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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 332nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 April 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Diallo (Senegal)

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

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

2. **The Chair**, summarizing some of the activities and developments that had taken place since the Committee's previous meeting, said that, on 22 March, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Oscar Fernández-Taranco, had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine.

3. On 29 and 30 March, the Committee had convened in Montevideo the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, followed by the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, on 31 March 2011.

4. On 4 April, the Jerusalem District Planning and Construction Committee had approved the construction of 942 new housing units in the Gilo settlement in East Jerusalem.

5. On 7 April, a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip had hit a school bus in southern Israel, seriously wounding a 16-year-old boy. Israel had subsequently carried out retaliatory attacks in the Gaza Strip, killing some 20 Palestinian militants and civilians.

6. At the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, held in Brussels on 13 April, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations had reported that the Palestinian Authority had crossed the threshold for a functioning State with respect to institution-building. However, many donors had noted that lack of political progress had left the negotiating track out of sync with the advanced state-building efforts of the Palestinian Authority. At that same meeting, the European Union and the Palestinian Authority had signed an agreement whereby all agricultural products and fish and fishery products originating in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would be given duty-free access to the European Union market.

7. On 12 March, shortly following the killing of five Israelis in the Itamar settlement, the Israeli

Government had approved the construction of 500 houses in the West Bank.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

8. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that Israel had not ceased building illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and its offensive against the Palestinian people in East Jerusalem, including the expulsion of Palestinian residents, the demolition of homes and excavation at holy sites, continued unabated. Israeli occupation forces had also renewed full-scale military activity in the Gaza Strip by mounting a four-day assault against the territory, killing and injuring scores of civilians.

9. Those Israeli activities underscored the need of the Palestinian people for international protection, because Israel, the occupying Power, was not fulfilling its obligations under the Geneva Conventions. They also increased the urgency of the need to end Israel's siege of the Gaza Strip. The international community had an obligation to do whatever it could to compel Israel to comply with relevant resolutions and agreements, including Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. Recalling that the Security Council would devote its forthcoming meeting to the question of Palestine, he urged all Committee members to participate in the debate and, in that connection, called on them to emphasize the illegality of Israel's actions, the need to protect Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and the urgency of ending the siege of the Gaza Strip.

10. With the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly fast approaching, his delegation would continue its efforts to restart the peace negotiations, with a view to concluding a peace treaty, bringing an end to the occupation and establishing the State of Palestine. Those negotiations must address all permanent-status issues, without exception. Israel's illegal settlements were a major obstacle to achieving peace, and there could be no negotiations as long as settlement-building continued. In that connection, he called on the Quartet to issue a statement setting out the parameters of a resolution to the conflict in line with those set out by the representative of the United Kingdom, speaking also on behalf of France and Germany, at the 6484th meeting of the Security

Council, held on 18 February, namely, cessation of settlement activity; agreement on the borders of the two States on the basis of the 1967 borders, with equivalent land swaps as might be agreed between the parties; negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the capital of both States; and a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee question. Such a call by the Quartet would allow for the resumption of negotiations and the conclusion of a peace treaty by September 2011, as had been called for by the international community.

11. Since 2009, the Palestinian side had been engaged in a State-building programme, which had been endorsed by the international community, designed to build the institutions of the Palestinian Authority and have them ready to govern a State by August 2011. In parallel with that programme, Palestinian officials had made a concerted effort to gain international recognition of the State of Palestine. The number of Member States that had officially recognized Palestine stood at 112, and it was hoped that number would increase to 140, more than two thirds of the Organization's membership, by August. The declaration of an independent Palestinian State would be the natural conclusion of the two-State process that had begun in 1948 with the establishment of Israel.

12. The Palestinian people stood ready to negotiate all permanent-status issues and would honour all their obligations. However, the question of independence was not negotiable. As with all other colonial peoples, it was for the Palestinian people alone to decide when it would exercise its right to self-determination, including the right to declare its independence and establish its own State. Although he hoped that the push for statehood would help break the deadlock, he said that the Palestinians could no longer accept that Israel should dictate their future.

13. As the Palestinian people embarked on the final leg of its quest for freedom, it was vital that Committee members should continue to play an active role in persuading Member States to recognize the State of Palestine. Recalling the international community's responsibility to ensure the full implementation of the two-State solution, he called on all Member States to support the efforts of the Palestinian people to achieve statehood and raise the flag of Palestine at the United Nations in September 2011.

Report of the Chair on the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace and the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 29 to 31 March 2011

14. **The Chair** said that the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, under the theme "The urgency of realizing a two-State solution", had been held in Montevideo on 29 to 30 March. That meeting had been followed, on 31 March, by the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, also in Montevideo. Both events had been well attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities based in the region, civil society organizations and the media, as well as a delegation from the Committee.

15. The United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace had been opened by Mr. Luis Almagro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, who had emphasized the support of the Latin American States for the peace process. In the keynote presentation, Mr. Saeb Erekat, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, had focused on recent developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He had also expressed the Palestinian people's thanks to the Latin American and Caribbean countries that had recently recognized the State of Palestine.

16. The plenary sessions had focused on several issues, including, inter alia, international efforts aimed at resuming direct peace negotiations, the support of the Latin American and Caribbean countries for a just solution to the question of Palestine and the role of non-governmental actors in the region.

17. The participants had reaffirmed that there was no alternative to the two-State solution. The current dramatic developments in the Middle East and North Africa had increased the need to redouble efforts to break the deadlock between Israelis and Palestinians. The participants had also welcomed the recent decisions of several countries of the region to recognize the State of Palestine. In that connection, on 29 March, the participants had witnessed the signing of a protocol establishing diplomatic relation between Uruguay and the State of Palestine.

18. Turning to the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, he said that the Committee's delegation had welcomed the participation of representatives of the Arab and Jewish communities of the region, who had pledged their support for a two-State solution.

19. The two Meetings had enabled the Committee to explore ways of strengthening the international community's engagement in support of a two-State solution, including within the United Nations. The Committee and its partners had agreed on the importance of upholding the principles of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. The Meetings had also offered an opportunity to raise the awareness of various regional interlocutors of the Committee's mandate and activities.

20. In addition to participating in the Meetings, the Committee's representatives had also held consultations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay and a group of Uruguayan members of Parliament, led by the Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee of the Senate and the Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. On its way back to New York, the delegation had stopped in Buenos Aires, where it had been received by Mr. Alberto D'Alotto, Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina. The delegation and Mr. D'Alotto had exchanged views on the state of the peace process and ways of moving it forward.

21. **Mr. Vidal** (Observer for Uruguay) said that his Government was pleased to have had the opportunity to play a part in supporting the peace process and that it would continue to support the Committee's efforts in that regard.

22. **Mr. Daou** (Mali) said that his Government was pleased at the outcome of the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, in particular the establishment of diplomatic ties between Palestine and Uruguay. Although he had no doubt that the State of Palestine would soon be established, he nonetheless called on Committee members to participate actively in the forthcoming Security Council meeting on the question of Palestine and demonstrate their support for a just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution.

23. *The Committee decided to take note of the Chair's report.*

United Nations Seminar on Mobilizing Assistance to the Palestinian People, Helsinki, 28 and 29 April 2011 (Working Paper No. 3)

23. **The Chair** drew attention to Working Paper No. 3, which contained the provisional programme of the United Nations Seminar on Mobilizing Assistance to the Palestinian People, to be held in Helsinki on 28 and 29 April 2011. The seminar would be organized in cooperation with the Helsinki-based World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University, and the suggested theme was "Mobilizing international efforts in support of the Palestinian Government's State-building programme".

24. The purpose of the proposed Seminar was to review the progress of and garner further support for the Palestinian Authority's programme to end the occupation and establish the State of Palestine. The Seminar would also assess the current socio-economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, discuss the urgency of bringing relief to and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, and consider approaches to advancing the Palestinian State-building programme, including ways of addressing political challenges.

25. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme contained in Working Paper No. 3.

26. *It was so decided.*

Accreditation of civil society organizations to the Committee (Working Paper No. 4)

27. **The Chair** drew attention to Working Paper No. 4, which contained applications for accreditation to the Committee submitted by four non-governmental organizations. After reviewing the applications, the Bureau had concluded that the four organizations fulfilled the criteria for accreditation and had recommended that they should be accredited. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the applications.

28. *The requests for accreditation to the Committee received from Coalition to Stop \$30 Billion to Israel (United States of America), Comisión de Apoyo al Pueblo Palestino — Uruguay (Uruguay), Fundación Bait Al Hikma (Argentina), and The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy — MIFTAH (Occupied Palestinian Territory) were approved.*

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.