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General segment

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 42nd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 27 July 2006, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. ČEKUOLIS (Lithuania)  
(Vice-President)

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(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

In the absence of Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS  
CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS (continued)

- (b) REVIEW AND COORDINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES  
FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010 (A/61/82-E/2006/74 and Corr.1, E/2006/L.29)

Draft resolution E/2006/L.29: Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least  
Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

The PRESIDENT, submitting the draft resolution, said that it had no programme  
budget implications and thanked the facilitator for bringing the negotiations to a successful  
conclusion.

Ms. HOUNGBEDJI (Benin) read out editorial corrections that had been agreed upon  
during informal consultations.

Draft resolution E/2006/L.29, as revised, was adopted.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

- (g) TOBACCO OR HEALTH

Draft resolution E/2006/L.10/Rev.1: Smoke-free United Nations premises

The PRESIDENT announced that the draft resolution had no programme budget  
implications and that the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and the United Republic  
of Tanzania had joined the list of sponsors.

Draft resolution E/2006/L.10/Rev.1 was adopted.

Draft decision E/2006/L.32: Report of the Secretary-General on the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task  
Force on Tobacco Control

The PRESIDENT announced that the draft resolution had no programme budget  
implications.

Draft decision E/2006/L.32 was adopted.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM, AND THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN (continued)

Draft resolution E/2006/L.17/Rev.1: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Mr. ATTAR (Saudi Arabia) said that consultations on the draft resolution had resulted in the revised version of the text now before the Council. It was to be hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

The PRESIDENT announced that Venezuela had joined the list of sponsors.

Mr. MILLER (United States of America) requested a roll-call vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. HIMANEN (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova, said that in view of the need for a coordinated international response to the worsening humanitarian, economic and financial situation in the West Bank and Gaza, the European Union had established a temporary international mechanism to channel assistance directly to the Palestinian people. In order to achieve an immediate impact, the mechanism would focus on essential supplies and running costs for social services and health, supply of utilities, including fuel, and social allowances. Other partners should consider making early and substantial contributions to the international mechanism.

The European Union was the biggest aid donor to the Palestinian territories, spending, in an average year, around 250 million euros in the West Bank and Gaza. In 2006, it had disbursed funds much faster than usual in response to the worsening conditions on the ground and was doing the utmost to help ensure the continuation of essential public services. Recently, the provision of a further 50 million euros in humanitarian aid had been approved. Areas to be

covered included food delivery, health care, water and sanitation and protection activities. One of the most effective means of resolving the current funding crisis would be the urgent resumption of Israeli transfers of withheld Palestinian tax and customs revenues.

The European Union remained deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation between Israel and the Palestinian authorities and deplored the consequent loss of civilian life. It called on both parties urgently to demonstrate an active commitment to the search for a negotiated solution and reiterated its conviction that only a political process of negotiation could bring lasting peace to the region and durably improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

Mr. MNATSAKANIAN (Armenia) said his country was deeply concerned about the escalating violence in the Middle East, which had claimed a considerable number of innocent lives and resulted in the destruction of vital infrastructure and utilities. The dire economic and social conditions of the Palestinian population were degenerating into a humanitarian disaster. Armenia condemned all violence and denounced the use of disproportionate force, which effectively resulted in the collective punishment of civilians and the destruction of vital infrastructure. It called on all parties urgently to reach an unconditional ceasefire on all fronts, a major condition for saving human lives and for effective humanitarian relief operations. The transfer of funds to the Palestinian Authority was also a matter of urgency. Armenia supported the draft resolution and called for its effective implementation.

Mr. VARELA QUIRÚS (Costa Rica) said Israel's recent actions against Lebanon and, even earlier, against Palestine, in response to the kidnapping of an Israeli army officer, were disproportionate to the act that had prompted them. They amounted to collective punishment, in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and undermined agreements on peace and security in the region and worldwide.

His country condemned the use of force from whatever source: armed groups like Hamas or Hizbullah that brandished the banner of terrorism, or the armed forces of Israel. As a firm believer in peaceful solution to conflict through dialogue and disarmament, his country appealed to all parties for an immediate ceasefire and for respect for the right of all peoples - Israeli,

Palestinian and Lebanese - to life, freedom, security and dignity. A ceasefire would facilitate the search for a diplomatic solution and avert further destruction, bloodshed and suffering in the region.

The Costa Rican Government deplored the impact of Israeli army actions against Lebanon on the security of nearly 300 Costa Rican families that had taken up residence there and were now being evacuated. Having committed itself to disarmament, thus placing compliance with international law above its own security needs, Costa Rica was concerned over the slow pace of action by the international community to resolve the crisis. Weapons must fall silent so that the voice of reason might prevail.

For those reasons, his country would vote in favour of the draft resolution and reaffirmed its desire for a rapid return to stability in the region and an effort to find a just, lasting and definitive solution, enabling all to live within secure and recognized borders.

The vote on draft resolution E/2006/L.17/Rev.1 was taken by roll-call.

Benin, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Brazil, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, France, Germany, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania.

Against: Australia, Canada, United States of America.

Abstaining: Czech Republic, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Draft resolution E/2007/L.26 was adopted by 45 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.

Mr. MILLER (United States of America) said his country was concerned about the economic and social hardships facing the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, the draft resolution failed to address the fundamental causes of those hardships, including the actions of the Hamas-led Government of the Palestinian Authority. It reflected neither the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nor the need for both parties to take steps to create peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. It expressed a distorted, one-sided view of the situation in the Middle East, condemning Israeli actions while ignoring Palestinian actions - or inactions. The Council should in future focus its efforts on working effectively and constructively towards practical steps to improve the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people and should avoid politicized resolutions and debates that did nothing to encourage greater economic stability or prosperity.

Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) said the dramatic course of events in the Middle East, including Gaza - the heightened confrontations and continuing bloodshed - were a cause for the deepest concern. Every day brought news of civilian victims and the destruction of homes, bridges and roads. The population was on the verge of a full-fledged humanitarian disaster. The primary task at present was to effect an immediate ceasefire and stop the bloodshed. That would permit the launching of diplomatic and political initiatives to end the conflict and resolve urgent issues such as improving the humanitarian situation, halting terrorist attacks and launching serious negotiations on mutual security and the resolution of economic and social problems. In view of the fact that all those concerns had been to a large degree reflected in the draft resolution, his delegation had supported it.

Mr. ENDO (Japan) said his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution in view of the importance of improving the deteriorating living conditions of people in the Palestinian territories. A two-State solution was the only way to achieve sustainable peace in the Middle East. Japan was concerned about the humanitarian crisis experienced by the Palestinian people and had recently announced an initiative, through a contribution of about US\$ 30 million, to provide extensive assistance in strengthening the presidential office and improving medical care, public health and job creation. It would continue to be positively engaged, politically and economically, in order to advance the peace process. It had appreciated the amendments made to make the draft resolution more balanced and had voted in favour in that context, but considered it inappropriate for the Council to deliberate on highly political issues.

Mr. MALHOTRA (India) said his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution as it was seriously concerned by the hardships and suffering of the Palestinian people as a result of the evolving situation in Gaza and the West Bank, a situation exacerbated by the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure, including roads, bridges and power plants. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had concluded that nearly half the population in the Gaza Strip was currently without electricity, something that was also affecting the provision of water. Responding to a request from the Palestinian authorities and in keeping with India's traditional policy of sympathy and support for the people of Palestine, his Government had decided to give immediate humanitarian assistance worth 100 million rupees in order to alleviate the difficult situation. That was in addition to the approximately 700 million rupees of assistance pledged in 2005. The assistance would be primarily in the form of life-saving drugs and medical supplies requested by the Palestinian authorities. India called upon all parties concerned to eschew violence, de-escalate the situation and return to the path of negotiations. Lasting peace and security in the region, which was in the interest not only of countries there but also throughout the world, could be achieved only through the resumption of dialogue, not through the use of force.

Mr. CORMIER (Canada) said that while Canada was deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, it was disappointed with the draft resolution, which did not reflect in any way the responsibilities and obligations of the Palestinian Authority to take all necessary measures to secure the economic and social well-being of its people. Such measures included renouncing violence, recognizing the right of Israel to exist and accepting all previous agreements. It also did not take into account the negative impact of the violence perpetrated by Hamas. It was not acceptable for the United Nations to be used as grounds for continued one-sided criticism of Israel. For resolutions to be relevant and useful, it was imperative that they reflect the commensurate role and responsibilities of all parties.

Mr. KHELIF (Observer for Algeria) said that the adoption of the draft resolution, which would have been preferable by consensus, was nevertheless welcome. He drew attention to the omission of his country's name from the list of sponsors and requested that it be corrected.

Mr. KHANE (Secretary of the Council) acknowledged that there had been a technical error and assured the observer for Algeria that it would be corrected.



Mr. ANNAN (Syrian Arab Republic) saluted the collective efforts and flexibility shown by all who had worked to arrive at a consensus document. Just before coming to the meeting, he had witnessed one of the most shocking scenes of his life: a crèche in the Gaza Strip targeted by Israeli aircraft. Fifteen children had been killed, leaving their parents in terror and shock. Having simply described that scene, he would leave others to conclude who was a terrorist and who was not. The adoption of the draft resolution by an overwhelming majority of countries was an indication of their awareness that occupation had inhumane, degrading and adverse effects. It was also indicative of their commitment to the rule of law, objectivity and an effective United Nations, rather than to a paralyzed, fangless organization, as some wished it to be. The adoption of the draft resolution also projected the international community's commitment to alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people under an occupation that, he stressed, had gone on for 40 years.

Mr. ABU-KOASH (Observer for Palestine) said the outcome of the voting was a victory, not for Palestine and its supporters, but for common sense and reason. The Palestinians were the victims of aggression: people were bleeding and children being killed, not just in Palestine but also in Lebanon. All the Palestinians wanted was for reason to prevail. They accordingly appealed for an end to the killing and bloodshed, with immediate effect. The Israeli aggression, occupation and operation of a military machine could only instil hatred and the seeds of conflict. The Palestinians extended their hands to Israel: to live in peace and sit together at the negotiation table, to exchange words of reason instead of the bullets and shells falling on Palestine and Lebanon. He commended the sponsors of the draft resolution for their leadership and unsparing efforts and the European Union for its wisdom, hard work and cooperation. As for the countries that had voted against the draft resolution, he advised them to look closely: they would then see that they were walking out of step with the rest of the world.

The PRESIDENT said that he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people, contained in document A/61/67-E/2006/13.

It was so decided.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its third session, contained in document E/2006/80.

Mr. HIZAN (United Arab Emirates), referring to the draft resolution in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women entitled “Status of and assistance to Palestinian women”, said that had his delegation been present during the voting, it would have voted in favour of the text.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.