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INTRODUCTION

1. In the light of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), at its twenty-first session, adopted resolution 237 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 on the rehabilitation of economic sectors in Palestine. In view of the continued deterioration of those conditions, the Commission, at its twenty-second session, adopted resolution 252 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 on rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction in Palestine, in which it affirmed the urgent need to convene an Arab-international forum on rehabilitation and reconstruction.

2. In response to the above resolutions, and given that ESCWA is the only United Nations entity in which Palestine enjoys full membership, the ESCWA secretariat proposed the convening of the Arab-International Forum on Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Towards an Independent State.

3. The purpose and goals of the Forum were developed after extensive consultations with the key international, regional and local actors involved in the effort to alleviate the socio-economic plight of the Palestinian people. The consultations resulted in a general consensus on the *raison d'être* of the Forum, which was to advocate the importance of pursuing a process of sustainable socio-economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory despite political instability and a lack of security. There was also a need to link immediate humanitarian assistance efforts to those of socio-economic development and to forge sustainable Arab-Palestinian partnerships for development.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

4. The objectives of the Forum were as follows:

(a) To reaffirm the responsibility and commitment of the international community towards the Palestinian people based on international norms and principles, and on the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions;

(b) To present to the Arab and international communities the Palestinian vision, priorities and plans for the future process of social and economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(c) To mobilize Arab support for the process of rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory through the following four channels:

(i) Sustaining and enhancing support mechanisms of Governments, funds and institutions to assist in development and aid efforts to the occupied Palestinian territory;

- (ii) Enhancing Arab-international-Palestinian private sector partnership to support Palestinian production, marketing and investment;
- (iii) Enhancing the participation of Arab civil society entities in sustainable development, in addition to emergency aid;
- (iv) Developing stronger ties and channels through which Palestinians in the diaspora could alleviate the detrimental socio-economic conditions of Palestinians under occupation.

(d) To enhance the Arab bilateral and multilateral partnerships at the governmental, civil society, funding and organizational levels, focused on assisting the Palestinians within the existing international framework, to overcome the socio-economic repercussions of occupation and to address future challenges despite political instability and a lack of security.

II. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

A. THE ADVISORY GROUP

5. To ensure the broadest possible participation in the preparatory process, a successful outcome of the Forum and the implementation of its recommendations, the Commission called upon the Palestinian Authority and the League of Arab States to work together as the main partners in the organization of the Forum. The Commission also called upon a number of concerned United Nations entities, as well as on other regional and international organizations, to take part in an Advisory Group.¹

6. In addition to several members of the Advisory Group,² a number of national, regional and international entities contributed to funding the Forum and its preparatory activities.³

¹ The following entities are represented in the Advisory Group: ESCWA, the Palestinian Authority, the League of Arab States, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the World Bank, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Islamic Development Bank, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND).

² UNCTAD, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, Al-Aqsa Fund/Islamic Development Bank, UN-HABITAT, IOM and ANND.

³ Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Norwegian People's Aid, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Norwegian Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority, Qatar Red Crescent, Consolidated Contractors Company, Arabia Insurance Company, Khatib & Alami, Gezairi Transport, El-Nimer Family Foundation, and Al-Jawal Company/Palestine.

B. THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING

7. The initial preparatory activity was the convening of the broad-based Palestine Rehabilitation and Development Consultative Meeting, held in Beirut on 29 and 30 July 2003, which brought together representatives of the Palestinian Authority, civil society and the private sector in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as members of the Advisory Group and representatives of various other entities involved in Palestinian socio-economic development. The Meeting deliberated on the objectives of the Forum and set out its general framework. The Meeting concluded that, in order to achieve the objectives of the Forum, a coordinated Palestinian vision on socio-economic development should be formulated and a series of preparatory activities should be undertaken.

C. THE PALESTINIAN CONSULTATION PROCESS

8. The process, which was led by representatives of the Ministry of Planning in the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian private sector and civil society, was aimed at articulating a suitable Palestinian consensus on a coordinated vision for rehabilitation and development. Two Inter-Palestinian Consultation Meetings were held in Ramallah, West Bank, the first on 21 and 22 April 2004, and the second on 19 and 20 September 2004. In addition, a number of roundtables were held involving participants from Gaza, made possible through video-conferencing. These meetings and roundtables also brought together representatives of more than 10 ministries, as well as academia and various research centres. The deliberations were focused on a national development vision, and needs and priorities in the economic, social and infrastructure sectors and resulted in the preparation of papers for the Forum.

D. OTHER PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

9. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations of the above Consultative Meeting, further preparatory activities were carried out. These activities were set on four tracks:

(a) The Workshop on Palestinian-Arab Civil Society Partnership, held in Beirut on 9 and 10 June 2004, brought together representatives of Palestinian and Arab civil society institutions. The Workshop included the following: (i) presenting the vision, priorities and strategies for action of the Palestinian civil society institutions; (ii) sharing best practices, in which relevant Palestinian and Arab civil society experiences were exchanged; and (iii) formulating mechanisms of cooperation between Palestinian and Arab civil society entities, which were to be presented at the Forum;

(b) The Expert Group Meeting on the Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the Rehabilitation and Development Process in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, held in Amman on 29 and 30 July 2004, focused on mechanisms to enhance the support of

concerned Palestinian expatriates and institutions for the process of socio-economic rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(c) The Workshop on Palestinian-Arab Private Sector Partnership, held in the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 4 and 5 September 2004, brought together representatives of Arab and Palestinian private sector institutions. The Workshop was aimed at the following: (i) reviewing the means of establishing joint investments and exchange projects that would encourage Palestinian and Arab private sector entrepreneurship and partnership; (ii) formulating mechanisms to enhance Arab private sector support for sustainable development efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory; and (iii) identifying the role of Arab private sector institutions in facilitating access to Palestinian products in Arab markets;

(d) The Meeting of Arab Economic Organizations and Funds, held in Cairo on 7 and 8 September 2004, was aimed at the following: (i) presenting the coordinated Palestinian development vision; (ii) exploring current Arab support, at the governmental level, of the Palestinian people and ways to enhance those efforts in the light of the Palestinian vision; and (iii) deliberating on the means to implement fully the resolutions of Arab summits and other official meetings concerned with providing support to the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Meeting highlighted the importance of the coordinated development vision, reasserted Arab commitment to support the Palestinian people, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States, and undertook to enhance the established Arab mechanisms of support. The recommendations were subsequently adopted by the League of Arab States in a ministerial meeting that was held on 15 and 16 September 2004.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

10. The Forum was held over a period of four days (11-14 October 2004). The programme of work included an opening ceremony, plenary sessions, technical workshops, roundtables, working groups and cultural side events (see annexes I and II).

11. At the opening ceremony, representatives of ESCWA, the Palestinian Authority and the League of Arab States, as well as the President of Lebanon, made statements.

12. The second day consisted of two plenary sessions and three parallel technical workshops. The first plenary session, which commenced with statements by high-level Arab representatives, focused on the impact of occupation and the Palestinian development vision. During the second plenary session, several participants made presentations on the prospects of development in the occupied Palestinian territory amidst the current uncertainties. Following the plenary sessions, participants were split into the three technical parallel workshops to study Palestinian needs and priorities in three sectors: social, economic and infrastructure.

13. On the third day, two plenary sessions (sessions 3 and 4), one roundtable (plenary), three parallel technical workshops and one working group meeting were held. The third session, entitled “Enhancing Arab-Palestinian partnership”, reviewed various Arab-Palestinian partnerships and Arab official assistance to the Palestinians, as well as assistance from civil society, the private sector and the Palestinian diaspora. Session four, entitled “Enhancing International-Palestinian partnership”, concentrated on the assistance of the United Nations, other international organizations, and European civil society to the occupied Palestinian territory. The three cross-cutting parallel workshops were held and focused on enhancing the involvement of the Palestinian diaspora, the Arab private sector and women in the socio-economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory. A working group discussed the Qatar Red Crescent Partnership Initiative on medical education and training. The workshops were followed by a plenary roundtable on the role of the media in promoting socio-economic development partnerships.

14. The last day of the Forum was devoted to discussing partnership initiatives. Four working groups were established to address the following subjects: Agricultural and Agro-business Partnership; Civil Society Partnership; Twinning of Municipalities; and Education. This was followed by a short presentation of a video film, entitled “This is Palestine Photography”. The Forum concluded its meetings with a declaration as well as a number of recommendations. Representatives of ESCWA, the Palestinian Authority and the League of Arab States also made closing statements.

15. Daily cultural activities, under the theme of “The Other Side of Palestine”, accompanied the Forum’s activities. These included: the Ramallah Film Festival; an arts exhibition on “Colours of Palestine”; a Folklore Evening; a book fair on “Palestine in Books”; a crafts exhibition on “Palestine as Crafts”; a photo exhibition on “Palestine: Daily Life”; and an exhibition of children’s paintings, entitled “Construction versus Destruction”.

ATTENDANCE

16. An estimated 450 participants took part in the Forum.⁴ These included representatives of the Palestinian Authority; Governments of Arab countries; national, regional and international entities; donors; Palestinian, Arab and international civil society; private sector institutions; the Palestinian diaspora community and institutions; and experts and eminent persons.

17. The Palestinian delegation, which was headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, included the Minister of Planning, the Minister of Women’s Affairs and the Minister of Communications and Information Technology. A large number of

⁴ The complete list of participants is available at: www.escwa.org.lb/main/pal.

representatives of Governments of Arab countries participated in the Forum, including the Minister of Planning of Tunisia and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Egypt.

IV. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND DELIBERATIONS

A. OPENING CEREMONY

18. The opening ceremony of the Forum commenced with a statement by Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Executive Secretary of ESCWA. It was followed by the statement of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Amre Moussa, which was read out on his behalf by the League's Deputy Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs, Ambassador Said Kamal. Mr. Nabil Shaath, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, then made a statement. The ceremony concluded with the statement of the President of Lebanon, which was read out by Mr. Asaad Diab, Minister of Social Affairs of Lebanon.

19. In her statement, the Executive Secretary cited United Nations figures on the living conditions of the Palestinian people. She noted that 47 per cent of Palestinian households had lost 50 per cent of their income. The poverty rate had reached 63 per cent in 2003, with 2 million Palestinians living on less than US\$ 2.10 per day. Unemployment ranged between 26 and 33 per cent, with 42 per cent of Palestinian families being dependent on humanitarian aid. The development of social and economic capacity was the first line of defence in safeguarding Palestinian national aspirations and limiting Israeli expansion. There was a need to shift international efforts from emergency relief to comprehensive development. The most important objective of the Forum was to enhance development in Palestine by connecting the Palestinian society and economy with their Arab milieu in a framework of a true Arab partnership that would go beyond the isolation forced upon the Palestinians for years. The Forum sought to develop more effective mechanisms and measures that would achieve greater cohesiveness and parallelism between Palestinian development visions and plans and Arab-international efforts in that regard.

20. The Arab League's Deputy Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs said that the Forum provided a very important opportunity to build an effective Arab-international partnership. He stressed that the Arab community had "spared no effort in offering assistance to the Palestinian people. In the last four years, our contribution to providing financial assistance exceeded half of the total amount of financial assistance offered to the Palestinian people in this period. In addition, our States decided to open the Arab market to Palestinian products, exempting them from customs duties and taxes of a similar nature". He called upon the international community not to be contented with compensating Palestinians for damages caused by Israeli policies, practices, and measures, but rather, to oblige Israel to cease such practices and to pay compensation for damages it caused the Palestinian people.

21. In his address, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority stated that there was an Israeli policy aimed at undermining the pillars of the Palestinian economy and society. There had been a dangerous escalation in the past four years aimed at destroying all that was built during the transitional period. There would be a destructive effect, with an economic, social, and humanitarian impact, resulting from the erection of "Israel's racist separation wall" on Palestinian territory in the West Bank. He briefly outlined the Palestinian vision for a long-term socio-economic and political development strategy, and added that the Palestinian delegation to the Forum carried with it working papers on the Palestinian development vision as well as current and future challenges facing the Palestinian economy and society. He hoped that the opportunity would be taken to study those papers in order to reach a shared vision of working together to achieve the objectives of the Forum. The Palestinian people was unwavering in its legitimate resistance to the occupation, and struggle for the establishment of an independent State on all Palestinian land occupied since 1967. A just resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue must be found on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, ensuring the right of return and compensation.

22. The Minister of Social Affairs of Lebanon stressed that "human development and rehabilitation are the ideal way to bring together the support needed to develop a future, built on solid ground for the establishment of a State based on institutions and headed by persons for whom ideal conditions and training have been provided". He called for "true Arab solidarity" on both official and popular levels to support the needs of the Palestinian people. He stressed the need to be adamant on the implementation of international resolutions, and the right of return. He also stressed the need to focus on the development and economic plans in Palestine, supported by Governments of Arab countries and international organizations.

B. STATEMENTS BY HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS

23. Statements by Mr. Hammoudi Hamdi, Minister of International Cooperation of Tunisia; Ambassador Dawlat Hassan, Assistant to the Egyptian Foreign Minister for International Economic Relations; and Mr. Youssef Al-Bassam, Saudi Fund for Development, were made during the second day of the Forum.

24. In his statement, the Minister of International Cooperation of Tunisia stressed the interest of his country in supporting a "courageous plan to rebuild the Palestinian territory" financially and morally, as well as in contributing to creating appropriate mechanisms for infrastructural rehabilitation. "Short-term financial and technical support to answer the needs and requirements of daily life must be underlined", he said, adding that, "however, we also believe it is necessary to intensify structural support for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. Hence it is necessary for donor countries and organizations to provide long-term financing in support of public sector efforts to rehabilitate the overall infrastructure, which is the sector's specialty". It was also necessary to raise investment in the private sector, create mechanisms for proper

financing, provide an inspiring marketing climate that bolsters the ability of the sector to create jobs, and seize every opportunity for investment in industry, farming, tourism, and modern economy based on the immense capacities of the Palestinian people.

25. Ambassador Hassan, Arab League Deputy Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs, who spoke on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Ahmad Abu Al-Ghaith, commended ESCWA for assuming a central role in addressing the different economic and social issues facing the region, and noted the mounting challenges generated by the political, economic and social conditions in the region and worldwide. Economic and social development was a keystone to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State capable of playing a constructive role in the international arena. That goal would require the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure that had been destroyed by Israel over the past five decades.

26. Ambassador Hassan explained that Egypt perceived Palestinian-Arab partnership to be based on several building blocks. Arab Governments needed to increase their financial and technical assistance. She called on the Arab private sector to assume its role and enter into partnerships with its Palestinian counterpart so as to enable the Palestinians to benefit from the Greater Arab Free Trade Area. At the same time, Arab civil society entities needed to support their Palestinian counterparts and assist them in identifying priorities and achieving social and economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory.

27. She pointed out that international support should involve: (a) exerting increased pressure on Israel to halt its destructive measures; (b) creating mechanisms for linking emergency relief efforts to long-term development objectives; (c) providing the required resources for building Palestinian national institutions and rehabilitating physical infrastructures; (d) contributing to the development of Palestinian human resources; and (e) ensuring that the dismantling of settlements proceeded in a manner that would allow for utilizing them in future economic projects.

28. She emphasized Egypt's commitment to supporting the Palestinian people's development efforts. Egypt had been providing scholarships for Palestinian youth and exempting students from fees, in addition to training members of the Palestinian security force, journalists and those involved in the tourism sector. The Egyptian Ministries of Health, Oil, Agriculture and Local Development, as well as non-governmental organizations, had also provided financial and in-kind assistance to support emergency relief efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory.

29. The representative of the Saudi Development Fund, in his statement, noted that the assistance provided by Saudi Arabia to the Palestinian Authority included development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory that amounted to US\$ 300 million in Saudi Arabian commitments. Despite the lack of stability in the occupied Palestinian territory, there was an urgent need for the Arab and international

community to participate in the process of rehabilitation and development in various social and economic sectors.

C. IMPACT OF THE OCCUPATION

30. Minister Hammoudah Hamdi and Mr. Hassan Charif, Adviser to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA on Emerging Issues, served as joint moderators of the session. Mr. Charif delivered a presentation on the impact of occupation on socio-economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Director of the Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute, Palestine, gave a presentation on the impact of physical separation and Israeli military measures in the occupied Palestinian territory.

31. An overview of the impact of occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory was presented through the report of the Secretary-General on the “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan”.⁵ The report noted that the Israeli occupation had continued to worsen the economic and social hardship for Palestinians. There was a significant quantity of data documenting those hardships.

32. According to the above report, the demolition of Palestinian homes, together with displacement of the population, was among the most destructive of Israeli practices, leaving tens of thousands of persons homeless. Restrictions on mobility and closure policies exacerbated the already difficult situation in the occupied territory. Moreover, the expansion of Israeli settlements and the construction of a barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory, contrary to the Geneva Convention and other norms of international law, continued to fuel the conflict. Forty-five per cent of the land in Gaza benefited 7,000 Israelis in the settlements, while only 55 per cent of the land was allotted to over 1 million Palestinians. Overcrowding and building restrictions had depleted the potential housing supply. It was worse with regard to water: Israel extracted more than 85 per cent of the water from the occupied Palestinian territory, creating a serious shortage for the Palestinians living there. Adding to the suffering of the Palestinian population was the erection of the West Bank barrier, which accelerated during 2003, affecting one third of West Bank inhabitants, severing communities from their land and water and leaving them without any other means of subsistence, forcing many to leave.

33. It was women and children who bore the brunt of the conflict in the occupied territory. Gender inequality became more pronounced in a crisis situation, and the women suffered not only crushing psychological burdens, but also increased domestic

⁵ For more details, see United Nations, “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan”.

violence. Lowered health standards due to limited access to public health facilities had had negative effects on all the population, but particularly on women in terms of reproductive health. Children suffered from food shortages affecting their growth, a loss of educational opportunities, and the psychological effects of the conflict. While acute malnutrition, mental disorder, domestic violence and self-destructive behaviour might have short-term consequences on Palestinian children, long-term consequences included the loss of confidence in adults, a lack of respect for established institutions of authority, the acceptance of violence as a means of solving problems, and diminished hopes or belief in a just or meaningful future.

34. The above report asserted that economic and social indicators quantitatively and qualitatively showed the deterioration of living conditions for the Palestinian people. The closure and curfew in 2003 led to losses and trade stagnation, resulting in unemployment reaching up to 70 per cent in some areas. Israel's frequent withholding of Palestinian customs revenues and destruction of Palestinian public infrastructure also contributed to the negative trends in the Palestinian economy. In real terms, the Palestinian economy had lost all the growth it achieved in the preceding 15 years, and economic recovery was not possible without the lifting of restrictions on mobility within the occupied territory. In the period between October 2000 and March 2003, about 47 per cent of households had lost more than 50 per cent of their income. Households coped by drastically reducing consumption and expenditures for basic needs. On a larger scale, there were changes in the economic structure, which had shifted from medium-size enterprises to micro enterprises that had only limited capacity to withstand the current economic difficulties.

35. In his presentation on the socio-economic impact of occupation and physical separation in the occupied Palestinian territory,⁶ Dr. Mustapha Barghouti, Director of the Palestinian Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute, focused on the systematic process of land annexation, which he said Israel had been conducting since 1947, and which had shrunk Palestinian land to 11 per cent of its original size. He said that what was currently going on in Palestine was a comprehensive military, economic, cultural and political war, and provided figures on the number of Palestinian dead and wounded, in particular the high number of children killed and injured, and those detained in Israeli prisons in the past four years.

36. Dr. Barghouti stated that the erection of the barrier constituted a serious danger and that a total of 790,000 people would be directly affected, given the 703 Israeli checkpoints scattered over the Palestinian territory that inhibited the movement of Palestinians from one place to another. He reiterated that there were detrimental repercussions caused by the Israeli restrictions on the movement of goods and persons, which had led to a sharp rise in unemployment and poverty, poor health care and interrupted education, as well as the daily humiliation of the Palestinian people. The

⁶ The presentation by Dr. Mustapha Barghouti is available on compact disc. Copies of the CD can be requested from the UNDP/PAPP office in Jerusalem.

agricultural sector was the most affected, with about 1 million olive and fruit trees uprooted by the Israeli authorities. He called upon the international community to pressure Israel to stop the construction of the barrier in accordance with the decision of the International Court of Justice.

37. Dr. Barghouti said that, with regard to Gaza, the Israeli disengagement plan was rather a redeployment scheme of Israeli forces, and that Israeli authorities would continue to control the Gaza Strip and its border with Egypt and transform it into a “large prison”.

38. He concluded by saying that it was crucial to continue to rebuild and rehabilitate what was being destroyed by Israel, and to enhance the economic capabilities of the people, maintain national unity and support Palestinian civil society.

D. DEVELOPMENT AMIDST UNCERTAINTIES

39. Moderated by Mr. Mansour Ben Fetn, Al-Aqsa Fund/Islamic Development Bank, and Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, UNDP Lebanon, the second plenary session was titled, “Prospects for development amidst uncertainties”. Three speakers emphasized their belief that, despite the uncertain political environment due to the occupation and other impediments, there were possibilities for the Palestinian economy to move forward.

40. Mr. George Abed, Special Adviser to the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), spoke of “the challenges of Palestinian development in the emerging regional and international environment”. He called for the establishment of a serious political framework to launch a real, just and sustainable development process. The Arab region was facing numerous economic as well as political challenges which, in turn, had burdened the Palestinian people and leadership with greater responsibilities.

41. He emphasized the importance of increasing international and Arab humanitarian aid as well as assistance in socio-economic development efforts. Such assistance should correspond to Palestinian needs and priorities, and be aimed at enhancing the ability of the Palestinian people to overcome the socio-economic difficulties associated with occupation.

42. He stated that mobilizing the Palestinian private sector (particularly in the diaspora) to increase investment in the occupied Palestinian territory and its involvement in the development process would be another track of equal importance. At the same time, the process of internal reform should continue. Particular attention should be given to the development of natural resources, in particular water. The Palestinian economy should also be geared to face the increasing challenges of providing sufficient employment opportunities, including opportunities for labourers returning from Israel, and women.

43. In his presentation on “Development under crisis situation”, Mr. Atef Kubursi, Professor of Economics at McMaster University in Canada, stated that security and development were inseparable, and that it was crucial to address the escalation of violence. The strategies for development must be Palestinian in ownership and geared towards the development of local production to meet local needs.

44. Mr. Kubursi stated that, under current conditions, development became a strategy for perseverance under occupation. Strategies must be Palestinian in ownership and dedicated to develop local production that would meet local needs. It would be a special challenge to reintegrate Palestinian labourers, who had been deprived of access to the Israeli market because of closure policies, into productive Palestinian sectors, especially in the agricultural sector.

45. Mr. Mushtak Khan, Professor of Economics at the University of London, gave a presentation on “Institution-building and reform in a war-torn economy: the case of Palestine”. He considered the basic institutional obstacles facing the Palestinian Authority to be Israel’s security rules and its constraints on the Palestinian economy, as well as the restrictions on mobility. Mr. Khan called on the international community to confront the unwavering condition of “security first” imposed by Israel on the Palestinian Authority.

46. Although he considered development amidst uncertain conditions to be vital in the occupied Palestinian territory, Mr. Khan emphasized that security and development were inseparable. The resolution of the security issue—that is, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State—should be given priority. Historical evidence, he added, showed that economic reforms were also a prerequisite to good governance, which meant that the Palestinian Authority could not practice good governance and fight corruption effectively before developing the economy and reaching a political settlement.

47. Mr. Khan stated that between 1994 and 2000, in a favourable political environment, the Palestinians were granted limited autonomy to run their affairs and that, in spite of corruption, the period showed an overall growth of 6-8 per cent, with 25 per cent of investment attributed to the private sector.

E. THE PALESTINIAN DEVELOPMENT VISION

48. The Palestinian development vision was at the core of the Forum, since the effectiveness of Arab and international assistance was seen to depend largely on the needs and priorities as defined by the Palestinians. Three presentations related to the vision were held during the second plenary session on the second day of the Forum. The first presentation described the inter-Palestinian consultation process that led to the formulation of a coordinated Palestinian development vision. The second discussed the main elements of the vision. The third presentation focused on the importance of linking relief efforts to development in the proposed vision.

49. The strategies to implement the coordinated vision, including the needs and priorities of the economic, social and infrastructure sectors, were discussed in three parallel workshops.

1. *The inter-Palestinian consultation process*

50. Representatives of the Palestinian Authority commended the close cooperation of Palestinian civil society and private sector institutions with Palestinian Authority ministries in working to formulate a coordinated Palestinian vision for development in the occupied Palestinian Authority. To that end, the representatives stressed the need for the creation of a mechanism to enable all Palestinians, regardless of their geographical location, to participate in the process of formulating a national vision for the development of a “nation”.

51. It was previously agreed in the Palestine Rehabilitation and Development Consultative Meeting, organized by ESCWA on 29 and 30 July 2003, that an inter-Palestinian dialogue was an important first step towards articulating such a mechanism, as well as towards attaining a unified vision for a democratic partnership among all Palestinian actors: government, civil society and the private sector, as well as Palestinian expertise in the diaspora. Mr. Mohamed Ghudeyah, Director General of the Ministry of Planning, Palestinian Authority, stated that such a dialogue was a Palestinian national priority, as well as a useful map to guide the preparations and convening of the Forum. He added that in the process of adopting a suitable critical approach to development, the inter-Palestinian dialogue would have had to address issues such as the nature of development needed in the occupied Palestinian Authority and the role of various Palestinian stakeholders.⁷

52. Mr. Ghudeyah described the inter-Palestinian consultation process and said that, while external influences had guided the development priorities in the occupied Palestinian territory in the past, the preparations for the Forum had given the Palestinian Authority a unique opportunity for internally developing its own vision through involving all Palestinian actors. Mr. Ghudeyah stated that, during the first consultative meeting in 2003, there was a heated inter-Palestinian dialogue that included various Palestinian parties.

53. He also stated that, despite the difficult living conditions of the Palestinian people, the widespread destruction of the pillars of the economy, society and State, and despite different political affiliations, the various Palestinian parties had decided to accept the challenge and work together towards a national consensus on a Palestinian vision for development. It was to that end that the efforts of the public sector, private sector and civil society were combined.

⁷ ESCWA, Report of the Consultative Meeting held in preparation for the proposed Arab-international Palestine rehabilitation and development forum, Beirut, 29-30 July 2003 (E/ESCWA/OES/2004/2).

2. The main elements of the coordinated vision

54. Mr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, Minister of Planning of the Palestinian Authority, presented the outlines of the coordinated Palestinian development vision and strategy. He said that the keystone of the strategy was the development of human capital, which was a practical expression of the Palestinian people's refusal to depend on Israel.

55. To be effective, the Palestinian developmental vision and strategies must be based on the recognition of the importance of human and social capital. In addition, aid should be linked to development and a realistic assessment of the internal and external environment in which development strategies could be implemented.

56. Previous developmental experiences, in particular those of South-East Asia, had shown that the development of human and social capital was essential to high economic growth rates and to making the transition from a developing to a more developed country. Developed human and social capital stocks permitted societies to develop more complex and productive economies, as well as more effective institutions of governance and a more diverse and active civil society.

57. Focusing on human-social capital development was also a natural choice when viewed in the context of Israeli policies of imposing dependence on Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory and relegating the Palestinian population to the position of an unskilled labour pool for the Israeli economy. Furthermore, the new direction in development planning built upon the traditional value that the Palestinian family placed on education, a tradition that had given the Palestinians a relatively strong human capital base when one considered the high level of literacy and the prevalence of primary, secondary and higher education, relative to income levels and the chronically unstable political, economic and security situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. That venerable tradition had also enabled Palestinian society to preserve itself under occupation without disintegrating into outright anarchy.

58. The private sector had played a leading role in designing the Palestinian development strategy, which sought to enhance the economy's competitiveness through regional and global integration. Palestine enjoyed several competitive advantages, in particular in the education sector, which could be beneficial in sectors such as consultancy services and information technology, as well as in enhancing comparative advantages in tourism, agriculture and the manufacturing of stone, marble and food products.

59. With regard to Palestinian priorities, the Minister of Planning said that they included addressing the issues of unemployment, poverty and the brain drain, in addition to enhancing the Palestinian Authority's ability to maintain basic public services. The Palestinian Authority was in the process of designing a mid-term development plan for the period 2005-2007, based on six building blocks, namely: (a) investment in physical infrastructures; (b) enhancing the private sector's absorptive

capacity; (c) improving the quality of education and health services; (d) ensuring income equity; (e) institutional reform; and (f) ensuring the rule of law.

60. The Minister stated that the Forum was critical for enhancing the Palestinians' resilience in confronting Israeli policies and practices. There was an urgent need for clear plans and flexible projects to address the economic crisis, in addition to expertise and financial support in line with the Palestinian development vision.

61. The paper presented by the Ministry of Planning on the socio-economic development vision addressed the following internal and external strengths and weaknesses of the Palestinian developmental environment:⁸

(a) Internal strengths included a youthful population with a productive labour force; a strong human capital base (educated population); a large, capital and expertise-rich diaspora; a strong social capital base and dynamic civil society; excellent geographic location and historic and religious tourism resources; and a dynamic and experienced private sector;

(b) Internal weaknesses included a weak governmental/public sector; limited natural resources, particularly water resources; Israeli control over the main levers of development; structural economic distortions resulting from the occupation; and women's limited economic participation;

(c) External opportunities were Palestine's Arab neighbourhood; international sympathy for the struggle of the Palestinian people; trade facilitation granted to Palestine by nearly all industrial countries; and the globalization of markets, culture, transportation and communication;

(d) External challenges were posed mainly by the continued occupation of Palestinian land, coupled with the practices of the Government of Israel in the occupied territory, namely settlement expansion, the erection of a barrier in the West Bank, the isolation of Palestinian villages, towns and cities, extensive curfews and movement restrictions, the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, institutions and homes, in addition to numerous and repetitive incursions into Palestinian populated areas. Other serious external challenges were the lack of a political solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the possible disintegration of the Palestinian Authority and the threat of reduced international assistance.

62. Based on the above analysis of the internal and external strengths and weaknesses of the Palestinian developmental environment, and until a just and lasting political solution to the conflict was attained, the Minister concluded that it was necessary to focus on sustainable development, by linking the development of human,

⁸ Ministry of Planning, Towards a coordinated Palestinian development vision, paper presented at the Forum (in Arabic), September 2004 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/1).

social and institutional capital with humanitarian assistance within the context of a broadly negotiated and comprehensive developmental vision.

63. In brief, the proposed Palestinian vision statement for a future state was as follows:

The Palestinian economy is a modern one whose leading resource of development is its human capital. An economy capable of utilizing this resource in various sectors accumulates capacities to increase productivity and produces high-quality and competitive goods by skilled labour. This economy is: an economy that lays the firm foundations for the development of an information economy. An economy in which the private sector plays a leading role in a competitive environment, one that is economically integrated with its Arab neighbourhood and open to regional and international markets. An economy that achieves true equality for women and enables them to participate economically and socially on an equal footing with men, and whose social capital is the source of Palestinian society's solidarity and its commitment to Arab identity, culture, human values and religious tolerance.

3. Linking relief to development: the pillar of the strategy

64. Mr. Fadle Naqib, Adviser to the Ministry of Planning, Palestinian Authority, presented a paper entitled "Linking aid to development in the current Palestinian situation".⁹ He stated that, since the intifada started, assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory had increased to US\$ 1 billion per annum, a significant portion of which had been devoted to poverty alleviation programmes and immediate humanitarian aid and relief efforts in addition to financing to alleviate the Palestinian Authority's budget deficit. At the same time, development projects, which accounted for 88 per cent of donor assistance in 1999, had declined to 27 per cent. That shift, Mr. Naqib said, could be regarded as natural, given the severe deterioration of the socio-economic situation resulting from the relentless post-2000 Israeli military operations and policies in the occupied Palestinian territory.

65. Mr. Naqib noted, however, that the shift could be attributed in part to a return to the widespread notion among donors that development could not take place in the occupied Palestinian territory under current conditions, characterized, in their view, by a lack of stable markets and an untenable political-security environment. He added that, nevertheless, a market's ability to foster efficient production and exchange depended not on its stability, but rather on its ability to adjust dynamically to changing circumstances, a capacity that the Palestinian markets possessed, which was evident in the functioning markets within the occupied Palestinian territory. He stressed that even if a physical Israeli withdrawal or redeployment were to take place from Palestinian

⁹ For more details, see Fadle Naqib, Linking aid to development in the current Palestinian situation, paper presented at the Forum (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/5).

population centres, development programmes would still need to be tailored to compensate for the obstacles created by a likely continuation of aggressive Israeli policies. Mr. Naqib stated that it was incumbent upon donors to work with their Palestinian partners to shift, wherever and whenever possible, at least part of the assistance from humanitarian relief to development investment.

66. Where viable development investment was not possible, it was necessary to design relief programmes to maximize their developmental impact. To maximize the expenditure multiplier, donor assistance should be used for financing the local production of goods and services that could replace imports, in addition to infrastructure projects. That should be carried out within the context of a cohesive strategy linking emergency relief efforts with long-term development objectives. The Palestinian Authority and the donor community should focus on development efforts with immediate impact, and emergency relief interventions that contributed to enhancing the long-term development prospects of the economy.

67. Linking relief to development required, first and above all, a clear articulation of long-term development objectives. Thus far, those objectives had not been accurately identified. Since the Palestinians faced the detrimental effects of occupation, humanitarian and development efforts should seek to alleviate their suffering. Efforts should include enhancing the economy's productive capacity in order to reduce its dependence on the import of goods from Israel and on the export of labour services to Israel.

68. The agricultural sector was the main strategic sector to develop, not only because it linked the cultivator/developer to his/her land, but also because it met the criteria for viable private sectors (see paragraph 70 (i) below). The agricultural sector had shown an impressive capacity to absorb the unemployed labour force and to provide food for the local market; it was widespread and thus could withstand military attacks; it had strong linkages with the food and beverage industry. Areas requiring immediate support included the export of surplus olive oil; land reclamation; rehabilitation of water resources; development of agro-industries and cash crops; and replanting olive trees and other trees uprooted by the Israeli authorities.

4. Strategies to implement the coordinated vision

69. Strategies for achieving the Palestinian developmental vision could be divided into priorities to improve quality of life and priorities to lay the foundations for an independent State.¹⁰

¹⁰ Palestinian Ministry of Planning, Framework of Socio-Economic Development under Current Conditions, paper presented at the Forum (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/2); and Palestinian Ministry of Planning, Towards a coordinated Palestinian development vision, paper presented at the Forum (in Arabic), September 2004 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/1).

(a) *Strategies to improve quality of life*

70. Priorities meant to improve the quality of life of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, under the current state of instability and occupation, included the following:

- (i) Promoting job creation in the private sector by supporting selected sectors that enjoy the following characteristics:¹¹
 - a. Ability to meet local demands;
 - b. Capacity for sustainable job creation;
 - c. Forward and backward linkages;
 - d. Ability to withstand military attacks and destruction;
 - e. Good export potential;
 - f. Capability to use local input.

Support for those sectors could include:

- a. Public, Arab and Palestinian diaspora investment;
 - b. Loan guarantees;
 - c. Support for research and development;
 - d. Technical, financial and administrative consulting and advisory services;
 - e. Improvement and expansion of needed infrastructure, in particular road, electricity and communication networks;
 - f. Establishment of a working relationship with the diaspora and the Arab business community.
- (ii) Promoting partnership between the Palestinians and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by the following measures:
 - a. Developing of viable alternative financial resources for NGOs;
 - b. Coordinating and sharing resources among NGOs to reduce overhead costs;
 - c. Coordinating between NGOs and the Palestinian Authority in the provision of services through the following:

¹¹ Sectors and subsectors that met those criteria included: Agriculture (marketing surplus olives and olive oil, increasing land reclamation and rehabilitating infrastructure, developing water resources; supporting agro-industries, and increasing the cultivation of cash crops); and Industry (micro-enterprises and small projects, food industries, clothing, stone, tools and furniture industries, information technology industries and pharmaceuticals).

- i. Subcontracting by the Palestinian Authority of NGO related services;
 - ii. Supporting NGOs in services not provided by the Palestinian Authority;
 - d. Formulating and implementing regulatory and supervisory frameworks and systems based on transparency and accountability of NGOs and public administration in order to ensure customer protection and public safety.
- (iii) Strengthening links with diaspora Palestinians by the following measures:
- a. Mobilizing diaspora floating investment capital to contribute to the selected sectors mentioned above;
 - b. Providing a suitable environment for the participation of diaspora expertise in local development and rehabilitation projects;
 - c. Calling on diaspora business communities to assist in linking the Palestinian economy to those of neighbouring Arab countries;
 - d. Formulating a mechanism to develop “local skilled labour” abroad.

The Palestinian Authority should exert serious efforts toward the diaspora community through:

- a. Extending the right to return to the occupied Palestinian territory, including citizenship and work opportunities;
 - b. Enhancing links with diaspora institutions and organizations;
 - c. Coordination of advocacy and media drives.
- (iv) Ensuring access to health services through the following:
- a. Reviewing and monitoring coverage policies;
 - b. Utilizing spare capacity at NGO facilities;
 - c. Expanding the Health Ministry’s food and medicine inspection capacity;
 - d. Investing in health facilities and a medical laboratory;
 - e. Addressing difficulties with vaccinations and malnutrition;

- f. Providing programmes to upgrade and modernize medical and paramedical human resources.
- (v) Alleviating poverty by improving macroeconomic conditions through the following:
- a. Increasing sustainable employment opportunities;
 - b. Investing in public works and in economic sectors with strong linkages, as stated above;
 - c. Implementing targeted relief programmes (such as cash and in kind assistance, micro-lending);
 - d. Providing training and rehabilitation programmes for the workforce.
- (vi) Reconnecting the Palestinian economy to the Arab economies through the following:
- a. Implementing the resolutions of the Meeting of Arab Funds and Economic Organizations;
 - b. Implementing resolutions of the League of Arab States regarding tariff exemptions on Palestinian products;
 - c. Reducing the red tape hampering Palestinian access to Arab markets;
 - d. Targeting Arab support to programmes and projects with developmental impact;
 - e. Increasing the contribution of the non-governmental and private sector institutions through their organization of campaigns to purchase Palestinian products;
 - f. Leading fundraising campaigns to support Palestinian development projects;
 - g. Encouraging investment and trade partnership between Arab entities and their counterparts in the occupied Palestinian territory.
- (b) *Priorities for laying the developmental foundations for an independent State*
71. These would include:

- (i) Sustaining and improving infrastructure
 - a. Rehabilitating and expanding water, energy, sanitation and transportation capacity and networks through public and private sector investment, as well as Arab and international donors' contributions;
 - b. Consolidating, wherever possible, currently fragmented service networks;
 - c. Increasing government regulatory and supervisory capacities to monitor and guide private sector investment in infrastructure.

(ii) Strengthening the education system

For primary and secondary education:

- a. Rehabilitating existing schools;
- b. Increasing the number of classrooms;
- c. Investing in information technology and library facilities;
- d. Reviewing and modernizing curricula;
- e. Training teachers.

For higher education:

- a. Achieving financial stability;
- b. Improving quality;
- c. Increasing financing of the higher education system through budgetary support and donor assistance;
- d. Implementing policies to attract and keep qualified staff;
- e. Establishing academic-private sector partnerships to provide relevant research and advisory capacities;
- f. Providing programmes and establishing centres for vocational training in the occupied Palestinian territory and abroad.

(iii) Reforming the legal system through the following measures:

- a. Reviewing and unifying all applicable laws and legal procedures;

- b. Ensuring the clarity, efficacy and transparency of business rules, mechanisms for conflict resolution, and the court systems;
 - c. Enhancing the implementation of legal decisions;
 - d. Designing and implementing rational and transparent procedures for hiring and promoting judicial personnel;
 - e. Enhancing the independence of the judiciary and its ability to make and enforce judgements that run counter to the preferences of the executive branch.
- (iv) Reforming government institutions and public administration through the following:
- a. Reviewing public agencies' missions and roles;
 - b. Transferring, consolidating and reorganizing departments as necessary;
 - c. Limiting government services and products to those that cannot be produced in a socially acceptable manner or cost by the private sector;
 - d. Limiting regulatory functions to those that can be justified on the basis of ensuring consumer protection, public safety and health and the maintenance of macroeconomic stability;
 - e. Tackling corruption by ensuring the transparency and rationality of hiring and promotion regulations, limiting the discretion of public servants, and awarding contracts and permits through a transparent bidding process.
- (v) Avoiding measures that impede long-term development through the following:
- a. Limiting public debt;
 - b. Avoiding the introduction of a Palestinian currency prematurely;
 - c. Maintaining an open economy;
 - d. Ensuring that public-private investment in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors is compatible with World Trade Organization rules;
 - e. Avoiding restrictions on capital mobility;
 - f. Avoiding agreements with Israel that threaten the reclamation of Palestinian land and resources, especially water, currently under Israeli occupation and control.

5. Palestinian needs and priorities in the economic, social and infrastructure sectors

72. Three parallel workshops were held under the title “Palestinian needs and priorities” in three respective sectors: the economic, social and infrastructure sectors. Each workshop included a presentation on those needs and priorities, followed by a discussion on the best means to satisfy them, and on the Arab and international roles in supporting as well as sustaining them.

(a) *Economic needs and priorities*

73. The workshop on the economic sector was moderated by Mr. Mazen Sinnokrot, Chairman of the Private Sector Coordination Council, and Ms. Hanna Daoudi of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Mr. Sinnokrot opened the workshop by highlighting the role of the private sector as the engine behind the Palestinian economy. He said that in the past four years alone, 15 Palestinian companies had achieved international recognition and certification.

74. Mr. Samir Abdallah, Director of the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, presented the Palestinian paper on economic needs and priorities. He said that improving the macroeconomic environment and encouraging investment in the Palestinian economy would require the following:

- (a) Enhancing the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary;
- (b) Focusing on public investment in human development;
- (c) Providing basic social services through private/public partnership;
- (d) Improving the capacity of the agricultural sector to meet the food needs of the population and to sustain viable agro-food industries;
- (e) Providing low-interest and low-cost financial and insurance products for productive sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- (f) Encouraging the development of specialized marketing and exporting corporations, as well as trade fairs and joint Palestinian-Arab enterprises;
- (g) Establishing promotion and trade centres in Arab countries;
- (h) Reducing bureaucracy and red-tape in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as in other Arab countries;
- (i) Creating a data bank on the Palestinian economy and market research;

- (j) Promulgating laws that encourage foreign direct investment;
- (k) Encouraging the use of local inputs and labour force development, in addition to improving quality standards and the strengthening of standards and inspection agencies;
- (l) Acquiring preferential market access to various States and trade blocs (in particular in Arab markets);
- (m) Developing municipal industrial zones and enhancing industrial standards;
- (n) Preparing studies on connecting Palestinian infrastructure (especially communications, roads, water and power) to neighbouring Arab States.

75. Mr. Abdallah said that it was important to open Arab markets to Palestinian products, as well as assist in the development of the economy, in order to enable the Palestinians to withstand the hardships and repercussions resulting from Israeli constraints and restrictions.

76. Participants in the workshop raised a number of issues, emphasizing the importance of investment in human capital, improvement of the education sector, in particular vocational training and research, and the introduction of new technologies. They stated that there was a need to identify economic subsectors with competitive advantages. Other issues, such as prioritizing actions and policies according to a time frame, were raised. The participants said that particular emphasis should be given to the promotion of SMEs as a viable means of reducing unemployment and increasing income. Improvement of the quality of Palestinian products and their conformity with international standards would enhance the ability of Palestinian products to enter the regional and international markets. The private sector would play a pivotal role, while complementing the public sector.

77. With regard to the assistance of the Arab community, besides Arab markets providing access to Palestinian products, a number of participants stated that what Palestinian needs were in relation to their Arab counterparts was unclear, as the requirements needed to be more specific. Other issues were related to the importance of studying the impact of the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Gaza on the Palestinian market.

(b) *Social needs and priorities*

78. The workshop on the social sector was moderated by both Mr. Jawad Naji, Palestinian Ministry of Economy, and Mr. Khaled Doudine, International Labour Organization, occupied Palestinian territory.

79. Mr. Mohsen Abu Ramadan, representing the Palestinian NGOs Network, presented the Palestinian paper on the social needs and priorities of the Palestinian people, stressing the need for an integrated socio-economic strategy to achieve comprehensive human development. He said that education and health constituted the two priority subsectors. In those sectors Mr. Abu Ramadan presented the priorities for action, which were as follows:

(i) *Education*

- a. Capacity-building for staff and teachers;
- b. Repairing the infrastructure of established schools;
- c. Providing necessary learning and teaching materials;
- d. Providing financial assistance to low-income students;
- e. Upgrading and rehabilitating educational staff;
- f. Increasing and supporting the research capacities of Palestinian institutions of higher education through support of a research fund;

(ii) *Health*

- a. Restoring and maintaining existing but damaged health-care infrastructure, including its expansion;
- b. Constructing basic health-care facilities in rural and isolated communities;
- c. Providing necessary stocks of medicines and health-care supplies (including emergency stockpiles), in addition to children's vaccines;
- d. Developing nutritional health programmes for women and children;
- e. Supporting and financing continuous training for physicians, paramedical and health-care professionals;
- f. Providing the necessary financing to attract specialists to the occupied Palestinian territory;
- g. Financing cooperation and exchange programmes between Palestinian and Arab health-care institutions;

(iii) *Social welfare and safety nets*

- a. Providing assistance to families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed;
- b. Developing work creation programmes in sectors with developmental potential for families who have lost their livelihoods;

- c. Supporting the families of the wounded and the martyred;
- d. Supporting families living in areas severely damaged by Israeli aggression;
- e. Supporting poor and low income families through continued humanitarian assistance;
- f. Providing work training programmes to the poor and supporting financially, and through capacity- building, public agencies charged with overseeing assistance to the poor.
- g. Providing rehabilitation programmes for children affected by psychological disorders.

80. Participants emphasized the importance of enhancing national capacities, in particular those of non-specialized teachers, expanding vocational education, improving educational policies, ensuring justice and equality in educational opportunities at all educational levels and enhancing partnerships between the schools and civil society. More scholarships must be given to Palestinian students in Arab and international universities. Distance learning, particularly e-learning, was to be expanded. It was stressed that the development of human resources, which was a high priority, was an area that could not be destroyed by Israel.

81. A separate working group on education was also held during the Forum to further explore the priorities and needs of the education sector. The participants in the working group, which was organized by UNESCO, emphasized the importance of establishing funds for student credit and scholarships, scientific research and quality development. The participants stressed the need to support Palestinian universities and exchange programmes between those universities and their Arab counterparts.

(c) *Infrastructure*

82. The workshop on infrastructure needs and priorities was jointly moderated by Mr. Azzam El-Ahmad, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Palestinian Authority, and Ms. Anhar Hegazi, Director of the ESCWA Sustainable Development and Productivity Division.

83. Palestinian needs and priorities in the five subsectors of infrastructure were presented by Mr. Sameer Abu-Eisheh, Director of Planning and Development, and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at the An-Najah National University. In his presentation, Mr. Abu-Eisheh described the reality of current infrastructure in Palestine, including roads, air and marine transport, public transportation, movement of goods, electricity, water and sanitary services.

84. Minister Azzam El-Ahmad said that the Palestinian Authority, with the support of the private sector, had exerted great effort in executing critical livelihood projects.

He added that the difficult conditions faced by the Palestinian people due to Israeli aggression had left the infrastructure in a very poor state.

85. Mr. Abdel Monem Ariss, Mayor, Municipality of Beirut, presented the example of Lebanon following the civil strife in that country. He emphasized the necessity of gathering data on the extent of the damages before drawing up any plans for reconstruction and investment. Consequently, he considered it necessary for the Palestinians to prepare for reconstruction by undertaking field surveys and studies and discussing their execution with the private sector and other potential sources of funding.

86. The common feature of the presentations on the infrastructure priorities was the emphasis on developing human capacities in the following:

- (a) Maintaining the communication infrastructure and transportation network;
- (b) Producing and transmitting power;
- (c) Developing new water resources;
- (d) Developing better waste management policies;
- (e) Maintaining a viable modern communication system.

87. Other priorities suggested during the workshop included the need for rehabilitating sub-sectors that had been seriously affected by Israeli policies and measures.

88. Comments made during the workshop revolved around the role of municipalities in reconstruction and in providing momentum to the development of infrastructure, and the need to promote decentralization in order to avoid a bureaucracy that would impede the daily mainstays of Palestinian life.

89. A separate working group on the role of municipalities was also held during the Forum. The participants in the working group concluded that municipalities were to play the predominant role in the rehabilitation of selected parts of the infrastructure sector, as decentralization gave more flexibility for the Palestinians to respond to the daily emerging needs and problems. Twinning Palestinian and Arab municipalities would assist in enhancing the provision of services. Particular attention was to be given to the training of human resources needed for rehabilitation, and to the need for developing research facilities, with a focus on areas that served the infrastructure sector, such as facilities and applications for information and communications technologies (ICT).

F. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

90. Ms. Zahira Kamal, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestinian Authority, and Ms. Fatme Sbaity-Kassem, Director of the ESCWA Centre for Women, jointly

moderated a workshop on Palestinian women's participation in the development process.

91. The social, economic and political conditions of Palestinian women were described by Ms. Hadil Qazzaz, of the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Women's Affairs, in a paper entitled "Palestinian women and priorities for development: a vision for participation". The paper addressed issues such as the status of Palestinian women in education and the job market and their role in decision-making, and asserted that the greatest achievement remained the establishment of the Ministry for Women's Affairs, which was responsible for creating strategies to ensure greater effective participation of women in the comprehensive development process.

92. The representative of the Palestinian Authority emphasized two main aspects of women's participation in the development process: (a) their participation in public development planning and political life; and (b) their contribution to economic activities.

93. The representative also noted that the Ministry of Women's Affairs had developed a strategy for the coming three years, during which it would execute many developmental projects aimed at the following goals:

- (a) To decrease poverty among young women;
- (b) To educate and train young women technically and professionally;
- (c) To incorporate the role of women in policy formulation and the decision-making process.

94. The deliberations of the workshop concentrated on the importance of the role of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in preparing a plan of work for the implementation of its strategy and mobilizing, to that end, the international community and civil society.

95. The participants noted the need to establish a database on the conditions of women in all sectors, utilizing the assistance of government agencies and Palestinian civil society institutions. Participants stressed the importance of networking and forging partnerships between women's associations with the development centres of the civil society in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the diaspora.

96. Participants concluded that the Ministry should study the reasons behind the low level of women's participation in the services sector, and the relation between unemployment and the decreasing level of education of women. They also recommended that, since the Palestinian labour law currently in effect had had a negative impact on women's employment opportunities, the devising of social policies taking into consideration gender issues should be a priority. In addition, particular

attention was to be given to women in rural areas, who faced different kinds of problems from those living in urban areas.

G. PALESTINIAN-ARAB PARTNERSHIP

97. The Palestinian coordinated vision for rehabilitation and development provided the basis for launching a multilateral process aimed at enhancing Arab-Palestinian partnerships on four tracks: Palestinian-Arab civil society; the Palestinian-Arab private sector; the Palestinian diaspora; and Arab economic organizations and funds. Those four tracks were the main themes of the plenary session on Palestinian-Arab partnership and constituted the larger part of the preparatory process.

1. *Arab governmental assistance*

98. The session was jointly moderated by Ambassador Said Kamal, League of Arab States, and Ms. Oumnia Taha, League of Arab States.

99. Ms. Ghania Malhis, Director, Construction and Development, League of Arab States, highlighted the importance of linking Arab aid to clear goals and setting specific programmes. She said out that Arab and international financial aid during the transitional period from 1994 to 2000 amounted to approximately US\$ 3.2 billion, and that it doubled during the past four years to an annual average of US\$ 1 billion. Ms. Malhis noted that where Arab aid represented about 7.8 per cent of the total international aid in the transitional period, it had since doubled to enhance Palestinian self-capability. However, Ms. Malhis added that a large part of that aid was being directed towards bolstering the Palestinian Authority's budget at the expense of development projects.¹²

100. The representative of the League of Arab States presented the outcome of the deliberations of the Meeting of Arab Economic Organizations and Funds, held in Cairo on 7 and 8 September 2004. The Meeting brought together the Palestinian Authority and numerous Arab economic organizations, funds and institutions, in addition to Advisory Group members. The recommendations, which were adopted on 26 September 2004 by the League of Arab States Ministerial Council,¹³ included the following:

¹² See League of Arab States: Arab Assistance to Support the Steadfastness of the Palestinian People and to Rehabilitate and Develop Its Economy, Department of Palestine Affairs, League of Arab States (paper presented at the Meeting of Arab Funds and Economic Organizations, 7-8 September 2004), in Arabic.

¹³ Recommendations of the Meeting of Arab Funds and Economic Organizations, 7-8 September 2004, Department of Palestine Affairs, League of Arab States, in Arabic.

(a) To support the priorities of the Palestinian development vision and the efforts of the PA to achieve economic and administrative reform;

(b) To consider the plan for Palestinian development in the medium term as the basis for attracting and implementing Arab and international support, in addition to affirming the importance of partnership between the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian private sector and civil society;

(c) To affirm Arab commitment to implement the resolutions of the Arab Summits and Ministerial Meetings related to supporting the Palestinian people, their National Authority and the institutionalization of this support through the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifada Fund;

(d) To coordinate with other Arab entities to ensure the continuation of support, and the coordination and continuity of its flow, with a view to strengthening Palestinian capacities, expanding the base of common Arab-Palestinian interests and ending Palestinian dependency on the Israeli economy through the following measures:

- (i) Adopt a unified strategy to coordinate Arab support and utilize it to rehabilitate and develop the Palestinian economy. Efforts of the Al-Aqsa Fund to ensure the necessary technical assistance to develop that strategy in consultation with all relevant parties were commended and encouraged;
- (ii) Encourage the strengthening of the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifada Fund, as well as other Arab economic and financial organizations including the institutions of joint Arab action that specialize in the support of the Palestinian people, and call upon all relevant parties to put programmes into place to achieve the socio-economic development goals of Arab aid;
- (iii) Preserve the independence of Arab aid organizations and encourage the transparency of their operations and distribution of funds;
- (iv) Encourage Arab aid efforts to fall within a strategy of Arab support, in partnership with concerned international entities and in consultation with the Palestinian Authority;
- (v) Enhance external assistance to the Palestinian people with the aim of increasing its impact and ensuring that their developmental needs and priorities are addressed;

(vi) Increase Arab and international awareness of the reality of the Arab role in supporting the Palestinian people through various existing media outlets;

(e) To increase Arab and international aid to the Palestinian people with the aim of rehabilitating the Palestinian economy, strengthening its capacities and ending its dependency on Israel, which would lay the foundation for a future independent Palestinian State.

101. Mr. Mansour Ben Fetn, Coordinator of the Al-Aqsa Fund, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), stated that the Bank was keen to support projects that focussed on development. He said that US\$ 1 billion had been earmarked in order to support the Palestinian people after the emergency session of the League of Arab States in 2000. To that end, he added, an Arab mechanism had been established, and its management entrusted to the IDB (the Al-Quds Intifada Fund and the Al-Aqsa Fund). The representative of IDB emphasized the need for the Palestinian economy to develop its own capabilities, as well as its need to build strong networks with partners from international organizations, volunteer organizations and a group of Arab funds.

102. Within the context of the Arab-Palestinian partnership, Mr. Saleh Abdul Rahman Al-Manih, representing the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), gave an overview of the level of official economic and financial aid given to the Palestinian Authority, especially the contributions made by GCC member States in the past 10 years (1993-2003). He said that those contributions had reached US\$ 4.5 billion, including financial contributions made by the GCC States to establish the Intifada Fund and the Al-Aqsa Fund during the Arab Summit in Cairo in 2000. On behalf of the GCC, Mr. Al-Manih called on the Security Council to send international forces to protect the Palestinians as an initial step towards establishing Palestinian self-defence forces.

2. Enhancing Palestinian-Arab private sector partnership

103. During the session, Mr. Samir Huleileh, Chairman, Palestinian Trade Centre (Paltrade) presented the outcome of the Workshop of the Palestinian-Arab Private Sector Partnership, held in the Dead Sea, Jordan, on 4 and 5 September 2004. He said that the Workshop emphasized the importance of initiating a dialogue with those Arab States that were restricting the access of Palestinian products. Mr. Huleileh added that one of the main outcomes of the Workshop was a recommendation for the private sector to look upon Egypt and Jordan as gateways of Palestinian products into the Arab countries.

104. He also stated that human resource development and quality improvement of Palestinian products were prerequisites for enhancing their competitiveness.

105. In his statement, Mr. Huleileh focused on the issue of supporting the private sector to cope with problems caused by the Israeli occupation. He pointed out that the Palestinian private sector received only 2 per cent of the total official Arab aid, which was insufficient to deal with poverty and unemployment. He also stressed the need to strengthen the institutional relation between the Palestinians of the diaspora and those in the occupied Palestinian territory. He then turned to the issue of non-implementation among some Arab countries of the League of Arab States decisions related to the import of Palestinian products and the absence of facilitation measures for travel of Palestinian businessmen to Arab States.

106. A separate workshop, "Partnering for a Promising Palestine", was held during the Forum and jointly moderated by Ms. Ghania Malhis, League of Arab States, and Mr. Mahmoud Khaled Ezzedine, Al-Aqsa Fund. During the workshop Mr. Huleileh gave a presentation on "Palestinian private sector potentials for partnership". He described the challenges facing the Palestinian private sector and presented the main recommendations formulated by the participants of the above-mentioned Dead Sea workshop, which could be summarized as follows:

(a) Twinning of Palestinian and Arab private sector institutions on a bilateral basis, leading to a more established coalition;

(b) Promoting Palestinian economic business potential and investment opportunities, even under the current conditions, through the following measures:

(i) Organizing visits, seminars and meetings for Palestinian private sector representatives in Arab countries;

(ii) Conducting a joint Arab-Palestinian media campaign;

(iii) Preparing a number of studies on the benefits and feasibility of investment in the occupied Palestinian territory and establishing joint ventures with its private sector, and widely disseminating the findings throughout the Arab world;

(iv) Establishing a private fund to promote the image of the Palestinian private sector and Palestinian products in Arab countries and the world.

(c) Facilitating meetings with Governments of Arab countries to increase the possibilities for trading with Arab countries;

(d) Enhancing capacity-building of the Palestinian private sector by receiving training from Arab private sector companies.

3. *Enhancing Palestinian-Arab civil society partnership*

107. Mr. Ziad Abdel Smad, Director of the Arab NGO Network for Development, stated that the basic functions incumbent upon Palestinian civil society included lobbying decision makers, raising awareness, and providing health, education, social and economic services. He cited a number of challenges in the sectors of health, education, agriculture and information technology. Mr. Izzat Abdel Hadi, representative of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations, identified the most important elements supportive of a strong Arab partnership: a shared vision for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict; an agreement on development reform; and the enhancement of coordination between private and public sector institutions as well as NGOs.

108. According to both the above representatives, the process of enhancing the Palestinian-Arab civil society partnership was to be based on addressing Palestinian needs and priorities as defined by the Palestinians, as well as common Palestinian-Arab civil society goals, including: democratic transformation, social justice and the enhancement of human development for all Arab societies. They said that the process must be closely linked with another common Palestinian-Arab objective, namely, a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict leading to the establishment of an independent and viable State of Palestine, as well as a just solution to the Palestinian refugee issue.

109. The speakers noted that the Palestinian-Arab Civil Society Workshop, held in Beirut on 9 and 10 June 2004, had concluded that Arab and Palestinian civil society institutions could concentrate their efforts on advocacy and awareness-raising by establishing Arab lobbying and advocacy groups.¹⁴ The latter would be able to influence the policies and strategies of national and regional decision makers, international organizations, donor agendas and funding mechanisms. Furthermore, the establishment of public relations centres to launch campaigns raising awareness in the Arab region and the world at large, with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, would also assist in mobilizing popular voluntary relief efforts.

110. The two representatives also stated that cooperation and partnership in the fields of capacity-building, information sharing and networking could be enhanced by twinning Palestinian and Arab institutions, including schools, municipalities and research institutes, and training and exchange programmes. Such programmes would involve students, teachers, doctors and other professionals. Other means of enhancing such partnerships could include networking among associations, research institutions and professional syndicates, establishing non-profit loan funds to finance micro, small

¹⁴ See ESCWA, Outcome of the Workshop on Palestinian- Arab Civil Society Partnership, Beirut, 9-11 June 2004 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/CRP.1); and Izzat Abdul Hadi, Mechanisms and Approaches to Strengthen Partnership between Palestinian Civil Society and Civil Societies in the Arab World (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/CRP).

and medium-sized enterprises and other developmental needs in the occupied Palestinian territory and building databases of professionals in various specializations.

4. *Enhancing the role of the Palestinian diaspora*

111. Mr. As'ad Abdul-Rahman, Executive Chairman, Palestine International Institute, said that the major obstacle to the contribution of Palestinian expatriates to the rehabilitation and development process in the occupied Palestinian territory was the lack of institutionalized expatriate assistance.

112. According to Mr. Abdul-Rahman, Palestinian institutions operating abroad could be categorized into relief and rehabilitation organizations, civil society networks, political and media solidarity institutions and fund-raising institutions. In order to promote and enhance a long-term partnership between Palestinian society and its diaspora, there was a need to develop a communications network between the respective institutions, and to establish a database of Palestinian capabilities abroad.

113. Mr. Abdul-Rahman summarized the results of the Expert Group Meeting on the Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the Rehabilitation and Development Process in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, held in Amman on 29 and 30 July 2004.¹⁵ He stated that the participants in the Meeting:

(a) Agreed that the Palestinian diaspora had a political and national responsibility towards Palestine;

(b) Agreed that the Palestinian diaspora could enhance the rehabilitation and development process in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(c) Considered that networking, fostering long-term partnerships and diversifying mechanisms and approaches for Palestinians in the diaspora to contribute to human development efforts would enhance the relations between diaspora Palestinians and their counterparts in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(d) Stressed the importance of providing the younger Palestinian generations, particularly those born abroad, with information about Palestine and the plight of the Palestinian people, so they could become real advocates for Palestinian rights, including the "right to development". In that regard, specialized institutions could be established to cater to the needs and aspirations of young diaspora Palestinians;

¹⁵ ESCWA, Outcome of the Expert Group Meeting on the Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 29-30 July 2004 (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/WG.4/CRP).

(e) Called for the enhancement of activities carried out by Palestinian diaspora communities to promote advocacy and solidarity, in particular activities focusing on the rights of Palestinians living under the occupation;

(f) Asserted the need to promote, among diaspora communities and solidarity groups, the concept of the right to development for Palestinians inside the occupied Palestinian territory, in addition to the right to self-determination as well as rights related to daily life, including the right to education, the right to work, the right to property, the right to health care and the right to freedom of movement;

(g) Called for the formulation of a concrete mechanism by which Palestinian institutions and the diaspora could enhance and coordinate their efforts. (In order to formulate such a mechanism, it was suggested that a series of workshops and meetings should be held in different countries to engage the widest possible range of diaspora institutions, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, as well as to develop and maintain a database of Palestinian expertise).

114. In addition to the presentation made by Mr. Abdul-Rahman during the plenary session, a special workshop on the “Role of the Palestinian Diaspora in the Development Process in the Occupied Palestinian Territory” was held. The workshop was jointly moderated by Mr. Amin Makki Medani, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and Mr. Ismail Zabri, Director of the Welfare Association, an international NGO established and supported by Palestinian businessmen in the diaspora. Mr. Zabri made a presentation on the work of the Association, which included the implementing of programmes to support community development, housing, NGOs, extending micro-credit. Thus the Association provided a means for diaspora Palestinians to contribute to the development process in the occupied Palestinian territory.

115. Mr. Nabil Hajjar, a Palestinian expatriate and professor at the University of Lille in France, presented the main paper of the above workshop, entitled “The role of the Palestinian diaspora in the development process in the occupied Palestinian territory”. The paper reviewed the role of the Palestinian businessmen and expertise in the rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as the role of Palestinian institutions in mobilizing Arab and international communities and the media, particularly in their countries of residence: A number of institutions abroad supported education and research programmes on the question of Palestine. Many such institutions had been established in the past decade to nurture and maintain relations among Palestinian communities in the diaspora. While those institutions catered primarily to the needs of the community where they had been established, particularly in the United States of America, a few of these institutions also provided support to their hometowns. Solidarity groups were, by far, the largest group of institutions working with the Palestinians. Solidarity groups had been established throughout Europe, Canada, the United States and other countries, including South Africa. They often combined the dissemination of information with political advocacy.

116. The experience of the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme was presented by Mr. Mounir Kleibo, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), as an example of a mechanism in which Palestinian experts in the diaspora could be placed in various public and private institutions in the occupied Palestinian territory, for short periods, to respond to the specific needs of those institutions by using their acquired expertise and experience from their countries of residence.

H. PALESTINIAN-INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

117. A plenary session on enhancing Palestinian-international partnership was jointly moderated by Mr. Issam Yousef, *I'tilaf Al-Khair*, and Mr. Abdallah Abbas, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). It included presentations by representatives of the United Nations and international agencies, as well as representatives of European civil society.

118. Mr. Alex Costi, Head of Coordination, and representative of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO), said that the assistance programmes executed by the United Nations in the past two years had been mainly focused on distributing food rations to around 217,000 Palestinian families, creating job opportunities and supporting the social services offered by the Palestinian Authority.

119. The representative of UNDP/PAPP, Mr. Mounir Kleibo (Head of Governance), focused on the TOKTEN programme. He noted the large number of Palestinians in the diaspora who had excelled in various fields. Since 1994, more than 500 Palestinian expatriate professionals had served, through TOKTEN, in senior advisory and planning positions in various key Palestinian Authority ministries and other leading Palestinian institutions. Some 33 per cent of the consultants came from Jordan, 38 per cent from the United States, and the remainder from Canada, Europe and the GCC countries.

120. The representative of the World Bank, Mr. Sebastien Dessus, Senior Country Economist for the West Bank and Gaza, gave an overview of the assistance that the World Bank had provided to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinians, which had reached US\$ 950 million between 2001 and 2003. The grants, however large they might be, were still not sufficient to push the Palestinian economy forward in the light of the current situation, given the difficulties faced by donors in the absence of any progress made in achieving peace.

121. Senator Pierre Galand, Chairman of the Belgian-Palestinian Association, said that there was a distorted image of the Palestinians in Western countries. He stated, however, that the thousands of civilian volunteers who had visited the Palestinian territory during the past three years had helped to change that image. The volunteers pressed their Governments to take concrete action for peace. He added that, while Governments around the world remained silent, the conflict was claiming more lives

and devastating the homes and livelihoods of the Palestinian people. He noted, however, that a large number of ordinary people, members of parliaments and peace activists were mobilizing to safeguard the rights of the Palestinians.

122. Ms. Gretta Duisenberg, Chair of “Stop the Occupation”, a group from the Netherlands seeking to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory and to remove the barrier, called on civil society and other institutions to lobby for the enforcement of international law in the territory. She added that lobbyists also needed to mobilize financial support for the reconstruction and development of the occupied Palestinian territory.

I. ROLE OF THE MEDIA

123. During a roundtable discussion, prominent journalists from Arab and international media outlets, in addition to representatives of the Palestinian private sector and NGOs, deliberated on the role of the media in promoting rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory. Mr. Rami Khouri, Executive Editor of the *Daily Star*, moderated the discussions. The speakers included: Ms. Khawla Mattar, ILO; Mr. Sate’h Nour Eddine, *Assafir* newspaper; Ms. Jivara Al-Budeiri, Aljazeera Network; Mr. Nejjib Friji, United Nations Information Centre, Beirut; Mr. Zahi Khoury, Chairman, Jawal Company (Palestine); Mr. Allam Jarrar, Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute, Palestine; Ms. Kate Sealy, National Public Radio, United States; and Mr. Alfred Hackensberger, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper, Germany.

124. The speakers noted that the only image of the occupied Palestinian territory that appeared in the Arab and international media was an image of violence and destruction, with little exposure to Palestinian economic, social or cultural issues.

125. They identified “media fatigue” on Palestine-related matters as a major problem and suggested that practical steps on how to improve access to the media, including the United States-based media outlets, should be formulated. It was emphasized that the media should be encouraged to focus on not just violence and politics, but rather aspects of Palestinian life that promoted Palestinian products, culture and folklore, as well as socio-economic development issues.

126. Success stories that reflect daily life despite the political and military turmoil would show the human side of Palestine. For example, participants suggested covering subjects such as health programmes, education programmes and cultural events, thereby presenting the development story in a framework of popular interest. Civil society institutions could play a leading role in that regard.

J. INITIATIVES AND AGREEMENTS ANNOUNCED DURING THE FORUM

127. Participants divided themselves into a number of theme-oriented working groups, exploring means of enhancing partnerships in pertinent areas. Partnership initiatives were launched and announced as a result of those groups.

1. *Replanting trees: a symbol of socio-economic rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory*

128. The initiative on “Replanting trees” was discussed in the working group on Agricultural and Agro-business Partnership, and was moderated by Mr. Antoine Mansour, Coordinator of the ESCWA Task Force on Palestine, and Mr. Issam Yousef, Secretary-General of *I'tilaf Al-Khair*. The initiative was presented by Ms. Razan Zayter, Director of the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (Jordan), who stated that an estimated 1 million trees had been uprooted in the occupied Palestinian territory since September 2000. She also stated that funds were desperately needed to support the activities of Palestinian farmers and NGOs working on replanting trees and rehabilitating the agricultural sectors throughout the territory. She noted that, as productive resources, trees provided nourishment and revenues for families and that, as cultural icons, they evoked images of the historic ties that Palestinians had to their land. She said that, while olive trees were among the major targets of Israeli security forces, citrus fields (orange and lemon) and forests had also been uprooted and destroyed.

129. ESCWA would work with the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (Jordan) and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (Palestine) to implement the initiative. The above-mentioned NGOs had invited ESCWA to mobilize concerned actors to support their tree replanting initiative, which had been launched in 2001. Nearly 100,000 trees were planted in 2003 as part of the first phase of the initiative.

130. The role of ESCWA in the initiative would be to coordinate the NGO activities in the Arab region, as well as assist in raising awareness and funds. A series of events were to be organized by ESCWA in collaboration with Arab partner organizations to raise awareness of the significance of rehabilitating the agricultural sectors in the occupied Palestinian territory, and in particular to raise awareness of the importance of replanting uprooted trees. During the Forum, the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund (INTERPAL), an international NGO, allocated the sum of US\$ 500,000 to the project as seed money for its implementation.

2. *Agricultural land and agro-industrial development as instruments of economic sustenance: strengthening the capacity of Palestinians through Arab-international partnerships*

131. The working group on Agricultural and Agro-business Partnership discussed a second initiative related to agricultural land and agro-industrial development. The

initiative, which was presented by Ms. Carol Chouchani, ESCWA secretariat, would seek to strengthen the capacity of Palestinians to rehabilitate agricultural land and develop agro-industries in the occupied Palestinian territory through private sector partnerships. The programme would specifically forge and foster the development of partnerships between the Palestinian private sector entities, the Palestinian diaspora and Arab-international networks that retain an expertise in agricultural and agro-industrial development. The purpose of those partnerships would be twofold: (a) to upgrade the technical skills of Palestinians through professional exchanges, with a view to supporting the viability and sustainability of agricultural production and associated agro-industries in the occupied Palestinian territory; and (b) to facilitate through such exchanges the establishment of commercial linkages between agricultural and agro-industrial producers in the occupied Palestinian territory and those abroad. Those initiatives would engage the international community and Palestinians in partnerships to upgrade local capacity.

132. Partnerships would be forged in the areas of agriculture, food-processing, testing, packaging, quality control, management, marketing and distribution as well as other areas. They would be based on a consensus regarding local needs and priorities. The two phases of the initiative were:

(a) Phase I, which would include twinning, apprenticeships and other on-site training arrangements structured to support long-term human resource development for Palestinians in the areas of agriculture and agro-industrial development;

(b) Phase II, which would be initiated on the basis of the findings of Phase I, would be aimed at linking Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory to Palestinian, Arab and international networks abroad.

133. The initiative would focus on raising the capacity of Palestinians living under occupation by introducing them to new technologies and expertise available outside the occupied Palestinian territory through extended learning arrangements with specialists eager, but unable themselves, to identify professional channels through which to support the Palestinian economy. Palestinians who received such training would be required to share the knowledge and experience gained abroad with counterparts upon their return home. That self-help, interactive approach would contribute to strengthening agricultural and agro-industrial capacity among Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, and to encouraging professional exchanges between Palestinians both inside and outside the territory, as well as establishing partnerships between Palestinians and Arab-international networks throughout the world. The initiative was a fundamentally different approach to the existing, well-established programmes that sought to inject short-term expatriate knowledge into the occupied Palestinian territory, as it would instead seek to build long-term human capacity and private sector partnerships.

134. The initiative was a joint effort by *I'tilaf Al-Khair* and ESCWA. A total amount of US\$ 5 million was to be allocated (of which US\$ 3 million had already been committed by *I'tilaf Al-Khair*) to support the agricultural and agro-food products sectors and to develop Palestinian capacities in those two important sectors.

3. Arab-Palestinian civil society coalition for enhancing development partnership

135. The working group on civil society partnership was moderated by Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), and Mr. El Mansour Ben Fetn, Al-Aqsa Fund. ANND announced an initiative to establish a coalition of Arab and Palestinian civil society institutions to enhance development partnerships. The coalition would involve the establishment of a more permanent structure that would allow Palestinian and Arab civil society institutions to meet regularly and coordinate their efforts. In order to begin the process of establishing such a permanent structure, the following steps would be taken:

(a) Common terms of reference for a partnership arrangement were to be formulated, including the setting of specific criteria for membership;

(b) A guide for Palestinian-Arab partnership was to be disseminated, describing criteria, goals, strategies and plans for implementation. Such a guide might also include a list of all Palestinian and Arab civil society organizations (to be updated regularly), in addition to a clear statement outlining the needs and priorities of Palestinian civil society institutions (also to be revised as needed);

(c) Meetings were to be held by each national delegation in its respective home country to better coordinate activities, ideas and available resources;

(d) The electronic resources available, such as the Palestinian Development Gateway portal,¹⁶ were to be used and new ones were to be established, if the need should arise, in order to stay abreast of all issues related to sustainable development in Palestine, thereby enhancing the efficiency of partnership efforts;

(e) Regular meetings were to be held bringing together representatives of civil society in the region to coordinate follow-up activities on the recommendations of the Forum and its preparatory process;

(f) The Arab NGO Network for Development, the Palestinian NGO Network and ESCWA were to take the lead in implementing the initiative.

¹⁶ Palestinian Development Gateway Portal, available at: <http://www.psgateway.org>.

4. *The Qatar Red Crescent initiative on medical education and training in Palestine: investing in building human capacity for excellence in health care*

136. Dr. Mohamed Ghanem Al Ali, Secretary-General of the Qatar Red Crescent, moderated the working group on the Qatar Red Crescent initiative. Presentations were made by: Dr. Wael Issa, Ministry of Health, Palestine; Dr. Haitham Al-Hassan, Makassed Hospital, Jerusalem; Dr. Mohamed El-Tawil, Qatar Red Crescent; and Dr. Khaled Diab, Qatar Red Crescent.

137. The medical education and training initiative, which was aimed at achieving self-reliance in postgraduate medical education in the occupied Palestinian territory, was launched by the Qatar Red Crescent, in consultation with the Palestinian Medical Council. The initiative would include the following steps: (a) installing a quality assessment scheme for development of postgraduate medical education centres; (b) redefining the quality of medical education and training facilities and staff; (c) creating modern educational approaches and selected programmes that would receive more support to implement specific modern training strategies (such as ACLS and BTLS Training); (d) creating facilities to promote staff and faculty development and international orientation of institutions, and to upgrade and expand educational materials; (e) integrating the instruction of local trainers into short programmes, recruiting international and regional experts, and establishing exchange programmes affiliated with renowned centres; and (f) promoting the independence of postgraduate medical education in all aspects, including nursing, paramedical training, rehabilitation, public health and community medicine.

138. The initiative was designed to achieve the following objectives: (a) to study the current challenges in Palestine, a process already begun by the Palestinian Medical Council; (b) to develop a comprehensive database of facilities, staff, Palestinian experts in the occupied Palestinian territory and abroad, and non-Palestinian experts; (c) to develop a long-term plan for postgraduate medical education, using the Pan-Arab Medical Board as a platform; (d) to upgrade a number of medical training centres; (e) to initiate new units for training and education; (f) to recruit and retain medical and academic staff with abilities to train and educate; (g) to recruit Palestinian experts in the diaspora on a staff-on-loan basis or with full financial support from various donors; and (h) to maintain the process of continuous medical education.

5. *Other initiatives and agreements*

139. The following initiatives and agreements were also announced during the Forum:

(a) The initiative on the part of the Islamic Development Bank/Al-Aqsa Fund to allocate US\$ 23 million for rehabilitation in the Gaza Strip;

(b) The “Berlin Initiative for the Removal of the Separation Barrier” (the barrier being built by the occupying authorities on Palestinian territory), to devote US\$ 500,000 to media campaigns and advocacy efforts aimed at removing the barrier. EUROPAL and *I’tilaf Al-Khair* were to contribute to financing the initiative;

(c) An agreement between the Islamic Development Bank and the Palestinian Businesswomen’s Association (ASALA), pursuant to which a portfolio of Islamic loans in the amount of US\$ 200,000 would be made available to support micro-projects undertaken by Palestinian women;

(d) An agreement between the Islamic Bank and ASALA regarding loans for micro-projects as an experimental undertaking. The sum of US\$ 1.4 million had been allocated to seven other Palestinian institutions involved in supporting micro-projects. Further agreements were to be concluded in the future with other institutions working in Palestine in the same field.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. DECLARATION ISSUED BY THE ARAB-INTERNATIONAL FORUM

140. Under the auspices of His Excellency General Emile Lahoud, President of Lebanon, the Arab-International Forum on Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Towards an Independent State was held in Beirut from 11 to 14 October 2004, and was attended by representatives of Governments and Palestinian, Arab, and international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

141. The objectives of the Forum included the reaffirmation of the responsibility and commitment of the international community to the Palestinian people and the urgent need to reorient Arab and international efforts towards medium- and long-term economic and social development in Palestine while at the same time providing relief for the Palestinian people in order to alleviate the conditions of occupation. Further objectives were to mobilize Arab support for the rehabilitation and development process in the occupied Palestinian territory and to formulate specific and effective arrangements and mechanisms to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral partnership of all sides in assisting the Palestinian people. Those mechanisms would allow the Palestinians to overcome the economic and social impact of the occupation and address future challenges on the basis of their own vision and priorities.

142. The Forum was held over a highly intensive four-day period, during which the participants followed with grave apprehension the continuing process of the destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure, economy, society and human resources and of Palestinian public and private property.

143. The participants expressed their profound concern about the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and about Israeli policies such as closures, the building of the barrier and the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territory. All of those circumstances reduced the likelihood of any political solution, and threatened regional and international security and stability.

144. Participants also warned of the dangers posed by the continuous drain of Palestinian human and material resources, worsening living conditions and the destruction of economic and commercial activity caused by: (a) Israeli policies of closure and isolation; (b) the withdrawal of public and private investment in the occupied Palestinian territory; (c) the collapse of Palestinian productive and employment capacities; (d) the alarming spread of the phenomena of poverty and unemployment; (e) the growing dependence of the Palestinian people on relief assistance for survival; and (f) the almost complete cessation of the implementation of development projects, which had serious long-term implications for capacity-building and for Palestinian economic and social institutions capable of reviving the economic and social development process that would be the basis for the foundation of any sustainable State.

145. The participants considered that the deteriorating economic and social conditions resulting from the measures taken by the occupying power required a serious and radical response from the international community that would end Palestinian economic dependence on the Israeli economy, strengthen its independent capacities and conserve its human and material resources.

146. Notwithstanding the lack of security and the continuous destruction of Palestinian social and economic infrastructure, the Forum asserted that it was both possible and essential to take action to strengthen the international and Arab-Palestinian partnership, in order to restart an unimpeded socio-economic development process.

147. The participants expressed their complete solidarity with the Palestinian people and reaffirmed their determination to intensify and coordinate their endeavours, with the following intentions:

(a) Upholding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people established by international conventions, norms and resolutions, including the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State, to exercise its right to development, and to have sovereignty over its resources, using them in accordance with its own interests and priorities;

(b) Implementing the relevant international resolutions and continuing the efforts and initiatives of the international community aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

(c) Linking relief efforts with comprehensive development, thereby ensuring that those efforts contributed to building Palestinian capacities and to helping the Palestinian people to deal with the economic and social impact of the occupation;

(d) Providing various forms of international and Arab support for rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory, in accordance with the priorities of the Palestinian vision, through the following five means:

- (i) The continuation and strengthening of Arab government mechanisms for the provision of financial support to the Palestinian people and the activation of their role in building a genuine and unimpeded Arab-international partnership;
- (ii) The enhancement of support by Governments and international organizations for the process of rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory;
- (iii) The establishment of Arab-international partnership with the Palestinian private sector with a view to supporting production, marketing of products and investment;
- (iv) The mobilization and coordination of partnerships between international and Arab non-governmental organizations in the provision of relief and sustainable human development;
- (v) The establishment of more dependable channels and links enabling the Palestinian diaspora to participate in the process of rehabilitation and development in the occupied Palestinian territory.

148. The participants thanked the Government of Lebanon for hosting the Forum and for providing all the facilities necessary for its success. Similarly, they expressed their appreciation of the efforts exerted by ESCWA, the Palestinian Authority and the League of Arab States in the preparations for, and successful convening of, the event.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

149. The participants adopted the following recommendations:

1. All parties are called upon to support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to development.
2. The Arab and international communities are called upon to give urgent priority to social and economic development issues in the occupied Palestinian territory, despite the continuing Israeli occupation, hostilities and conflict, to link aid programmes and emergency assistance to Palestinian development strategies, and to formulate development aid

programmes and emergency assistance projects based on the Palestinian development vision, needs, priorities and plans.

3. Efforts should be concentrated to support the Palestinian education system, from elementary to higher education, in order to develop human resources capable of coping with the challenges of liberation and those of economic and social development, so that the Palestinian economy can be placed on the path of sustainable development after independence.
4. Socio-economic development for the Palestinian people should be considered as a continuous process guided by Palestinian concerns and priorities and should enjoy the support of international and Arab partnerships.
5. All parties concerned are urged to intensify efforts to reintegrate the Palestinian economy into the surrounding Arab environment, including providing the Palestinian people with all benefits from the League of Arab States resolutions that grant preferential treatment to Palestinian products in Arab markets and exemption from obstructive customs duties and taxes and any other restrictions, in addition to facilitating the entry of Palestinian businessmen to Arab States.
6. The reform plan, adopted on 27 September 2004 by the Palestinian Council of Ministers and the Palestinian Legislative Council in order to enhance the performance of government institutions as well as the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to formulate a Palestinian socio-economic development vision and to build effective partnerships between the Authority, the private sector and civil society institutions, is a welcome initiative.
7. Governmental and non-governmental organizations at both the regional and international levels are called upon to support the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs in the implementation of its plan of work, as an expression of their commitment to the issue of the advancement of Palestinian women.
8. As the legally elected Palestinian entity recognized by the Arab and international communities, the Palestinian Authority is commended for its role in supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in confronting the challenges resulting from occupation.
9. Training of Palestinian media professionals is required to address socio-economic development challenges and to relate these challenges to the media.

10. Concerned Arab parties are called upon to invest in the media, particularly Palestinian media, to ensure the fulfilment of their role in promoting Arab-Palestinian socio-economic partnerships as well as propagating accurate information on the plight of the Palestinian people wherever necessary.
11. The international community is called upon to request Israel to compensate the Palestinian people for the economic and human losses that the latter have been sustaining as a result of Israeli policies and practices, and to identify and evaluate these increasing losses so that their magnitude can be clearly estimated and mechanisms for compensation formulated.
12. The international community is called upon to prevent Israeli aggression and to exert pressure on Israel to halt policies, practices and procedures that obstruct development in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular:
 - (a) The depletion of human and natural resources through the confiscation of land, water and other resources; continued construction and expansion of settlements and bypass roads; construction of the barrier; and driving out the Palestinian skilled labour force;
 - (b) The depletion of economic and social capital through the systematic destruction of the infrastructure, amenities, public health and education facilities, the productive base of the agricultural and industrial sectors, and other natural resources;
 - (c) The obstruction of trade through blockades, barriers and administrative measures that hinder domestic and foreign trade, in particular with Arab partners, and that constitute a breach of the Paris Protocol of 1994;
 - (d) The arbitrary and systematic seizure of Palestinian public revenues for long periods, which constitutes a violation of the Paris Protocol, in particular the undeclared seizure of value added tax, sales and customs tax revenues, and the illegal confiscation of part of these revenues.
13. All concerned parties are called upon to strengthen official Arab, bilateral and multilateral civil partnerships at all levels, including Governments, funds and organizations as well as private sector and civil society institutions, with the aim of supporting Palestinian development efforts, in addition to coordinating and integrating Arab support with international aid frameworks in order to help Palestinians to overcome the social and economic impact of the occupation, consolidate the basic components of

independence and address future challenges through the following measures:

- (a) Welcoming the resolutions of the Meeting of Arab Economic Organizations and Funds and other Arab action institutions, held in Cairo on 7 and 8 September 2004, which were adopted by the Arab ministerial meeting and disseminated as part of the documents submitted at the Forum;
- (b) Emphasizing the importance of established Arab support mechanisms and their continued response to the requirements of linking aid to development and to Palestinian development needs and priorities;
- (c) Strengthening partnerships between the Palestinian, Arab and international private sector institutions in order to support Palestinian production sectors through the following:
 - (i) Encouraging investments and establishing joint economic projects in the occupied Palestinian territory;
 - (ii) Supporting the Palestinian and joint Palestinian-Arab private sector projects, particularly through establishing funds allocated to financing small and medium-sized enterprises in the occupied Palestinian territory, informing Palestinians about them and facilitating the access of Palestinians to such funds;
 - (iii) Facilitating the transfer of expertise to the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular through the technical cooperation programmes of the Islamic Development Bank and the United Nations specialized bodies, and formulating procedures and exemptions necessary to enable Palestinians to benefit from such human capacity-building programmes;
 - (iv) Focusing on technical support programmes and procedures that enhance Palestinian human resources capacity and contribute to improving the quality and competitiveness of Palestinian goods and services;
 - (v) Providing necessary information to Palestinian businessmen on methods of benefiting from the Palestinian export insurance programmes provided by the Islamic Development Bank, the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation and other Arab and international programmes;

- (vi) Invigorating the role of Arab private sector institutions in facilitating the access of Palestinian products to Arab markets through organizing exhibitions of Palestinian products and setting up centres for the promotion of Palestinian trade in Arab markets;
 - (vii) Seeking to develop permanent networks of communication and information exchange between Palestinian and Arab private sector institutions and encouraging joint initiatives in this area;
- (d) Strengthening the participation of international, Arab and Palestinian civil society institutions in sustainable development and emergency aid efforts through the following:
- (i) Enhancing cooperation in order to invigorate the participation of Palestinian and Arab institutions in decision-making and the formulation of local, regional and global policies;
 - (ii) Enhancing cooperation with regard to the establishment of alliances, capacity-building and information exchange, in particular through twinning institutions and organizations and implementing joint training programmes for the exchange of expertise between Arab and Palestinian institutions, including students, university professors, doctors and other specialists;
 - (iii) Establishing a permanent mechanism that would allow Arab and Palestinian civil society institutions to hold regular meetings and enable them to better coordinate their efforts and to continue their consultations after the Forum;
 - (iv) Strengthening the role of local authorities as essential partners in linking aid efforts with development in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular in the provision of water, health services, education and roads, through measures including the increasing of financial support to the Palestinian Authority Municipalities Fund, the twinning of municipalities, and the support of the UN-HABITAT Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People;
- (e) Formulation of relations and channels enabling Palestinians in the diaspora to support their nationals in the occupied territory, through the following:
- (i) Strengthening consultations between diaspora Palestinians and their peers in the occupied territory with regard to the

development vision, priorities and strategies in the occupied Palestinian territory;

- (ii) Diversifying mechanisms and methods whereby diaspora communities can contribute to human development efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory to include financial contributions, investment, capacity-building, provision of expertise, and facilitation of the access of Palestinian goods to Arab and global markets;
- (iii) Promoting the use of knowledge transfer programmes, such as TOKTEN and the Al-Aqsa Fund;
- (iv) Establishing new partnership programmes and plans for the construction of a database on Palestinian experts in the diaspora, in cooperation with specialized Palestinian, Arab and international organizations including the International Organization for Migration.

14. It should be noted that this Forum is considered to be a unique initiative. The Forum has witnessed the voluntary participation of global, Arab, regional and national organizations to mobilize resources and exchange experiences in order to support a Palestinian development strategy, characterized by national sovereignty and formulated by direct cooperation between the Palestinian National Authority, civil society institutions and other development partners from the private sector.
15. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of maintaining the Forum as a permanent consultative process through the establishment of a joint specialized committee, which is to be established from the Advisory Group, to follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the Forum. ESCWA would call for the first meeting of the follow-up committee to deliberate on the measures for its activation, identify the mechanisms for follow-up and encourage the initiatives announced at the meeting, with the possibility of reconvening the Forum at another suitable time.
16. Participants expressed appreciation of the efforts of the organizers and their partners in organizing and hosting the Forum, in particular ESCWA, the League of Arab States, the Palestinian National Authority and other members of the Advisory Group.

Annex I

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Monday, 11 October 2004

- 6 - 7.30 p.m. *Opening session*
- Ms. Mervat Tallawy (Forum Chair), Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
 - H.E. Ambassador Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary General on Palestinian Affairs, League of Arab States
 - H.E. Mr. Nabil Shaath, Minister of Foreign Relations, Palestinian Authority
 - H.E. Mr. Asaad Diab, Minister of Social Affairs, Republic of Lebanon
- 7.30 p.m. *Reception*

Tuesday, 12 October 2004

- 9 - 10 a.m. *Arrival and registration*
- 10 - 10.30 a.m. *Statements of representatives of Arab states*
- H.E. Mr. Hammoudah Hamdi, Minister of Foreign Investment and International Cooperation, Tunisia
 - H.E. Ms. Dawlat Hassan, Deputy Foreign Secretary, Egypt
 - H.E. Mr. Yousef Al-Bassam, Deputy Chairman of the Saudi Fund for Development, Saudi Arabia
- 10.30 - 11.45 a.m. *First session: The Impact of Occupation and the Palestinian Development Vision*
- Moderators: - H.E. Mr. Hammoudah Hamdi, Minister of Foreign Investment and International Cooperation, Tunisia
- Mr. Hassan Charif, Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary on Emerging Issues, ESCWA

Tuesday, 12 October 2004 (continued)

- (a) Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation (Note by the Secretary-General)
Mr. Hassan Charif, Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary on Emerging Issues, ESCWA;
- (b) "The inter-Palestinian consultation process"
Mr. Mohamed Ghudeyah, Director General, Ministry of Planning, Palestinian Authority;
- (c) "The coordinated Palestinian development vision"
H.E. Mr. Ghassan Al-Khatib, Minister of Labour and Acting Minister of Planning, Palestinian Authority;
- (d) "Linking relief to development"
Mr. Fadle Naqib, Adviser to the Ministry of Planning of the Palestinian Authority.

11.45 a.m. - Noon *Break*

Noon - 2.00 p.m. *Second session: The Prospects for Development Amidst Uncertainties*

Moderators: - Mr. Mansour Ben Fetn, Al-Aqsa Fund/Islamic Development Bank
- Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, United Nations Development Programme, Lebanon

- Noon - 1.15 p.m.
- (a) "The challenges of Palestinian development in the emerging regional and international environment"
Mr. George Abed, Special Adviser to the Managing Director, International Monetary Fund;
 - (b) "Development under crisis conditions"
Mr. Atef Kubursi, Professor of Economics, McMaster University, Canada;
 - (c) "Institution-building and reform in a war-torn economy: the case of Palestine"
Mr. Mushtak Khan, Professor of Economics, University of London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

Tuesday, 12 October 2004 (continued)

1.15 - 2.00 p.m. (d) "The impact of physical separation on socio-economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory"
Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, Director, Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute, Palestine.

2.00 - 3.30 p.m. *Lunch break*

3.30 - 6 p.m. *Parallel technical workshops: Palestinian needs and priorities*

Workshop A: Social aspects

Moderators: - Mr. Jawad Naji, Ministry of National Economy, Palestinian Authority
- Mr. Khaled Doudine, International Labour Organization, Palestine

Paper: "Social needs and priorities"
Mr. Mohsen Abu Ramadan, Palestinian NGOs Network

Discussants: Mr. Victor Billeh, Director, UNESCO, Beirut
Mr. Hasan Abdel Ati, Coordinator, National Civic Forum, Sudan

Workshop B: Economic aspects

Moderators: - Mr. Mazen Sinnokrot, Chairman, Private Sector Coordination Council, Palestine
- Ms. Hanna Daoudi, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Paper: "Economic needs and priorities"
Mr. Samir Abdullah, Director, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute

Discussants: Mr. Atef Kubursi
Mr. Radwan Shaaban, the World Bank

Workshop C: Infrastructure

Moderators: - H.E. Mr. Azzam El-Ahmad, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Palestinian Authority

Tuesday, 12 October 2004 (continued)

- Ms. Anhar Hegazi, Director, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, ESCWA
- Paper: "Infrastructure needs and priorities"
Mr. Sameer Abu-Eisheh, Director of Planning and Development, and Associate Professor of Civil Engineering, An-Najah National University
- Discussant: Mr. Abdel Monem Ariss, Mayor, Municipality of Beirut

Wednesday, 13 October 2004

10 a.m. - Noon

Third session: Enhancing Arab-Palestinian Partnership

- Moderators: - H.E. Ambassador Said Kamal, League of Arab States
- Ms. Oumnia Taha, League of Arab States
 - (a) Arab assistance: League of Arab States
Ms. Ghania Malhis, Director, Construction and Development
 - (b) Arab assistance: Al-Aqsa Fund
Mr. Mansour Ben Fetn, Coordinator
 - (c) Gulf Cooperation Council
Mr. Saleh Abdel Rahman Manea, Representative of the Secretary-General
 - (d) Civil society
Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Director, Arab NGOs Network for Development
Mr. Izzat Abdelhadi, Palestinian NGOs Network
 - (e) The private sector
Mr. Samir Huleileh, Chairman, Palestinian Trade Centre
 - (f) The Palestinian diaspora
Mr. As'ad Abdul-Rahman, Executive Chairman, Palestine International Institute

Wednesday, 13 October 2004 (continued)

Noon - 1.30 p.m. *Fourth session: Enhancing International-Palestinian Partnership*

Moderators: - Mr. Issam Yousef, Secretary General, *I'tilaf Al-Khair*

- Mr. Abdallah Abbas, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

- (a) United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people
Mr. Alex Costi, Head of Coordination, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator
- (b) Programme of assistance to the Palestinian people
Mr. Mounir Kleibo, Head of Governance, United Nations Development Programme/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
- (c) Donors assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory
Mr. Sebastien Dessus, Senior Country Economist for the West Bank and Gaza, the World Bank
- (d) International support: roles and responsibilities
Senator Pierre Galand, Chairman, Belgo-Palestinian Association
- (e) Role of the European civil societies
Ms. Greta Duisenberg, Chair, Stop the Occupation, Netherlands

1.30 - 3.00 p.m. *Lunch break*

3.00 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. *Parallel technical workshops: Cross-cutting issues*

Workshop A: The Palestinian diaspora

Moderators: - Mr. Ismail Zabri, Director, Welfare Association
- Mr. Amin Makki Medani, Representative, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Lebanon

Wednesday, 13 October 2004 (continued)

Papers: "The role of the Palestinian diaspora in the development process in the occupied Palestinian territory"
Mr. Nabil Hajjar, Professor, University of Lille, France

"The TOKTEN experience"
Mr. Mounir Kleibo, UNDP/PAPP

Discussants: Mr. Essam Youssef, Secretary General, *I'tilaf Al-Khair*

Mr. Mahmoud Issa, Denmark

Workshop B: Private sector partnering for a promising Palestine

Moderators: - Ms. Ghania Malhis, League of Arab States
- Mr. Mahmoud Khaled Ezzedine, Al Aqsa Fund

Paper: "Palestinian private sector potentials for partnership"
Mr. Samir Huleileh, Chairman, Palestinian Trade Centre

Roundtable discussion

Workshop C: Women's participation

Moderators: - H.E. Ms. Zahira Kamal, Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestinian Authority
- Ms. Fatme Sbaity, Director, Centre for Women, ESCWA

Paper: "Palestinian women and priorities for development: a vision for participation"
Ms. Hadil Qazzaz, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Palestinian Authority

Discussants: Ms. Niemat Kuku, Researcher, Gender Centre for Research and Training, Sudan

Ms. Salwa Seniora Baasiri, Secretary General, National Committee of UNESCO

Mr. Kamal Hamdan, Head of Economic Division, Consultation & Research Institute

Wednesday, 13 October 2004 (continued)

3.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m. *Partnership Initiatives: Medical Education and Training: a Qatar Red Crescent Partnership Initiative (Working group I)*

Moderator Dr. Mohamed Ghanem Al Ali, Secretary-General, Qatar Red Crescent

Speakers

- Dr. Wael Issa, Ministry of Health, Palestine
- Dr. Haitham Al-Hassan, Makassed's Hospital, Jerusalem
- Dr. Mohamed El-Tawil, Qatar Red Crescent
- Dr. Khaled Diab, Qatar Red Crescent

4.30 - 6 p.m. *Roundtable discussion: The role of the media in promoting socio-economic development partnership*

Moderators:

- Mr. Rami Khouri, Executive Editor, *Daily Star*
- Ms. Khawla Mattar, International Labour Organization

Thursday, 14 October 2004

10 - 11.30 a.m. **Working group sessions: Partnership initiatives**

Working group II: Civil society partnership

Moderators:

- Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad, Director, ANND
- Mr. El Mansour Ben Fetn, Coordinator, Al-Aqsa Fund

Working group III: Agricultural and agro-business partnership

Moderators:

- Mr. Antoine Mansour, Coordinator, Task Force on Palestine (ESCWA)
- Mr. Issam Yousef, Secretary General, *I'tilaf Al-Khair*

Working group IV: Twinning of municipalities

Moderators:

- Mr. Abdallah Abbas (UN-HABITAT)
- Mr. Riyadh Tappuni, ESCWA

Thursday, 14 October 2004 (continued)

Working group V: Partnership in education

Moderator: - Mr. Victor Billeh, Director, UNESCO office,
Lebanon

11.30 - Noon **“This is Palestine Photography”, Presentation by Mr.
George Azar**

Noon - 1.30 p.m. **Closing session**

Closing statements by:

Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Executive Secretary, ESCWA
H.E. Ambassador Said Kamal, League of Arab States
H.E. Ghassan Al-Khatib, Palestinian Authority

Annex II

THE OTHER SIDE OF PALESTINE: CULTURAL AND SIDE EVENTS

(a) ***The Ramallah Film Festival***

Date: 4-8 October 2004, screenings from 6 - 8 p.m.

Venue: The American University of Beirut, Hamra (Bathich Hall)

Co-organizers: The Cinema Club at the American University of Beirut and the Ramallah Film Institute

(b) ***Plastic Arts Exhibition: "Colours of Palestine"***

Date: 9-15 October 2004, open from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Venue: The Glass Hall, Ministry of Tourism, Hamra Street, Hamra

Co-organizer: The General Union of Palestinian Plastic Artists

(c) ***Folklore Evening***

Date: 13 October 2004 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Venue: Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Centre

Performers: Bara'em el-Funoun, Palestinian folkdance group from Ramallah

Somoud Group for Popular Arts, Palestinians from refugee camps in Lebanon

Children of Dar Al Aytam Al Islamyah (Lebanese children)

Co-organizer: National Institute for Social Care and Vocational Training (Beit Atfal Assomoud)

(d) ***Book Fair: "Palestine in Books"***

Date: 11-15 October 2004

Venue: Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden, Riad El-Solh Square*

Co-organizer: Ibn Rushd Publishing House

(e) ***Crafts Exhibition: "Palestine as Crafts"***

Date: 11-15 October 2004

Venue: Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden, Riad El-Solh Square*

Co-organizers: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Palestinian Revival Heritage Committee

* The Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden is located in front of the United Nations House. Exhibits on display in the garden are open to the public throughout the day and also in the evening.

(f) ***Photo Exhibition: "Palestine: Daily Life"***

Date: 11-15 October 2004

Venue: Gibran Khalil Gibran Garden, Riad El-Solh Square*

Co-organizer: Union of Arab Photographers

(g) ***Children's Paintings Exhibition: "Construction versus Destruction"***

Date: 11-15 October 2004

Venue: ESCWA, United Nations House

Co-organizer: Ibda' Cultural Centre, Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Palestine