee is also of the view that it is important for the NGOs to continue to support the peace negotiations and, in particular, the Palestinian efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution based on international legitimacy. Mobilizing emergency relief and promoting varied assistance to the Palestinian people in nation-building and economic and social development should be another important area of NGO work.

19. The Committee intends to continue its practice of inviting civil society organizations to all international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. It will encourage them to use these events as a platform for discussing their initiatives and campaigns, and for bringing forward their views and ideas on the issues at hand. The participation of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in those events provides civil society with a unique opportunity to support and strengthen, in particular, such positions and initiatives that are geared towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

20. The Committee encourages cooperation, coordination and networking among civil society organizations. It will maintain and develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. It will continue the accreditation of new NGOs and their umbrella organizations and asks the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue and intensify outreach efforts directed at civil society. Periodic meetings and consultations with NGO representatives will contribute to further review and enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with NGOs.

21. The Committee is of the view that regular exchange of information with the NGO community on respective initiatives and the various current and planned activities and their results is crucial to its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages the accredited NGOs to keep the Committee abreast, on a regular basis, of major NGO activities and campaigns in support of the Palestinian people. In this connection, the Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue to maintain its Internet site on NGO activities on the question of Palestine ([www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo](http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo)) as a central tool for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society. Meetings of the Committee, as well as its international conferences and meetings, can also be used by NGOs to present results of major initiatives and campaigns on the question of Palestine.

22. In the course of the year, the resources available for cooperation with NGOs on the question of Palestine will be used to implement the following:

(a) Organization, wherever appropriate and feasible, of meetings of NGOs in conjunction with international conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the Committee;

(b) Periodic consultations with representatives of NGOs, parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organizations;

(c) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in significant conferences, meetings or other events organized by NGOs and other civil society organizations;

(d) Providing assistance to Palestinian organizations in sending their representatives to meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or supported by the Committee;

(e) Periodic visits by members of the Committee and staff of the Division to the territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority to brief local NGOs and institutions on the work of the Committee and to assess those of their needs that can be met through the Division's programme of work.

#### **Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations**

23. The Committee strongly believes that the role and contribution of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines is important for upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee attaches great importance to developing further cooperation with parliaments and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies in order to encourage discussion of the current peace process and the various aspects of the question of Palestine within the respective parliaments and among all the layers of society. To that end, the Committee intends to involve parliamentarians and representatives of inter-parliamentary organizations in its international conferences and meetings. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, held during international events to be organized by the Committee, will contribute to an enhanced cooperation between the two sides.

#### **D. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine**

24. The Committee has requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on the development and expansion of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), an activity initially mandated by the General Assembly in 1991. This will include updating UNISPAL on a day-to-day basis with relevant new documents available in electronic form; improving the quality control mechanisms and user-friendliness of the system; and furthering the development and management of the "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet. Efforts will be made to complete, in the course of the year, the work on UNISPAL's collection of earlier documents. The Division will focus on enhancing the comprehensiveness of the collection through the inclusion of recently issued documents in the system. Also, additional work will be required to make the UNISPAL web site more technically advanced and user-friendly. The Division will continue to administer the UNISPAL web site.

## **E. Other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights**

### **Publications**

25. The Committee considers that the Division for Palestinian Rights should continue to prepare and issue in a timely manner its periodic publications, namely:

- Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- Periodic bulletin on developments in the peace process;
- Monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine;
- Annual compilation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council;
- Reports of meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee;
- Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

26. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to continue to prepare its informal periodic summary of information on significant activities of NGOs relevant to the question of Palestine for the information of the Committee and for communication to the network of NGOs.

27. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should review the existing studies and information notes prepared by the Division and make proposals with regard to those that require updating, in particular the publication entitled *The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1988*.

### **Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority**

28. The Committee considers that this useful programme, carried out in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, should be continued in 2001. The Committee considers that the experience of the previous years of the training programme should be evaluated, in consultation with the Mission, and used in such a way as to maximize the programme's effectiveness and usefulness for Palestinian Authority trainees.

### **Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

29. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be observed on Thursday, 29 November 2001. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna, and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

30. The Committee will once again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities. During the week beginning 26 November, a Palestinian cultural exhibit will be presented at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

31. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of new developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and the situation on the ground, and will make adjustments as necessary.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35).*