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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 25 July 2012, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. De Alba (Vice-President) (Mexico)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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In the absence of Mr. Koterec (Slovakia), Mr. de Alba (Mexico), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations
(A/67/64; E/2012/47 and E/2012/68-A/67/84)

Regional cooperation (*continued*) (E/2012/15 and Add.1 and 2 and E/2012/16-20)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/2012/13-A/67/91)

1. **Mr. Morejón** (Ecuador), speaking as Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization, said that support for Non-Self-Governing Territories was particularly important during the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Introducing the draft resolution entitled Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations (E/2012/L.22), to be submitted by his delegation, the report of the President of the Council on consultations with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (E/2012/47), and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/67/74), he thanked the organizations which had taken steps for the participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories and presented reports in the preceding year on the assistance given to those Territories.

2. The participants in the Pacific Regional Seminar of the Special Committee, held in Quito, Ecuador, from 30 May to 1 June 2012, had discussed socioeconomic questions linked to decolonization and emphasized the importance of providing focused support to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee had approved the Seminar's recommendation that United Nations specialized agencies participate in the Special

Committee's work and provide more assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

3. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, had recognized the Council's key role in the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Such integration was particularly important for Non-Self-Governing Territories given their social, economic and environmental vulnerability.

4. The Council and its subsidiary bodies needed to be focused on sustainable development. The sustainable development challenges facing the Non-Self-Governing Territories could best be met holistically, on a case-by-case basis, with the participation of the interested parties.

5. The Special Committee was ready to cooperate with the Council to support the Non-Self-Governing Territories through the United Nations, bringing them closer to full self-government on the way to decolonization through a coordinated process of sustainable development.

6. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the note by 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 East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (E/2012/13-A/67/91), said that Israeli measures affecting Palestinians were increasingly viewed as systemic rather than ad hoc, with continuing Palestinian deaths (including those of children), injuries and incarcerations. The report of June 2012 entitled "Children in Military Custody", funded by the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, had concluded that certain Israeli practices against detained Palestinian children could amount to torture.

7. Israel was pursuing its policy of demolishing Palestinian homes, in breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In 2011, 42 per cent more structures had been demolished than in 2010. Since Israeli policies made it difficult for Palestinians to obtain building permits, many Palestinian homes lacked permits or were subject to outstanding demolition orders. In June 2012 the Israeli authorities had revealed that they had revoked approximately 250,000 Palestinian residency permits between 1967 and 1994. That policy was

ongoing in East Jerusalem, in violation of international law.

8. Israeli settlements, which were also illegal, were another instance of the policy of altering the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing had stated in the preliminary conclusions drawn from her mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in January and February 2012 that Israeli settlements were “the new frontiers of dispossession of the traditional inhabitants, and the implementation of a strategy of Judaisation and control of the territory”. Around 40 per cent of the West Bank had been seized by Israel for settlements, with settlement activity increasing in 2011, threatening the contiguity of Palestinian territory and the establishment of a viable Palestinian State. The number of attacks by settlers on Palestinians had also increased, leading to deaths and injuries, and there had been extensive damage to property and harassment of children and teachers going to and from school. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had documented cases in which the Israeli army had appeared to support attacks on Palestinians by settlers.

9. Israel had continued construction of the separation wall in the West Bank, in contravention of international law. The wall annexed some of the West Bank’s most fertile land and severed East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Mobility restrictions, including settlement buffer areas, outposts, military closed areas and nature reserves, were systematic in the West Bank, and there were many road obstacles, checkpoints and restricted roads.

10. The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip was a case of collective punishment of a civilian population. Restrictions on the movement of people and the importing of materials, and a ban on exports, remained, despite Israeli measures to ease the blockade in June 2010. Since late 2008, 17 per cent of the land mass of the Gaza strip and 35 per cent of its agricultural land had been inaccessible to Palestinians. In a joint statement issued on 14 June 2012, the fifth anniversary of the blockade, over 50 international organizations had called for it to end.

11. Israel was causing water stress in the West Bank by diverting 83 per cent of the water supply for Israeli use and selling the remainder back to the Palestinians,

meaning that each Palestinian was allocated only a quarter of the water allocated to each Israeli settler. Israel’s over-pumping of groundwater in the Gaza Strip had led to warnings that by 2027 Gaza would have no drinkable water.

12. In December 2011, Israel’s High Court of Justice had issued a judgement enabling the Israeli State and private enterprises to continue using quarries in the West Bank. The dumping of industrial waste from Israeli facilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was polluting land and damaging crops.

13. The economic development of the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been arrested by Israel’s exploitation and de-development policies. Unemployment was high, particularly in Gaza, which was additionally affected by the blockade. Per capita gross domestic product was 35 per cent lower than in 1994, and 80 per cent of Gazans depended on international aid.

14. The level of food insecurity of Palestinians was 27 per cent in 2011, with a threefold demand for mental health services owing to stress disorders in the West Bank. One third of the population of Gaza was living in overcrowded camps, with high rates of depression and anemia among pregnant women. A quarter of the patients assisted through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were children afflicted with bedwetting, a frequent symptom of psychological trauma. The contamination of groundwater was leading to a disproportionate number of cases of methaemoglobinaemia (“blue-baby syndrome”). Stocks of one third of essential medicines were at zero throughout 2011.

15. Israeli settlers and security forces had attacked at least 32 schools. Conditions in schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory did not satisfy the population’s needs.

16. Although the Security Council had declared in its resolution 497 (1981) that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void, the de facto annexation and the discrimination against Syrian Arabs in favour of illegal Israeli settlers continued.

17. Israeli violations against Palestinians and Syrians served neither peace nor confidence. The international community needed to uphold international law and end

the occupation, which was illegal, unsustainable and morally indefensible.

18. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia) said that his delegation supported the statement by the Group of 77 and China. Since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza almost 70 years before, Israel had defied all calls for peace and persisted with its illegal actions, killing civilians and imprisoning thousands of Palestinians. Illegal settlement was ongoing and the numerous road obstacles meant that many Palestinians had been cut off from their livelihood. The blockades had curtailed economic and social progress and worsened the overall situation.

19. Access to emergency humanitarian assistance had been extremely difficult for Palestinians. The Council's deliberations would be meaningless if the international community could not help resolve their problems. His delegation shared the Palestinians' aspirations for freedom and the right to peace and prosperity, fundamental to which was full United Nations membership. Since that membership was consistent with the two-State solution for peace in the Middle East, his delegation appealed to the Member States to support Palestine's membership application. For a long-term solution, however, peace talks needed to be resumed and both parties needed to approach the negotiations positively, with the support of the international community.

20. The implementation of General Assembly resolution 66/118 was important to Palestinian State-building. His Government aligned itself with the international community's efforts to prevent Israeli violations of international law, and was supporting the establishment of a Palestinian State, including through capacity-building programmes for human resources. It had already provided considerable capacity-building assistance and was currently identifying a capacity-building plan together with the Palestinian National Authority.

21. His delegation supported the creation of an independent Palestine based on the 4 June 1967 borders, and commended the State-building efforts of the Palestinian National Authority.

22. **Mr. dos Santos** (Brazil) said that the Council's discussions were particularly appropriate since the Security Council was holding its open debate on the situation in the Middle East that day. The social and economic dimensions of the Israeli occupation were

integral to Palestinian security, and stemmed from Israel's lack of compliance with international law and Security Council resolutions. Development implied the realization of rights in an atmosphere of peace and stability, and was also, conversely, key to sustainable peace. The occupation was the main obstacle to Palestinian economic growth and State-building. Combined with illegal settlements, violence and destruction of Palestinian property by settlers, and Israel's natural resource policies in the occupied territories, it threatened the two-State solution.

23. His delegation remained troubled by the movement restrictions which hindered Palestinian access to livelihoods and basic services, and led to hardships including the unfair distribution of water. It was concerned by the situation in Gaza, where it called for the blockade, which was causing artificially high unemployment, to be lifted, and, pending that measure, for easier movement of persons and goods. The India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum was sponsoring projects in Palestine, and Brazil had contributed US\$7.5 million to UNRWA in 2011 for projects in Gaza.

24. The unsustainable economic situation in Gaza and the West Bank illustrated the risks of political inertia, since persistent hardship and lack of opportunities fuelled radicalism. An end to the occupation was needed not only to bring about lasting peace but also to realize Palestinian economic potential and grant Palestinians a better future.

25. **Ms. Melnikovich** (Belarus) said, referring to the report on the economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region: Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2011-2012, that the Secretariat should work more actively to involve the countries of the region in information-gathering and assessment. The findings in paragraph 37 regarding cause and effect related to the employment situation required further clarification. Moreover, the report contained no recommendations on how to improve the situation in the middle-income countries of the region.

26. Belarus welcomed the references in the report to integration processes, such as the customs union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. The Secretariat should focus on an analysis of the development prospects of such processes. The Commission must make further efforts to reduce the

significant economic disparities that existed among the countries of the region.

27. Activities to streamline or enhance the Commission's work should focus solely on adjusting priorities and improving existing cooperation mechanisms in ways agreed to by all member States. Under no circumstances should there be any changes to the mandate.

28. Heavy reliance on extrabudgetary funds to finance the Commission's technical cooperation projects was cause for concern, as it had the effect of making cooperation unpredictable and unstable. The excessive emphasis on environmental issues indicated a lack of strategic long-term thinking.

29. **Mr. Berdyev** (Russian Federation) said that President Putin had recently stated that the Russian Federation stood ready to engage in close integration in Eurasia. The unified economic space of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan served as a connective link between the mature economies of Europe and the growing economies of Asia.

30. The United Nations regional economic commissions, including the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, could contribute in a tangible way to the regional economy. The Russian Federation would continue its political, expert and financial support to those commissions, including its annual voluntary dues of 1.2 million dollars. It would also continue to foster strengthened collaboration in priority areas such as economic integration, innovative development, energy, commerce, transport and statistics. The Russian Federation attached great importance to the success of the first Asia-Pacific Energy Forum in Vladivostok in May 2013, to be organized jointly with ESCAP. There were plans for strengthened partnerships with the countries of Central Asia. The Russian Federation looked forward to seeing the powers and capacities of ECE and ESCAP grow even stronger.

31. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that, in view of the continued failure of the international community to uphold international law by ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, the relevant United Nations resolutions and reports of the Secretary-General were of particular importance.

32. The Secretary-General's report (document A/67/91-E/2012/13) clearly described the suffering of the Palestinian people. Israel's 45 years of violence against persons, destruction of property and infrastructure, theft of natural resources, environmental pollution and other violations were aimed at destroying the fabric of Palestinian society.

33. The economic losses caused by the occupation were estimated at between 6 and 7 billion dollars annually. In contrast, the occupation was advantageous for Israel, with its incessant confiscation of land and appropriation of water resources, while Palestinian consumers constituted a captive market for Israeli products.

34. In addition, the Palestinians of the territories were subjected to intimidation and humiliation by the occupying Power. Military checkpoints kept workers from their jobs, students from their classes and patients from access to medical care, while Israeli settlers attacked defenseless civilians, destroyed farmland and burned mosques and churches.

35. Yet the people had not lost hope in the possibility of a just and comprehensive peace and the exercise of their right to self-determination. They looked forward to a future of freedom and prosperity in an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital.

36. Accordingly, the members of the Council were urged to adopt draft resolution E/2012/L.21, which was an important contribution to the upholding of international law and the economic and social rights of peoples.

37. **Mr. Jawhara** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the information contained in the ESCWA report was just a small glimpse into the inhumane and immoral practices of the Israeli occupation. The recent massacres committed on 15 May and 5 June 2011 in the town of Quneitra, documented in the Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, were among the latest in the long string of atrocities perpetrated by the Israeli authorities as the international community looked on in silence.

38. The occupying Power continued to bar human rights workers from access to the occupied Syrian Golan in order to prevent them from witnessing those atrocities. Residents of the Syrian Golan were starving

because land that was rightfully theirs was being appropriated by Israeli settlers. Israeli nuclear, chemical and industrial waste was threatening the ecological balance of the entire region, and Israel and its illegal settlers were also destroying archaeological sites. Syrian farmers in the Golan had seen their olive trees uprooted and their apple crops prevented from reaching market, all in a deliberate Israeli attempt to cut them off from their livelihoods.

39. The Israeli occupation was the main obstacle to development in both the occupied Syrian Golan and Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, resolutions adopted by the Council and other bodies condemning the practices of the occupation remained unimplemented because certain influential countries continued to provide Israel with political cover.

40. **Ms. Davidovich** (Observer for Israel) said that her delegation was troubled by ESCWA's biased presentation of the note of the Secretary-General. Refuting all of the misguided allegations against Israel would not be conducive to professional or responsible discourse. While the proper forum for political debate on the Middle East was not the Council but the Security Council, her delegation wished to emphasize that the presentation had failed to mention the ongoing rocket attacks on Israeli civilians from Gaza and the brutal rule of Hamas, which was the cause of the real crisis in Gaza. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was in no position to comment on the matter under discussion while his regime was raping, torturing and murdering its own civilians in order to remain in power. Rather than serving the interests of Palestinians or anyone seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the current discussion merely demonized Israel, delegitimized Israeli democracy and blocked any prospect of peace and reconciliation.

41. **Mr. Mustafizur Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was appalling and deteriorating every day, before the eyes of the international community. Those who were so vocal elsewhere when human rights were flouted had remained subdued, indicating that different rules must apply in the Territory to allow such flagrant violation of international law. Israel's killing of civilians, its destruction of land and property, its use of torture, its blockade, its separation wall and its construction of illegal settlements demonstrated its utter disregard for international law.

42. If settlement activity continued at the current rate, the Occupied Palestinian Territory would soon become a ghetto comparable to those in apartheid South Africa. Israeli settlement per se would render the two-State solution impossible. In the interests of peace, pressure must be put on Israel to stop further settlements, dismantle existing settlements and fall back to the 1967 borders in line with the decisions of the Security Council and General Assembly. Israel's behaviour had been tolerated for too long, and it was time to act resolutely to persuade it to stop all illegal activities and relieve the plight of the Palestinian people.

43. **Mr. Ovalles-Santos** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation condemned Israel's illegal occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and urged the international community to bring an end to the unjust and criminal blockade. The General Assembly had recognized Palestine as a State, and he called on the Council to set an example of how to treat a sovereign people. The situation was a clear breach of international law and of Palestinians' right to access to water, to the conditions for their economic development and to the satisfaction of their needs. Palestine's economic and social development was being violently and illegitimately blocked. Such criminal practices were morally unacceptable and needed to cease.

44. **Mr. Jawhara** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was particularly disingenuous and dishonest for the representative of Israel to bring the ongoing situation in Syria into the discussion. The Syrian Government was defending itself against terrorism instigated by outside forces, some of which, as it happened, were operating in the interests of Israel. Syrian actions were not in any way comparable to the crimes being committed against Palestinian and Syrian citizens by the Israeli occupation. The hypocrisy was further compounded by the fact that the very countries that preached the loudest about freedom and human rights looked on in silence while Israel committed those crimes.

45. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was unfortunate that the representative of Israel clearly did not take the issues under discussion seriously. In the face of near universal international condemnation, the Israeli side was once again trying to portray itself

as the victim. Mere words would not end the occupation, and he urged the international community to demonstrate the will needed to implement the resolutions it had adopted.

Draft resolution entitled "Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations" (E/2012/L.22)

46. **Ms. Lalama** (Ecuador), introducing draft resolution E/2012/L.22 entitled "Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations", said that Indonesia had joined the list of sponsors.

47. **The President** said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2012/15), matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council: Economic Commission for Africa (E/2012/15/Add.1), matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (E/2012/15/Add.2), the economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region: Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2011-2012 (E/2012/16), the overview of economic and social conditions in Africa, 2012 (E/2012/17), the summary of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012 (E/2012/18), Latin America and the Caribbean: economic situation and outlook, 2011-2012 (E/2012/19) and the summary of the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia Region, 2011-2012 (E/2012/20).

48. *It was so decided.*

49. **Ms. Robl** (United States) said that her delegation disassociated itself from the oral decision on paragraph 11 of E/2012/15/Add.2, in which the Council's attention had been drawn to an ESCWA resolution reflecting the Commission's views on Palestinian membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and efforts to obtain full membership of other international bodies. The United States had voted against Palestinian

membership of UNESCO, which it believed was premature. Such efforts were a distraction from the shared goal of direct negotiations resulting in a secure Israel and an independent Palestine living peacefully side by side.

50. **Mr. Morrill** (Canada) said that his delegation disassociated itself from ESCWA's reaction to Palestinian membership of UNESCO, which the Council had noted in paragraph 11 of E/2012/15/Add.2. A number of States had voted against Palestinian membership because it was neither appropriate to UNESCO nor helpful in the broader discussion of the matter.

51. **Ms. Davidovich** (Observer for Israel) said that her delegation objected to the Council's taking note of E/2012/15/Add.2, in which reference was made to ESCWA resolution 307. That resolution would not resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians or advance the Palestinians' path to statehood, but would exacerbate the conflict and be counter-productive. The road to lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace ran not through Beirut or New York but through direct negotiations between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Her delegation was committed to peace with the Palestinians, but unilateral steps within the United Nations would only make that goal harder to achieve.

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*) (E/2012/13-A/67/91/, E/2012/L.21)

Draft resolution E/2012/L.21: 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

52. **Mr. Djacta** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution E/2012/L.21

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.