
UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

*Assistance to the Palestinians — challenges and opportunities
in the new reality of a State under occupation*

**Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
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Executive summary

The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People examined the impact of the Israeli occupation on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine; studied the current priorities, challenges and opportunities of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013; and addressed the urgent need for international assistance in support of the Palestinian economy in the light of General Assembly resolution 67/19, in which the Assembly accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations. During the deliberations and plenary interventions, the participants expressed great concern about the deterioration of the situation on the ground, the financial strain on the Palestinian Government and the lack of specific political perspectives to end the conflict on the basis of the two-State solution.

The Seminar experts drew a picture of the staggering poverty, rising food insecurity, growing unemployment and exacerbation of gender inequalities affecting both the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. They pointed to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Area C, where, they said, most problems could be traced to Israeli policies and practices (settlement expansion, separation wall, restrictions on movement and access). They appeared confident that the need for humanitarian assistance would drop sharply if such policies were revoked. The experts also warned that the Gaza Strip was increasingly in a state of reverse development and could reach a level of irreversible damage, especially with regard to water consumption. The blockade

and successive layers of restrictions were strongly criticized and described as the major causes for the Gaza Strip's devastated private sector, its isolation from the rest of the world, the dependence on tunnel smuggling and external aid, and the complexity of reconstruction.

The state of the Palestinian economy was also extensively discussed and described as being unable to reach its full potential owing to the occupation and the limited control of the Palestinian Government over its economic affairs. Several participants stressed the importance of an urgent revision of the 1994 Paris Protocol governing Israeli-Palestinian economic relations, Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, representing the Palestinian People, signed in Paris on 29 April 1994, calling for the creation of solid mechanisms to ensure its implementation. Enabling a vigorous private sector capable of achieving sustainable economic growth was also identified as a key objective. The experts spelled out several options that could help to foster the Palestinian economy, in particular in the agriculture sector with the establishment of a public agriculture credit bank.

While acknowledging the importance of donors' financial assistance and humanitarian interventions, several experts recognized that the situation in the State of Palestine was political in nature, rather than economic. Development under the yoke of an occupying Power was described as an objective impossible to achieve unless targeted at ending the occupation. Several participants challenged the international community to modify its practical engagement in the region and to stop paying for the occupation. They also called upon the international community and, in particular, the European Union to put more pressure on Israel to end its activities that were illegal under international law and to support a meaningful resumption of the peace negotiations.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People was held in Rome on 27 and 28 February 2013, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (the Committee) and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 67/20 and 67/21. The theme of the Seminar was "Assistance to the Palestinians: challenges and opportunities in the new reality of a State under occupation".
2. The Committee was represented at the Seminar by a delegation comprising Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal), Chair of the Committee; Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Vice-Chair; Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Vice-Chair; Christopher Grima (Malta), Rapporteur; and Riyad Mansour (State of Palestine).
3. The Seminar consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were: "The impact of the occupation on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in Palestine"; "Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013: current priorities, challenges and opportunities"; and "Urgent need for international assistance in support of the Palestinian economy following the United Nations vote".
4. Presentations were made by 15 experts, including Palestinian and Israeli experts. More than 160 representatives of 54 Governments, the State of Palestine, 7 intergovernmental organizations, 7 United Nations bodies, 34 civil society organizations and members of the public attended the Seminar. In addition, three members of the Italian academic community were invited to participate as discussants, thereby broadening the debate during the plenary sessions.
5. The summary of the Chair on the outcomes of the seminar (see annex I) was published soon after its conclusion and is available from the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, as are the full papers of the experts who provided a copy for distribution. See <http://unispal.un.org/databases/dprtest/ngoweb.nsf/f12fded4d0597000852573fc005b9471/01de73e4047772dd85257afc005798c2>.

II. Opening session

6. A statement was delivered on behalf of the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** by his representative at the Seminar, **Oscar Fernandez-Taranco**, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. In his statement, the Secretary-General urged the parties to refrain from actions that could undermine the prospects of reopening long-stalled peace negotiations and said that the future of Palestinian institutions was closely linked to specific achievements and tangible progress towards the two-State solution. He noted that the Seminar was the first organized by the Committee since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19, in which the Assembly had accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations.
7. He highlighted the unprecedented financial crisis which put at risk the significant institution-building achievements made in recent years by the Palestinian Authority. He reiterated the importance of the full transfer of Palestinian tax and customs revenues by Israel in a timely and predictable manner, and renewed his appeal to all donors, especially Arab countries, to fulfil their pledges and increase their support. He reaffirmed the continued support of the United Nations for Palestinian institution-building and humanitarian assistance, saying that the Organization had been working with the Palestinian Authority on the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, covering the period from 2014 to 2016.
8. In conclusion, he said that 2013 would be a decisive year for the two-State solution, expressing the deep concern of the United Nations about the actions and events that could undermine progress, including continued illegal settlement construction by Israel. He expressed concern at the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody and the recent death of a Palestinian prisoner, Arafat Jaradat, and called for an independent and transparent investigation.
9. The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Abdou Salam Diallo**, referred to the recent granting to Palestine by the General Assembly of non-member observer State status as an expression of international consensus in favour of the two-State solution. He stressed that the protests currently under way in the West Bank were a direct result of the Israeli policies of occupation and economic strangulation that undermined Palestinian institutions and deplored, on behalf of the Committee, the economic reprisals that the Government of Israel had imposed immediately after the vote in the General Assembly. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the international and regional donor communities to mobilize funds.
10. Echoing the Secretary-General's statement, he reiterated the engagement of the Committee on the issue of Palestinian prisoners and detainees and demanded an international investigation into the circumstances of the death of Arafat Jaradat.
11. He called for a push by the international community on the political, economic and legal fronts to relaunch international engagement, restart meaningful negotiations, achieve reconciliation, strengthen Palestinian institutions and end the Gaza blockade. Noting that the vicious circle of occupation that had cost the Palestinian economy nearly \$7 billion each year had to be broken, he expressed the hope that 2013 would be a pivotal year for the peace process.

12. The Directeur de Cabinet, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), **Fernanda Guerrieri**, expressed concern at the prevalence of food insecurity in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which, she said, had potential implications for peace, stability and economic development. Reaffirming her organization's commitment to continuing to provide assistance to the Palestinian people, she highlighted FAO efforts to help to improve the agricultural sector and alleviate food insecurity and malnutrition among the population. She also emphasized the importance of setting up a disaster risk reduction framework which, together with a forthcoming food security working group, would help to build a stronger and more predictable humanitarian and development response system.
13. The Minister of Finance representing the State of Palestine, **Nabeel Kassis**, delivered a keynote address. His intervention was articulated around three main points: the Israeli policies that crippled the Palestinian economy; the role that the international donor community could play to counteract those policies; and recommendations to support the Palestinian economy in the current political context for the realization of a fully independent and sovereign Palestinian State.
14. He noted that, since the beginning of the Israeli occupation, the objective of the Government of Israel, through the promulgation of numerous military orders, had been to prevent the Palestinian economy from deploying its full potential, turning it into one subservient to and dependent on the Israeli economy.
15. The most important document delineating Israeli-Palestinian economic relations was the 1994 Paris Protocol, which had established a customs union between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He explained that, by means of that agreement, the two parties had recognized the need to create an enabling economic environment for their respective people. Palestinians had little or no control over their economic affairs, however. All border crossings, except the Rafah crossing to Egypt, and all sea and airports were under total Israeli control. Consequently, instead of prosperity, the Palestinian people suffered rising unemployment and declining economic growth and over time had become dependent on foreign donors and the Israeli economy.
16. He pointed out that Israel had violated every aspect of the 1994 Paris Protocol and that there was an urgent need to revisit the agreement in order to ensure that the measures already in place were implemented by Israel in good faith. He listed a number of violations, among them the freeze by Israel on the transfer of the taxes that it collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority; its practice of blocking the movement of goods, services and people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and its continuing policy of exclusive control over the definition of the type and quality of goods allowed to enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Those unilateral breaches of the Protocol, he said, were accomplished with utter disregard for Palestinian priorities and previous legal agreements. He advocated the imposition of a ban on the goods produced in the settlements, using a clear labelling system, and called for sanctions against companies that directly or indirectly sustained the occupation or profited therefrom. He added that the illegal use of Palestinian natural resources alone had cost the Palestinian economy some \$1.8 billion in 2010, while the overall economic burden of the occupation in 2012 had amounted to around \$7 billion.
17. He underlined the need to build upon the positive momentum generated by the vote in the General Assembly on 29 November 2012, expressing the hope that the international community would help to bolster Palestinian institutions and support Palestinian civil society. He called for a paradigm shift whereby the donor community would publicly challenge Israeli policies and speak out against projects that seriously disrupted the Palestinian economy. In conclusion, he was of the view that, although the two-State solution was in great danger, it remained a viable option if bold measures were taken and if the international community implemented policy changes, including corrective actions towards Israel.
18. The Ambassador of **Jordan** to Italy expressed his Government's concern about the expansion of settlement activities, which, he said, threatened stability in the region. He stated that the international community should do its utmost to revive the peace process, while acknowledging that it was a challenge considering the unlawful behaviour of Israel, which had damaged the prospect of the two-State solution. The two-State solution was the only option and his Government believed in a prompt resolution of the conflict within the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement, including the Arab Peace Initiative. He stressed the urgency of the situation and the importance of Israel and the State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security.
19. The Permanent Representative of **the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** to the United Nations in New York reaffirmed his Government's support for the efforts of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination and for the two-State solution. He condemned the Israeli policies which had solidified its occupation of Palestinian lands and the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the Gaza Strip, and called for the release of the Palestinian prisoners, including children, held by Israel. He reaffirmed his country's call for a revival of the peace process and called upon the Security Council to reassess the application of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations. Lastly, he announced that his Government proposed to host a meeting of the Committee in Caracas on 17 and 18 April 2013.
20. The Ambassador of **Morocco** to Italy commended the work of the Secretary-General and of the Committee. He welcomed the General Assembly's historic decision to accord Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations in recognition of the hard work and tremendous efforts of the Palestinian people and their institutions. He said that the situation of the Palestinian people would continue to be assigned major priority on the Moroccan political agenda. The Government would spare no effort in helping to ensure that Palestinians exercised their right to self-determination, would continue its development cooperation with the State of Palestine and would step up its humanitarian efforts in the Gaza Strip. He reiterated his Government's call upon the international community for a firm and definitive end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, stressing also the important role that civil society organizations should play in that respect.
21. The Deputy Permanent Representative of **Namibia** to the United Nations in New York said that the continuing challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territory illustrated the compelling need for the international community to assist the Palestinian people in achieving a viable independent Palestinian State. He recalled the vote in the General Assembly of 29 November 2012 and noted with great concern the immediate announcement by Israel that it would press ahead with its illegal settlement activity, particularly in the E1 area near Jerusalem. He stressed that the international community should hold Israel accountable for any actions undermining the peace process and that Israel should refrain from any counterproductive actions. His Government shared the view that a just and comprehensive resolution of the question of Palestine was essential to ensuring peace in the Middle East, and supported the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders.
22. The Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Embassy of **Senegal** in Rome commended the work of the United Nations and of the Committee towards achieving a just and equitable peace between Israel and the State of Palestine. He expressed the concern of Senegal at the impact of the continued Israeli policy of occupation and settlement on the feasibility of the two-State solution, at the consequences of the many restrictions imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people and at the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, urging the international community to maintain a strong focus on human rights issues. He underscored that, the great challenges notwithstanding, the Palestinian leadership had managed to carry out an impressive programme of institution-building. He said that the international community, including the Quartet, must spare no effort to ensure a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.
23. The Secretary-General of the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)** delivered a speech on behalf of the President of PAM, Francesco Amoruso. He said that PAM worked in the region in close collaboration with the United Nations and was committed to addressing the following

issues: borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and water. PAM, which brought together in its Assembly both the State of Palestine and Israel, had responded swiftly to assist with the negotiation of a ceasefire following the most recent strife in the Gaza Strip. A PAM delegation would travel to the Middle East in April/May 2013 to fine-tune its strategy in the region and further advocate the two-State solution. The findings of the visit would be shared in May 2013 with the United Nations. PAM would organize a high-level intergovernmental conference on the theme “Harnessing trade for growth in the Mediterranean”, which would include a special session dedicated to the State of Palestine.

24. The Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of **Algeria** in Rome said that the Palestinian people had endured untold suffering because of the Israeli occupation, recalling the long-time support of his Government for the creation of the Palestinian State. Denouncing the punitive measures taken by Israel against the State of Palestine following the vote in the General Assembly on 29 November 2012, he spoke out against the continued Israeli policies preventing the establishment of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State. He drew attention to the financial smothering by Israel of Palestinian institutions, which was used as political blackmail to prevent the revival of the peace process. He urged the international community to exert more pressure on Israel so that it would end its freeze on Palestinian tax revenues, in addition to its illegal practices. He said that it was time to act and that the international community could not continue to ignore the suffering of the Palestinian people.

25. The representative of the **Russian Federation** called for efforts to assist the Palestinian people in building their own capacities and said that the two-State solution was the priority for his Government within the framework of the Quartet. He recalled that his delegation had voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 67/19 and stressed that such a measure did not obviate the need for negotiations. He outlined his Government's bilateral efforts to assist the Palestinian people, including through its support for the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and in the fields of education and health, which was chiefly directed at ensuring the payment of teachers and doctors.

26. The representative of the **League of Arab States** said that General Assembly resolution 67/19 was a major step towards the consolidation of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, adding that Israel had made endless attempts to disrupt the efforts of the Palestinian people to build an independent State in disregard of international resolutions. Referring to the decision taken by the League in 2012 to provide monthly financial support to the Palestinians, he drew attention to the support provided by many Arab countries to the State of Palestine in various areas.

27. The representative of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation**, delivering a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, said that one of the main challenges facing the international community was the continuing occupation by Israel of Palestinian lands and its consequences for the region. He expressed the firm belief of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation that the Security Council and the wider international community should take immediate action to halt the Israeli settlements policies, end the occupation and enable Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights. Furthermore, he called upon the international community to take measures to lift the Gaza blockade, defend the human rights of Palestinian prisoners and support the access of the State of Palestine to United Nations agencies and other international organizations.

28. The representative of the **Union for the Mediterranean** stressed that, since its inception in 2008, the Union had included Palestine as a full member with duties and privileges equal to the other States. He said that it was important to support both the immediate and strategic needs of the Palestinian people, including issues such as the lack of clean water, for example, in the Gaza Strip. The Union was supporting a desalinization project in accordance with United Nations needs assessments and with the assistance of other intergovernmental agencies. Palestinians deserved to live in peace and freedom but also deserved to drink clean water, he said, pledging the Union's commitment to that objective.

29. The representative of **Ecuador** recalled that the Security Council and the wider international community bore the responsibility of protecting and ensuring the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including efforts to reinvigorate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process based on the two-State solution. She added that the international community must ensure that Israel met its obligation to respect international law, including United Nations resolutions, and that it should also support full membership for Palestine in the United Nations. Lastly, she announced that her Government was prepared to host an international meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Quito in 2014.

30. The representative of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** said that, over the course of 2012, ILO had undertaken a series of consultations with relevant Palestinian ministries to develop a decent work strategy, establishing three key priority areas: support for labour rights, labour market governance and realization of core labour standards; promotion of a sustainable economic environment for greater access to employment and livelihood opportunities; and facilitation of the development of a social security system and the extension of social security to workers in the private sector. On the basis of those priorities, ILO had identified four pillars which required urgent action: labour market governance through reformed labour law and enhanced social dialogue; development of a social security system; gender equality and women's empowerment; and support for post-war economic recovery and livelihoods in Gaza.

31. The representative of **Brazil** reiterated the historical support of Brazil for the two-State solution and its opposition to the Israeli occupation, urging a renewal of peace talks. He recalled that Brazil had recognized the State of Palestine in 2010 on its 1967 borders and had campaigned in favour of the vote held in the General Assembly in November 2012. His Government had recently committed \$20 million to Palestinian development efforts and continued to provide technical cooperation at the bilateral level.

III. Plenary sessions

A. Plenary session I Impact of the occupation on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine

32. The speakers in plenary session I addressed the following sub-themes: (a) “Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinians, in particular women and children, under continued occupation”; (b) “Current situation in Gaza”; and (c) “The aftermath of the United Nations admission of the State of Palestine: Israeli retaliatory measures and other possible fallout”. The session was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York and Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Zahir Tanin**.

33. The Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, **Ramesh Rajasingham**, noted that the situation was not a traditional humanitarian crisis. Palestinian society was highly educated, organized and motivated, and would be able to foster its economy and manage a State, as the World Bank had indicated in 2011, if there were no occupation and no restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities. The restrictions fell into three categories: threat to life, liberty and personal security; loss of lands and livelihoods (which could lead to forced displacement); and restriction of movement and access to services and assistance. That constituted a protection crisis.

34. Among the results of the restrictions, he cited the Gaza Strip's 35 per cent unemployment rate, 39 per cent poverty rate and 44 per cent food insecurity rate, noting that more than 80 per cent of the population there was receiving some form of international aid or relief assistance. He stressed the important housing and shelter needs, given the lack of 71,000 housing units and the 15,000 people displaced since the 2008-2009 operation Cast Lead. Providing access to services and assistance represented a major humanitarian challenge, given the need for more than 250 schools (another 200 by 2020), 90 per cent unsafe pipe water (the aquifer would be unusable by 2016 and irreversibly damaged by 2020) and a daily power outage ranging from 4 to 12 hours. Physical insecurity was another problem, given that there was no real safe haven because of the lack of development and the overcrowding in the area (estimated at 2.13 million people and a density of 5,835 people per square kilometre by 2020). He recalled the importance of lifting the blockade which had also dramatically hindered humanitarian work, and stressed the many Israeli violations concerning the buffer zone.
35. In the West Bank, the continued loss of land and lack of access and the increased violence targeted at Palestinian properties and persons were of growing concern, creating further humanitarian needs. Many of the problems in Area C, which constituted 63 per cent of the West Bank and was fully controlled by Israel, could be traced to the Israeli settlement policy and the continuing construction of the separation wall, which had already taken more than 10 per cent of the land of the West Bank. Many of the Palestinians living in Area C lacked access to their livelihoods and could become vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance. He further noted that only 1 per cent of Area C was available for Palestinian development, and the loss of traditional livelihoods could spark forced displacement.
36. Although the number of checkpoints and other forms of closure had decreased over the past two years, unpredictability continued to prevail. On the other hand, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had noted a substantial increase in the number of house demolitions – in January 2013, Israel had demolished as many housing units as it had during the whole of 2012 – and land evictions. In addition, settler violence had increased by 165 per cent during the period 2009-2011, and there was a lack of legal response to address such violence, with 95 per cent of the complaints closed with no action taken. Settler violence included the destruction of Palestinian crops or infrastructure, which prevented Palestinian families from having access to their main source of income and therefore put them at risk. He demonstrated through a case study how land had been lost in the West Bank.
37. He said that East Jerusalem lacked 1,000 classrooms and that access to the six specialized hospitals for the Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including the Gaza Strip) was restricted. In the West Bank, 200,000 people were not connected to the water network, and settlers had much less expensive access to water. Unemployment in the West Bank had reached 20.5 per cent and poverty 22 per cent, while 24 per cent of the population was food insecure and 28 per cent, primarily herders, were vulnerable owing to malnutrition. In the E1 area, the population faced a risk of forced transfer to allow settlement expansion.
38. In conclusion, he called upon the international community to ensure the protection of civilians and respect for human rights, which should include an investigation of all complaints concerning human rights violations. Displacement could be put to an end by the suspension of demolition orders and allowing threatened communities to legalize their presence, he said, calling for safe movement and access to services.
39. The Director General of the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development, **Amal Khreishe**, stressed that Israeli violations, in combination with the Palestinian patriarchal system, undermined women's development. Regarding the socioeconomic situation of Palestinian women, she said that the progress made in education, with women representing 50 per cent of university enrolment, had not been translated into the labour market, where female labour force participation was estimated at 15.2 per cent, one of the lowest rates in the world. One of the main obstacles to women entering and remaining in the labour market was the patriarchal norms sustaining women's domestic and reproductive roles.
40. In terms of societal norms, she said that they were mainly influenced, in particular in rural areas, by an old patriarchal kinship system that had been institutionalized by law through unequal property rights and confiscation of women's inheritance rights, among other things. She underscored the importance of raising women's awareness concerning access to justice and of lobbying decision makers to modify existing laws in accordance with human rights standards. She asserted that the Israeli occupation had also contributed to gender inequalities, altering traditional family structures and gender relations. According to Amnesty International, there was an increased burden on women because they had to cope with psychosocial and economic distress, a direct effect of the occupation. The geographical dimension of the occupation also played a role in changing gender dynamics because of the restrictions on movement and access which limited women's responsibilities outside their household.
41. She said that gender-based violence in Palestinian society was compounded because of the effects of the occupation which had strengthened reactionary customs, traditions and cultures. In addition, women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had to deal with a multilayered legal system of Israeli, Palestinian, Egyptian and Jordanian laws, in addition to military orders, consisting of maladjusted laws. The levels of violence against women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were high: 66 per cent of married women were subjected to psychological violence, 34 per cent experienced physical violence and more than 15 per cent sexual violence. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic, Violence Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2011. She also highlighted the correlation between rising poverty, unemployment and gender-based violence. Some recent efforts notwithstanding, the capacity of the Government to protect women and provide justice was weak and had been further undermined by the unstable political situation. The police, she explained, continued to privilege informal settlement measures, and the Ministry of Health lacked proper protocols to deal with the cases of violence.
42. Regarding women's political participation, she noted there had been a slight improvement with the introduction of a quota system in 2004. Women's political gains remained fragile, however, because they did not necessarily result in the inclusion of women's visions and perspectives, either in decision-making processes or within other decision-making bodies, such as trade unions and chambers of commerce and industry. The paralysis of the Palestinian Legislative Council had also prevented success with regard to favourable initiatives.
43. Lastly, she demanded urgent and concerted action by the Government and the international community to resolve the economic crisis, address the Palestinian political divide, hold Israel accountable and end the occupation, warning that the prolonged absence of a credible political outlook could lead to a critical juncture, endangering the two-State solution.
44. The Director of Gaza Operations for UNRWA, **Robert Turner**, said that crushing poverty was nibbling at the Gaza Strip, with 39 per cent of the population living in poverty, one third of whom in deep poverty. He stressed that, notwithstanding the substantive food assistance provided by UNRWA and WFP to 1 million people (of a population of 1.7 million), 44 per cent of the population remained food insecure.
45. He said that such a level of poverty had been reached primarily because of the blockade and the successive layers of restrictions imposed in the area since 1999 on movements of goods, services and people, the 2007 blockade being only one of the most recent of such restrictions. He added that 2010 imports represented 50 per cent of 1999 levels and 2010 exports only 2 per cent of 1999 levels. Those constraints had been compounded by the internal political divide and the violence stemming from the occupation, destroying the local economy and its employment capacity. The former trade-oriented and self-sustained economy in the Gaza Strip had become a consumption economy characterized by a devastated private sector and a swelling public sector. The isolation of the

Gaza Strip from the rest of the world had also prompted its dependence on tunnel smuggling and external aid.

46. He noted that, slight improvements during the period from mid-2010 to 2011 notwithstanding, the unemployment rate had risen again during the fourth quarter of 2012, extending to 32 per cent of the active population and making it almost impossible for young people and females to gain access to the labour market. There were fewer jobs for the most educated people, and 85 per cent of university-educated women in Gaza were unemployed unless they worked directly for UNRWA or the Government. There were three main reasons for the employment crisis: the closure of the Israeli labour market, which involved 66 per cent of the Gaza workforce in 1999; the collapse of the private sector; and the dramatic drop in purchasing power, with real daily wages currently representing 70 per cent of their 1999 value. At the same time, the consumer price index had seen an increase of 40 per cent – 50 per cent for food – since 1999.

47. He said that the situation could have been even more dramatic if not for the massive humanitarian intervention. For example, UNRWA had spent \$445 million (18 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Gaza Strip) and created 21,000 jobs in 2012. To maintain the unemployment level at 30 per cent, the economy needed to create 75,000 jobs by 2020, 150,000 jobs to reach the 1999 level and more than 180,000 jobs to reach the Middle East/North Africa average. To achieve the West Bank GDP level per capita, the Gaza Strip needed growth of 11 per cent per year from the current time until 2020. That would require the lifting of the blockade and significant and sustained investments in the economy.

48. He shared some findings of the United Nations report, *Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?*. Of particular concern was the water situation, an existential threat to the population of the Gaza Strip because the aquifer was dying and would become irreversibly damaged by 2020, severely affecting also the agriculture sector. Political will and massive investment were required just to resolve the water problem. If the current situation in the Gaza Strip appeared dire, the future situation would be much worse without rapid and concerted political change, he asserted.

49. The Co-Director of the Alternative Information Centre, **Sergio Yahni**, said that any analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should come with the understanding that Israel had no interest in making peace. That was not a question of political will but a question regarding the social structure of Israel that had been built on the conflict, and on the colonization practices followed both in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. According to his assessment, even if the Palestinians were to accept the conditions of Israel, the Israeli authorities would never give up on their colonial enterprise.

50. He asserted that the Israeli settlement policy was largely intended to balance its internal social issues. As the poorest Member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with 21 per cent of its population living in poverty, the settlement enterprise of Israel provided it with socioeconomic solutions. Indeed, colonization had provided profits for important construction and security companies, in addition to affordable housing and labour options for the country's poor and middle classes. Moreover, the conflict generated by colonization had boosted the police and military exports of Israel.

51. He recalled that the term "peace process" dated back to 1991 and had barely progressed since 1993 because of the Israeli interest in maintaining the conflict at a manageable level through tools of control and without creating too many expectations regarding the prospect of an independent and effective Palestinian State. Israel was not moving towards the two-State solution, he said; such assertions were merely wishful thinking on the part of the international community. He added that, since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, there had been no serious move from Israel; rather, it wanted a subjugated Palestinian Government that would help it to maintain the flame of the conflict at a low and manageable level.

52. He was of the view that the recent Israeli elections would generate no movement towards peace. On the ground, Israeli policies were aimed not at resolving the conflict but at staving off any intervention by the international community. He presented that as a challenge: would the international community impose sanctions on Israel or would it remain silent and observe the sacrifice of the Palestinian people? He invited civil society and the international community to take real action and force Israel to abide by international law, including respect for human rights, and to genuinely launch a process that would allow space for the creation of a Palestinian State.

53. The Professor of International Law at the Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali and discussant at the Seminar, **Natalino Ronzitti**, noted that the colonialism/settlement practices of the occupation represented a major obstacle to the resolution of the conflict. He recalled that an occupying Power should apply both international human rights and humanitarian law and that Israel was party only to the Fourth Geneva Convention and not to the additional Protocols. He also recalled that there was no exception to the application of international humanitarian law and that an occupying Power was not allowed to change any legal provision of the land that it occupied. He stressed the importance of applying international law to ensure the fulfilment by Israel of its legal obligations and the protection of the Palestinian people's human rights. He wondered whether the granting of non-member observer State status in the United Nations signified the beginning or the end of a process, and expressed reservations regarding the possibility of the State of Palestine gaining full membership because of an expected veto in the Security Council. He considered it important for the State of Palestine to have access to United Nations agencies and international conventions, and noted that the Palestinian internal political divide had to be urgently overcome.

54. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of **Algeria** said that it was time to take action, that the international community was able to have access to real-time information and should therefore strongly support the Palestinian people. He asserted that the great Powers, all countries with interests in Israel, and the Security Council, were responsible for the lack of possible perspective and had a moral obligation to bring pressure on Israel to end the occupation. The Researcher in the History of International Relations at the University of Florence, **Maria Grazia Enardu**, asked what was being done to avert the catastrophic water situation in Gaza.

55. **Mr. Turner** explained that the construction of large-scale desalination plants had been hindered by the internal political divide, the high cost of such an initiative (\$500 million) and the lack of sufficient power to activate the plants.

56. **Ms. Khreishe** said that Palestinians had accepted many compromises and had built their State on 20 per cent of historical Palestine. The vote in the General Assembly gave hope, and it was time for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to the two-State solution and hold Israel accountable. No more compromises should be made by the Palestinian side as long as there was no political will from the international community to make progress. She also called for a boycott of settlement products. The representative of Tarabut, Arab-Jewish Movement for Social and Political Change, **Roii Ball**, said that the Jewish National Fund should be a prime target of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction campaign. The representative of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, **Khalil Shaheen**, expressed concern about the political context in the Gaza Strip, with three-and-one-half authorities governing the Palestinians: the Government of Israel, the Government of the State of Palestine, the de facto government in Gaza and the one-half authority, the international community.

57. **Mr. Rajasingham** pointed out that, from a humanitarian perspective, simple measures could be taken to improve the living standards in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to lessen the burden on donors: among others, allowing Palestinians to develop Area C, lifting the Gaza blockade, allowing farmers access to their lands and ending the confiscation of private land.

B. Plenary session II
Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013:
current priorities, challenges and opportunities

58. The speakers in plenary session II addressed the following sub-themes: (a) “Economy under the occupation: addressing financial challenges while continuing to strengthen State institutions, ensuring high governance standards and promoting economic development”; (b) “Reconstruction and development of the Gaza Strip”; and (c) “Seizing the opportunities in the light of the new reality: opening of international markets to exports of Palestinian products on the most favourable terms, and other possible initiatives”. The session was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations in New York and Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez**.

59. The Coordinator of Assistance to the Palestinian People in the Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), **Mahmoud Elkhafif**, presented the annual report of UNCTAD on assistance to the Palestinian people, which dealt with the agricultural sector. Over the past five years, UNCTAD had focused on the productive capacity of the Palestinian economy, he said, observing that there had been serious erosion in that area, preventing the Palestinians from feeding themselves, with Israel being the only possible option from which to import. Even under the occupation, however, the Palestinian people and Government had options.

60. He first focused on the Palestinian economy which, he said, had grown by 10 per cent in 2011 (23 per cent in Gaza and 5.5 per cent in the West Bank). He noted that such growth, however, was deceptive and not sustainable because it had been mainly driven by delayed construction (because of the blockade) following the Israeli operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip. Growth had reached 10 per cent because of the low economic base of the entire Palestinian economy, meaning that even a small increase was sufficient to appear substantial. Some improvements in 2011 notwithstanding, both the West Bank (23 per cent) and the Gaza Strip (29 per cent) showed a high unemployment rate, falling productivity and a shrinking of real wages. Regarding the latter, he added that the inflation rate had increased much more swiftly than the nominal wage, creating a retraction in the real wage, which had increased poverty. The real wage had declined by almost 8 per cent over the past five years.

61. He lamented what he described as a mission impossible for the Ministry of Finance, whose task was to provide for long-term growth from capital expenditure. Looking at the contraction of the tax base, he said that the Government had not been able to dedicate more than 4 per cent of its expenditure to capital development, which had had a negative impact on the development of the Palestinian economy. He enumerated the challenges faced by the Ministry, namely, the economic siege on Gaza, the Government's fiscal hardships, the declining donor support, the rising poverty rates and the severe restrictions to the economy because of the Israeli occupation. The disturbing consequence of all those difficulties was that the State of Palestine had been forced to depend on Israel because it was deprived of competitive sources for imports and markets for exports. A total of 84 per cent of the Palestinian trade deficit was a consequence of the trade with Israel (mainly imports) and represented 40 per cent of total Palestinian GDP.

62. According to UNCTAD estimates, the cumulative GDP loss for the period 2000-2005 stood at \$8.4 billion, which was twice the size of the Palestinian economy in 1999. During the same period, the Palestinians had lost one third of their productive base. UNCTAD estimated the loss caused by the 2008-2009 operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip at around \$4 billion (three times the size of the Gazan economy). In addition, the Palestinians had lost 10 per cent of their agricultural land because of the expansion of the separation wall.

63. He noted that years of occupation had prevented the Palestinian agricultural sector from realizing both its employment and productive potential. The contribution of the sector to GDP had shrunk from 12 per cent in 1999 to 5.5 per cent in 2011. Moreover, less than 1 per cent of donor assistance to the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been earmarked for that sector which, in addition, was also shedding jobs (nearly 110,000 in 2012) and faced a dual problem caused by loss of land and trees and the lack of irrigated water.

64. Providing specific examples, he said that, by 2009, 9,000 dunams of irrigated land had been expropriated to facilitate the construction of the wall. Furthermore, more than 2.5 million trees had been uprooted since the occupation began in 1967. Among the other factors that had led to the erosion of the sector were the Israeli confiscation of Palestinian groundwater and its prohibition on well construction, which had left the Palestinians with no choice but to import 50 per cent of their water from Israel. In addition, more than 800,000 olive trees had been destroyed since 1967 owing to uprooting activities organized by settlers and the Israeli-imposed restrictions. He also pointed to the reduced access to fishing zones (3 nautical miles instead of 20) which had exacerbated the collapse of the Palestinian fishing industry, which had registered a 66 per cent decline in the number of fisherfolk since 2000.

65. He urged the international community to scale up its assistance to Palestinian agriculture and devote more attention to linking relief with development assistance in order to replant olive trees, provide farmers with access to credit and insurance, and assist in the establishment of an agricultural credit bank, which should be a public and well-funded facility.

66. The Head of the Middle East-North Africa Governance Programme of OECD, **Carlos Conde**, said that focusing on good governance as a tool for fostering economic growth had led OECD to work since 2005 with North African and Middle Eastern countries to build strong institutions (governance pillar) and generate inclusive growth (investment pillar). That work had been carried out within the framework of the demand-driven Governance Programme. He said that the Programme followed a two-track approach: at the regional level, fostering of dialogue, and at the national level, support of a reform agenda. The Palestinian Authority had been one of the most active partners in the programme since 2005 and had been implementing projects since 2009.

67. He explained that, within the framework of the Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013, the Palestinian Authority had been aligning its efforts with some of the standards and good practices of OECD, mainly those concerning the rule of law, a public sector integrity framework, e-governance and prevention of corruption. The main instruments of the approach included enhancement of the policy dialogue between the Authority and OECD experts as well as policymakers; support for the institution-building efforts of the Authority; ensuring sustainability through capacity-building and transfer of knowledge; and focusing on specific impacts and assistance in implementation. The Programme had strongly benefited from the experience of the donor community in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and from the important support of the United Nations.

68. He then focused on the public sector integrity framework, which he said was a key area of OECD work, and where particular emphasis was given to efforts to combat corruption. OECD had developed numerous sets of recommendations, which had led to the elaboration in 2012, in consultation with various stakeholders, of the code of conduct for public officials, which also featured implementation mechanisms.

69. Regarding the rule of law, he said that the OECD-backed programme in that area aimed to improve the regulatory capacities of Palestinian officials, reinforce the rule of law and enhance the legal security for businesses and citizens. While the regulatory framework in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was

quite complicated, the initiative had, among other outcomes, led to the elaboration of a guide on regulatory consultations and a manual which focused on an open and participatory policymaking process. In that area, OECD had been working closely with the Ministry of Justice and other stakeholders, including Birzeit University. OECD had also been working with Palestinian officials in the area of e-governance, which he described as very risky, noting that an institution should develop an integrated strategy before investing so as to mitigate the risk of tremendous cost in the medium and long term. The overall aim in that area was to set in place some of the building blocks for what could one day become an online administration of the Palestinian Authority.

70. He also noted that OECD had promoted the idea of strategic States capable of correctly anticipating internal and external challenges through sound, evidence-based decision-making and strategic foresight. Such an approach was aimed at enhancing openness and transparency and promoting a broad stakeholder dialogue. In the case of the Palestinian Authority, OECD had witnessed good leadership and coordination capacity at the centre of government institutions, something that was not common. The Authority had also demonstrated sound programming, aligned with strategic objectives. He highlighted the Authority's progress in its statistical capacity, policy design, delivery and transparency, among others, and ended by stating that some of the work of OECD with the Authority was being replicated in other Middle Eastern and North African countries.

71. The Chief Executive Officer of the Palestine Investment Fund in Ramallah, **Mohammad A. Mustafa**, who was unable to attend the Seminar in person, focused in his paper entitled "The State of Palestine: towards achieving economic independence" on the arrangements for trade, fiscal and monetary policies and access to natural resources, which were critical for Palestinian economic independence. Infrastructure for energy, telecommunications, tourism and knowledge-based services were among the new sources of growth that he identified as necessary to create a sustainable economy in the State of Palestine.

72. The Chair of Al Athar Global Consulting, **Reham Al Wehaidy**, delivered a presentation on the difficulties encountered in the reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. She noted that, with a total area of 365 km² and some 1.7 million inhabitants, the Strip was one of the most densely populated areas on Earth. It had been subjected to many external and internal political, economic and social pressures which had led to poor socioeconomic conditions. In that regard, she singled out the occupation, the internal political divide which had led to a duplication of authority over Gaza, the recent military operations and the blockade.

73. She pointed to three main issues: (a) the closure that had led to a complete halt of the private sector and where the productive capacity of the Gaza Strip had shown no recovery owing to import and export restrictions; (b) the emergence of the tunnel economy, which was four times more important than the official registered trade, employing around 15,000 people and involving 25,000 traders; and (c) a significant decline in the quality of infrastructure and services, including health, education, water and sanitation. In addition, the recent Israeli military operations – Cast Lead in December 2008 and January 2009, and Pillar of Defense in November 2012 – had caused \$1.5 billion in damage to the Gazan economy.

74. The Palestinian National Development Plan 2011-2013 characterized the reconstruction and development of the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as the greatest and most pressing challenges in the Palestinian Authority's endeavour to ensure that all citizens enjoyed the same opportunities, rights and freedoms, she said. The Plan reconfirmed the Authority's commitment to the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan, endorsed by the international community at the donor conference held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in March 2009, which had earmarked \$1.3 billion for the recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. She expressed regret that, to date, there had been no disbursement of the funds, and noted that closure and permit policies had obstructed local attempts to address the most urgent needs.

75. She spoke of several challenges, among them access to building material and construction inputs. Basic construction material remained on the list of forbidden import items, while only very limited authorizations were granted, usually at a very late stage, delaying the reconstruction process. When Israel had eased some of the restrictions on the import of building materials in December 2012, the quota constituted only about 15 per cent of estimated demand, and less than 10 per cent of the average volume that used to enter Gaza on a daily basis before the closure. The level of financial support was inadequate and most of the funds were scattered and delayed, while the human resources gap had caused construction workers either to remain unemployed or to seek employment in sectors outside their line of work. Lastly, she pointed to the organizational challenge posed by the duplication of authority created by the internal political division, which had led to dual planning efforts.

76. In terms of opportunities, she mentioned the Qatari fund for the reconstruction of Gaza, announced in October 2012, which was aimed at bolstering economic activity, especially in the construction sector, and was expected to disburse \$450 million over a period of three years. She considered that the effect of the fund would extend beyond actual physical infrastructure to other aspects of Palestinian lives, such as housing, education, health and transport. In addition, its establishment had created momentum, with the United Arab Emirates announcing a fund of \$100 million for the construction of a new city, consisting of 1,300 housing units to accommodate political prisoners released from Israeli jails.

77. In conclusion, she said that the current challenge in the Gaza Strip was to respond to life-threatening issues in a durable manner and to enable the Gazans to exercise their basic human rights, including the rights to movement and to work. She made the following recommendations: (a) ending of the blockade; (b) ending of the internal political division and the achievement of national reconciliation; (c) provision of support by the international community for the forthcoming results of the Palestinian elections; (d) reopening of all crossings shut down since 2007; (e) increasing the capacity of currently operating crossings, especially Rafah and Kerem Shalom; (f) promotion of development-oriented interventions; (g) identification of niches to better direct coordination efforts; (h) transition to strategic projects to support growth in the private sector; and (i) upgrading of workers' skills through capacity-building.

78. **Ms. Enardu**, participating as a discussant, encouraged the audience to look again at the presentation by Mr. Elkhaffif, in particular regarding the destruction of olive trees, which she saw as a blow to the Palestinian economy and Palestinian cultural heritage. She shared her interest in the paper by Mr. Mustafa, in particular regarding the constriction of the Palestinian economy by the Paris Protocol which, she said, should be revised. Impressed by the high level of educated young people in the State of Palestine, she stressed in particular the dreadful situation of female graduates who remained unemployed despite a good university performance, calling upon the practitioners in the audience to pay attention to that problem. On the issue of international support for the Palestinian State, she, having reviewed all relevant resolutions since 2006, identified a positive shift among European countries. In particular, those which used to vote in favour of Israel had abstained during the vote in November 2012, and those which traditionally abstained had voted in favour of Palestine. She described that as momentum that could be used to revise the Paris Protocol. Nevertheless, she was not very optimistic in the short term about the peace process. In conclusion, she shared her experience as a teacher, noting that young people had a different outlook than older generations towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Older generations were influenced by a sense of guilt, whereas young people had the advantage of being beautifully ignorant and sought to act logically to understand the conflict, which she saw as an opportunity that could bring a new impetus to resolving the conflict.

79. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the Palestinian Return Centre, **Sameh Habeeb**, said that the discourse on the beginning of the occupation in 1967 had overlooked what Israel had done in 1948 and, therefore, the refugee issue. He called for more representation by Palestinian refugees and from members of the Palestinian diaspora in forthcoming Committee events, and was of the view that the two-State solution appeared to be lifeless, asking what the Palestinian Authority had in mind in terms of the way forward. **Mr. Yahni** asked whether any mechanisms were in place to ensure that OECD members complied with the rule of law so that the Palestinian Government would be allowed to work effectively, as set forth in the OECD standards.

80. **Mr. Conde** explained that the mandate of OECD was very specific and did not take into consideration the issues raised by Mr. Yahni, adding that the work of OECD in the State of Palestine was to build the needed institutions and create good policies in the long term. In response to a question from **Mr. Reyes Rodríguez** as to whether there was a mechanism of peer review among OECD members to examine what was happening with regard to their work on governance, he said such mechanisms existed and that they were public and available.

81. **Ms. Khreishe** said that it was difficult to talk about sustainable development when living under occupation. She expressed her disappointment that the United Nations had taken on a role within the Quartet, thereby entering the power game. Rather than serving the interests of the major powers, she said, the United Nations should step up its efforts to uphold international law and to hold Israel accountable.

82. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York, **Riyad Mansour**, recalled that the Seminar was not the only event organized by the Committee. The Seminar dealt with one dimension of the Palestinian question, namely, the alleviation of the suffering of the Palestinian people. The Committee had been very active in supporting the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the rights of refugees. Reiterating the Seminar's focus on assistance to all Palestinian people, he stressed that the Committee was not leaving any segment of the Palestinian people behind. Furthermore, the Palestinian people had chosen their own political platform, through democratic processes. While a discussion was under way among Palestinians about the viability of the two-State solution, a new political platform would emerge following a transparent debate with the Palestinian people. He recalled that the prevailing agenda was still to work towards the two-State solution.

C. Plenary session III

Urgent need for international assistance in support of the Palestinian economy following the United Nations vote

83. The speakers in plenary session III addressed the following sub-themes: (a) "The role of the international and regional donor community: creating a financial safety net, reviving the Palestinian economy"; (b) "Mobilizing and coordinating assistance: the role of the United Nations system and international financial institutions"; and (c) "Assistance by and the role of non-governmental organizations". The session was chaired by the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations in New York and Rapporteur of the Committee, **Christopher Grima**.

84. The representative of the European Union to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and UNRWA, **John Gatt-Rutter**, underlined the importance of the Seminar's topic. He said that the European Union had been working in partnership with the Palestinians to bolster their State institutions and achieve an independent and democratic Palestinian State. He shared his concern about the impasse in the peace process and the steady deterioration of the situation on the ground, which had eroded some development gains and was perhaps putting into question efforts to achieve the two-State solution. Taking that into consideration, he said that the most important priority for the European Union was the stabilization of the Palestinian Authority in the immediate term.

85. In his view, a clear political perspective was needed for the European Union to continue to sustain the current level of support. The difficult economic situation of the eurozone, combined with the fundamental change taking place in the Arab world, had created competing demands for limited European resources. He added that, without economic sovereignty, it would be very difficult for the Palestinians to achieve what had been envisioned by the General Assembly in resolution 67/19. Referring to the stabilization of the Palestinian Authority, he described it as at a rescue phase; he considered that the forthcoming meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, to be held in March 2013, would provide an opportunity to reflect on whether the state-building process could be accompanied by a political perspective.

86. He spoke of the importance of preparing for the transition phase, which meant greater movement and access and greater autonomy for Palestinian entrepreneurs. Such progress would also allow greater development in Area C and the Gaza Strip, which the European Union considered had tremendous economic potential. Referring to the Gaza Strip, he reiterated the European Union's position of opening permanently all crossings for all types of materials, goods and people. He stressed the need to ensure that the private sector had the means and space to work properly and, referring to the recent withholding by Israel of tax transfers to the Palestinian Authority, the need to ensure regularity and predictability in that regard.

87. Speaking of the challenges of aid under occupation, he said that delivering European Union assistance in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem was exceedingly complicated. He recognized that the occupation increased and distorted the need for aid. Noting that the political context had dramatically changed since the Oslo agreements while assistance continued to be provided under the same paradigm, he called for an urgent change of the latter. The European Union, he said, would continue to work with the Administration of the United States of America and the Arab countries on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative in moving forward the peace agenda.

88. Lastly, he called for a better implementation of the 1994 Paris Protocol, which would ensure more automaticity and predictability of transfers, and pointed to the need for increased political reference to international law, citing the adoption by the European Union of such language in its most recent statements. Ending on a positive note, he said that it was very important to remember that the Palestinian Authority, the criticism that it often received notwithstanding, remained the most credible and important vehicle for building the Palestinian State. The States members of the European Union had long stated that they would recognize an independent Palestinian State when the conditions were right. It would be easier to reach that point, he said, if European stakeholders saw the Authority and its institutions as credible and stable.

89. In his presentation, the Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, **James W. Rawley**, Mr. Rawley's presentation was delivered by Ramesh Rajasingham, focused on aid coordination and on sustainable human development, which he said had been constrained by the glass ceiling imposed by the occupation. Regarding humanitarian coordination, he stated that the global humanitarian model had been adapted to the State of Palestine. The consolidated appeal process had helped to raise more than \$3 billion since the first such process in 2003. The humanitarian system had responded effectively to the hostilities in Gaza in November 2012: all United Nations programmes had been brought back up to speed only a few days after the ceasefire; a rapid assessment of the humanitarian consequences of the hostilities had been conducted; and more than \$9 million had been raised to respond to the needs following the hostilities.

90. On the development front, he indicated that the United Nations was working towards its first United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine, which had been developed in full partnership with the Palestinian Authority. The mechanisms of the local aid coordination structure, which brought together the Authority, donor countries, the United Nations and civil society organizations, would need to be adjusted to the new ground reality. He reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to supporting Palestinian state-building, with the State of Palestine in the driver's seat. A range of complex restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation presented a challenge for aid coordination, and engaging with Israel on various fronts, including political and operational, was necessary.

91. He noted the substantial progress of the State of Palestine in many areas. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had confirmed in 2011 the readiness of Palestine for statehood, and the vote in the General Assembly in November 2012 had been an important step forward. In that regard, he underscored the paradoxical gap between the hopes associated with the status of non-member observer State and the reality on the ground. He emphasized the importance of creating a vibrant private sector, which would also require enhanced access for the Palestinians to Area C for purposes of economic activity, trade between Gaza and the West Bank, and the expansion of Palestinian exports to the rest of the world.

92. On the financial side, he stated the current period might be the worst since 2007, given that the State of Palestine had ended 2012 with a budgetary deficit of \$1.6 billion. He commended the Government for its deficit reduction efforts, welcomed recent additional pledges from donors and stressed the need for predictability in the transfer by Israel of Palestinian revenues in order to put the finances of the State of Palestine on a stable track.

93. He outlined the various ways in which the occupation had constrained human development. It had threatened the financial stability of the Palestinian Authority and stymied the growth of the private sector and the economy. It had led to aid dependency and had perpetuated humanitarian aid, adding to the Palestinian people's disempowerment and thereby creating tensions. On a positive note, the Palestinians had made progress in state-building and security, in the delivery of services and in financial management. At the same time, however, the occupation had become more entrenched and was increasingly imposing a straitjacket on human development. That could torpedo the accomplishments of the Government and undermine its state-building achievements.

94. In conclusion, he noted that safeguarding the financial and political stability of the Palestinian Authority was the first essential step towards attaining sustainable human development, and identified three actions to be taken in that regard: Israel must stop withholding tax revenues; the Authority should present a more balanced budget; and donors should increase their support. He considered, however, that real progress could be achieved only through a meaningful peace process.

95. The Country Director of Action against Hunger in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Chair of the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), **Charles Silva**, highlighted the work of non-governmental organizations operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under the AIDA umbrella. He said that the AIDA constituency was diverse in terms of size and activities and comprised 96 members, which partnered with a wide array of stakeholders, such as the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations, municipal bodies, national non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations. International non-governmental organizations implemented programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory worth several million dollars annually, covering areas such as water and sanitation, food security, human rights, education and protection.

96. He said that international non-governmental organizations added value to or filled gaps in the work carried out by intergovernmental bodies in four particular areas. First, in the area of emergency response, AIDA members focused their activities on demolitions and evictions, settler violence and slow onset natural disasters. Settler violence was mainly socioeconomic in nature, consisting of the destruction of trees, killing of livestock, damaging of water reserves and displacement of the population. In such cases, international non-governmental organizations provided psychosocial and mental health support. In the case of demolitions and family evictions, international non-governmental organizations provided cash grants, temporary shelter and legal assistance. The second area was the protection/protective presence in Area C. For example, Palestinian children living in Area C often needed to be accompanied to school to be protected from the settlers. AIDA members also provided legal assistance and were doing important work by documenting the cases.

97. The third area of work mentioned was building the capacity of national non-governmental organizations. In 2012, AIDA members had worked with more than 135 national non-governmental organizations and 92 community-based organizations, and had provided \$38 million in direct assistance to those partners (at least \$4.7 million of which had been spent on capacity-building). The main purpose was to enhance the governance ability and management functions of non-governmental organizations in order to enable them to meet their own needs. The fourth area of work described was global advocacy. International non-governmental organizations were uniquely placed to document violations and advocate on behalf of the Palestinians on issues such as the need to lift the blockade, end violations of international humanitarian law and achieve freedom of movement and access to water resources. He said that Israel was increasingly obstructing the advocacy efforts of AIDA members, often blocking human rights reports and preventing access by United Nations teams and the visits of special rapporteurs.

98. In conclusion, he stressed that non-governmental organizations carried out essential work in raising international awareness of human rights violations in the region, and called for more reference to and accountability in respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

99. The Professor of International Criminal Law at the University of Milan, **Chantal Meloni**, participating as a discussant, said that the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been experiencing a regular deterioration of what was already a dire situation. Echoing the statement of the Palestinian Minister of Finance, she noted that development under occupation was impossible unless it was aimed at ending the occupation. She stressed that the responsibility of the international community was not to be paying for an occupation but rather to end it and allow sustainable development to take place. She called for greater accountability on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides and expressed her frustration concerning European and international involvement, which appeared to be continuously rewarding Israel for its intensification of the occupation, the apparent support for the Palestinian cause notwithstanding. She regretted the lack of follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, also known as the Goldstone report, where a first-class legal document, analysing with accuracy the crimes committed on both sides, had not led to any practical result and had even been buried, she said, at the time of the Palestinian bid for membership in the United Nations. She also mentioned the United Nations fact-finding mission on settlements and the recent report of the European Union on Jerusalem, both of which contained strong language but, after their release, had unfortunately been followed by a lack of specific action. Such a practice, she warned, undermined the underlying principles of international law and sent a negative message to the Palestinian people.

100. In the ensuing discussion, **Mr. Habeeb** wondered why the European Union had a policy of double standards towards Israel, the latter's violations of international law notwithstanding. The representative of the Norwegian Refugee Council, **Charmain Mohamed**, said that some steps towards the rescue and transition phases mentioned by Mr. Gatt-Rutter could be taken immediately: for example, an immediate freeze of demolition orders and an investment in master planning in Area C. He took note of increased references by the European Union to international law and asked whether there was a plan to quantify progress by Israel against such benchmarks and whether the European Union would consider any measures if Israel failed to meet them. **Ms. Enardu** said that Europe, because of its past, had a very complicated relationship with Israel, clouded by a sense of guilt. She was of the view that there would be a time when the reports of Israeli violations would come down in an avalanche and Israel would be held accountable for its actions.

101. **Mr. Gatt-Rutter** acknowledged the gap between the content of the report and the actions on the ground, noting that one should nevertheless not underestimate the value of such reports because they were important in bringing key issues to the forefront of the international agenda. His office was addressing the issues concerning Area C in its discussions with Israel. He recognized that sanctions were unlikely because the European Union operated by consensus and reaching agreement on some issues could be challenging. **Ms. Meloni** stated that, while everyone was appreciative of the words of the European Union, actions were needed to ensure the rule of law. The representative of Assopace Palestina, **Luisa Morgantini**, also expressed frustration at the gap between the strong language in the reports and the lack of diplomatic action, calling for more coherence in the work of the European Union. She praised the work of the Palestinian popular committees whose actions on the ground were, she said, giving rise to hope. **Mr. Silva** said that international non-

governmental organizations responded to humanitarian conditions and not to the underlying political context. His organization, Action Against Hunger, was apolitical and was not even advocating as such the two-State solution. He said, however, that there was an implicit state-building function in the emergency response of non-governmental organizations. For example, the response to drought in 2011 had comprised the construction of structures that were currently managed by local institutions and could therefore respond to drought in the future. **Mr. Rajasingham** spoke about the humanitarian imperative when a population could not respond to a problem and when, as in the case of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the duty bearer was not complying with its obligations.

IV. Closing session

102. **Mr. Mansour** spoke on behalf of the State of Palestine. He expressed his gratitude to the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the United Nations, representatives of Governments, civil society organizations and all of the participants in the Seminar for their diverse and meaningful contributions. He said the diversity was important for exploring the subject of the Seminar from various perspectives so that the reality on the ground was properly represented. He also expressed his gratitude to those who spoke about the historic General Assembly resolution of 29 November 2012. The Seminar was the first gathering of its kind following the adoption of the resolution, which had set in motion a new political culture in which the Palestinians would be actively solidifying the pillars of the State of Palestine, both at home and in the international arena. He added that the Palestinians were a very resilient and creative people, continually in search of innovative ways to peacefully bring an end to the Israeli occupation.

103. He said that he was grateful for the principled expressions of support, and that it was up to the Palestinian people to help the international community embark on something fresh. There was a need to do something different after 20 years of on-and-off negotiations. Following the signature of the Oslo Accords, the situation had worsened and the Israeli settlement expansion policies had intensified, reaching an unprecedented level in the aftermath of the Palestinian bid in 2011 for full membership in the United Nations. He warned that, if Israel began to build in the so-called E1 area, it would signify an end to the two-State solution.

104. Four years previously, he said, the Palestinians and their partners within the international community had had a plan: to build the State of Palestine and end the Israeli occupation in the span of two years. The reactions of the international community had been enthusiastic and, once approved, the plan had been well funded. The Palestinians had abided by their half of the agreement, fortifying their institutions, while the other half had remained unfulfilled. After their readiness for statehood had been recognized, Palestinians could no longer wait for Israel to decide on their fate and had decided to bring the case to the United Nations. The time had come, following the vote in November 2012, for the partners of the State of Palestine to back up their heartfelt words and overwhelming support with action.

105. He drew attention to the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, organized by the Committee in Cairo in 2012, which had estimated the cost of the occupation to the Palestinian economy to be between \$7 billion and \$9 billion per year. He considered that an annual report that would examine the impact of the occupation on the Palestinian economy should be produced in order to bring forward financial arguments in support of the viability of the State of Palestine, showing that it could function without aid dependency. He urged the development partners of the State of Palestine to constructively support the efforts aimed at ending the occupation, noting that settlement activities had to stop if a meaningful political process were to take place in 2013. If the latter failed, arguments against the two-State solution would be reinforced. He called upon the leadership of Europe to present new ideas on how to move forward and to hold Israel to account, noting at the same time that the State of Palestine had the option of approaching the International Criminal Court.

106. He also drew attention to the recent death in Israeli custody of Arafat Jaradat, a Palestinian prisoner, and the months-long hunger strike by other prisoners which, he said, added to the current sense of disappointment. He warned that all that anger and frustration should be channelled through a meaningful political process, lest the Palestinians had no other choice but to launch a massive, peaceful revolt. Lastly, he urged the partners of the State of Palestine to do their utmost to ensure that the Palestinian people would soon achieve their goal of living with freedom, dignity and independence.

107. **Mr. Tanin** delivered the closing statement on behalf of the Committee. He expressed the Committee's appreciation of FAO support for the organization of the Seminar. The Committee, he said, looked forward to a further consolidation of the Palestinian institutions and expressed the hope that they would continue to reinforce the grounds for a future independent and sovereign Palestinian State, free of Israeli occupation. The Committee was appreciative of the vital efforts of the United Nations, the donor community, the Palestinian and international civil society organizations and the private sector. He also commended the creative ideas expressed during the Seminar.

108. He warned that the capacity of the State of Palestine to carry out its important task was at risk, in particular owing to the strain on its financial situation, and because of the growing challenges faced by field practitioners in providing technical support to the Government. He called for the strong private-sector investment needed to drive sustainable growth, while acknowledging that many layers of physical, administrative and security restrictions constrained that sector. The current deterioration of the situation on the ground was a dramatic reminder that the potential of the State of Palestine could only be maximized with a just, equitable and lasting peace with Israel and that it was time to invest meaningfully in that prospect.

109. In conclusion, he said that time should not be wasted. Past experience had shown that, when neglected, hope could turn into frustration, despair and even extremism. That was the reason why, he said, he opted for optimism, and was convinced that the Seminar, along with the recent Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development organized by the Government of Japan, was a timely opportunity to foster support for the Government of the State of Palestine, its institutions and action.

Annex I

Summary of the Chair

1. The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, examined the impact of the Israeli occupation on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine, the challenges and opportunities of the new reality of Palestine as a State under occupation, and the role of and assistance provided by the international donor community. Representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, including various United Nations bodies, and civil society, together with expert speakers, shared their expertise. The Seminar was the first gathering of its kind since the General Assembly vote in November 2012, when Palestine was accorded non-

member observer State status at the United Nations.

2. In an opening statement, the Secretary-General stressed the crucial importance of making specific progress towards the two-State solution for the future of Palestinian institutions. He expressed concern at the continued settlement expansion by Israel and at the current financial crisis of the Palestinian Government. He also voiced concern at the recent death of the Palestinian prisoner, Arafat Jaradat. He reiterated the importance of the full transfer of Palestinian tax and customs revenues withheld by Israel following the granting to Palestine of non-member observer State status at the United Nations in a timely and predictable manner, and renewed his call upon all donors to fulfil their pledges and increase their support. He furthermore reaffirmed continued United Nations support for Palestinian institution-building and humanitarian assistance. The Chair of the Committee deplored Israel's economic reprisals following the vote in the General Assembly on 29 November 2012, and called for a push by the international community on the political, economic and legal fronts to relaunch international engagement, restart meaningful negotiations, achieve reconciliation, strengthen Palestinian institutions and end the Gaza blockade. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations highlighted the Organization's efforts to help improve the agricultural sector and to alleviate food and nutrition insecurity throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
3. The Palestinian Minister of Finance and representative of the State of Palestine at the Seminar noted that the Palestinian economy had not been allowed to reach its full potential owing to the occupation, and that it had little or no control over its economic affairs. The Paris Protocol, which was governing Israeli-Palestinian economic relations, had created a one-sided customs union whereby Palestinian goods and services were largely excluded from the Israeli market. He pointed to numerous violations of the Protocol by Israel and called for mechanisms to be put in place to ensure its implementation by Israel. He expressed optimism following the new status of the State of Palestine, and urged the donor community to continue to support Palestinian institution-building efforts and challenge Israeli policies, and to support projects in Gaza, projects that helped to connect Palestinians in East Jerusalem with the rest of the West Bank, and projects in Area C. He also spoke of the importance of properly labelling and boycotting settlement products, and to ensure that companies that profited from the occupation were held accountable. Lastly, he stressed the need for political progress, which was closely linked to economic progress. A number of representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations reaffirmed their support for the efforts of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination and outlined their contributions, programmes and initiatives to that effect.
4. The participants then reviewed the impact of the occupation on the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine, with expert speakers from United Nations bodies (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process), Palestinian, Israeli and international civil society and the private sector. In the West Bank, the experts agreed, the restrictive policies, home demolitions and land confiscation by Israel had led to a staggering poverty rate of 22 per cent, food insecurity that affected 24 per cent of Palestinians and an unemployment rate of 20.5 per cent. Israeli restrictions on the movement of people and goods, in addition to threats to life, liberty and personal security, had created a protection crisis. Most of the problems in Area C could be traced to the Israeli settlement policy and the continuing construction of the separation wall, given that many Palestinians living there lacked access to their livelihoods and were, in addition, often victims of settler violence. Experts expressed confidence that the need for humanitarian assistance would drop sharply if those policies were revoked; people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory were well trained and highly educated and could generate solutions if given the opportunity.
5. In the Gaza Strip, poverty was crushing, reaching 39 per cent. The unemployment rate had reached 35 per cent, with women facing disproportionately high rates, and more than 80 per cent of the population was receiving some form of international aid or relief assistance. Even with the food assistance provided by UNRWA and the World Food Programme (WFP), 44 per cent of the Gazan population was food insecure. One of the most urgent needs was that of access to clean water, given that 90 per cent of the water piped into Gaza was not safe to drink. The reason for that situation was the blockade, together with the successive layers of restrictions that had been put in place since 2007, which had all but destroyed local productive capacity and labour markets, devastated the private sector, ensured the area's isolation from the rest of the world and promoted its dependence on tunnel smuggling and external aid. The reconstruction effort in the Gaza Strip faced several hurdles: limited access to construction materials and related imports; inadequate levels of financial support; a major gap in human resources as work stoppages in the construction sector forced construction workers to seek other employment; and an organizational gap created by internal Palestinian divisions.
6. It was noted that Palestinian women had borne the brunt of the Israeli occupation. Employment levels for women had continued to drop, and even as women saw some gains in education, that progress was not being translated into employment. The occupation had also contributed to gender inequalities and altered traditional family structures and gender relations.
7. The state of the Palestinian agricultural sector, which had been unable to realize its productive and employment potential because of the occupation, was also closely examined at the Seminar. The contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product (GDP) had shrunk from 12 per cent in 1995 to 5.5 per cent in 2011, and only 35 per cent of the Palestinian irrigable land was actually under irrigation. In the West Bank, land had been expropriated for the construction of the separation wall and 10 per cent was located in the zone between the wall and the 1967 borders. In addition, Palestinian trees were being regularly uprooted, and 82 per cent of Palestinian groundwater was being confiscated by Israel. The olive industry was deteriorating as a result of the loss of land, trees and water. In Gaza, the fishing industry had collapsed owing to Israeli restrictions that allowed fishing only within 3 nautical miles, as opposed to the internationally recognized 20 miles.
8. Providing an Israeli perspective on the impact of the occupation, one expert argued that the continuation of the settlement policy was beneficial to Israel as it offered a solution to the Israeli socioeconomic problems, in particular profits for construction and security companies, subsidized housing and labour for the Israeli poor and middle classes, and a boost to Israeli police and military exports.
9. The experts identified numerous opportunities that should be seized in order to strengthen the Palestinian economy. In the area of agriculture, it was pointed out that, the heavy losses notwithstanding, the sector was strategic, resilient and capable of achieving a swift and sustainable recovery. Access to land, water, markets and investment in infrastructure could lead to expansion in irrigated land in Area C, including the Jordan Valley, adding more than 25 per cent to Palestinian GDP; steps should be taken by the Palestinian Government and the international community to mitigate Israeli restrictions; and a programme to replant trees should be put in place. A suggestion was also put forward for the establishment of a well-funded, not-for-profit public agricultural bank.
10. The participants called for the lifting of the land, sea and air blockade in the Gaza Strip and stressed the importance of the connection between Gaza and the West Bank. Redressing the current situation would require political will, accompanied by sustained investment in the Gazan economy. It was also vital to allow the steady import and export of goods and services, currently restricted to international organizations, and to protect civilians from hostilities. The recently announced Qatari fund, with some \$450 million to be disbursed over the coming three years for projects in development, infrastructure and education, was expected to considerably bolster economic activity, especially in the construction sector.
11. For the Palestinians to develop a strong and free market economy, liberating Palestine from its forced dependency on the Israeli economy and developing a vigorous private sector capable of achieving sustainable economic growth was identified as key. One private-sector representative suggested that

the Paris Protocol should be replaced with a new framework that was conducive to Palestinian economic independence and consisted of the following elements: independent trade policy and control over commercial crossings, in addition to equitable economic relations with Israel; full and unimpeded access to Palestinian natural resources; independent fiscal and monetary policies; new sources of growth, such as knowledge-based industries and services, and tourism; development of infrastructure in the areas of transport, energy, telecommunications, tourism and water; and modern education and health-care services.

12. Importantly, the Palestinian Authority, in partnership with OECD, had been focused on achieving good governance in order to build strong institutions and foster economic growth, and was aligning its efforts with some standards and good practices of OECD, mainly in the fields of rule of law, public sector integrity and e-governance. That had involved enhanced policy dialogue between Palestinian and OECD representatives; OECD support for Palestinian institution-building efforts; and capacity-building and the transfer of knowledge. One specific example of the outcomes was the integrity initiative, which had led to the elaboration in 2012 of a code of conduct for public officials as a safeguard against corruption.

13. The representative of the European Union stressed that the Union's financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority was part of a broader political ambition to support the naissance of an independent Palestinian State. In the immediate phase, the Union's priority was the stabilization of the Authority. It was necessary to revisit the Paris Protocol to ensure more automaticity of tax transfers and thereby predictability, and clearer references to international law. Second, in relation to the Gaza Strip, the permanent opening of crossings for persons and goods was necessary. Lastly, the development of a strong and vibrant private sector was important. The Authority remained the most credible and important vehicle for the realization of a Palestinian State.

14. The participants agreed that the precarious situation in the State of Palestine was human-caused, a result of the occupation, and the underlying issues were political rather than economic. They noted that development under occupation was impossible unless targeted at ending the occupation. They challenged the international community to change its practical engagement in the region and to stop paying for the occupation. Deep frustration was expressed with regard to European and international engagement with Israel, which lacked any real attempt to ensure accountability. The work of non-governmental organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was also highlighted, because they added value to, or filled gaps in, the work being carried out by intergovernmental bodies in emergency response, providing a protective presence in Area C, capacity-building of local civil society and global advocacy.

15. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, in his concluding remarks as the representative of the State of Palestine, stressed the historical significance of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 29 November 2012, which had to be translated into reality. He called upon the partners of the State of Palestine to ensure that that achievement would be more than symbolic, and to put pressure on Israel to end its illegal activities on Palestinian land. He expressed the hope that Europe would take the lead, in particular by imposing sanctions on Israel, especially in relation to products originating from settlements and the criminals responsible for settler violence. Failing that, the Palestinians would have to resort to the other courses of action available to them, including the option of approaching the International Criminal Court.

16. In closing the Seminar, the Vice-Chair of the Committee warned that the capacity of the Palestinian Government to carry out its important task was at risk, especially owing to the strain on its financial situation. He noted that the potential of the State of Palestine could only be maximized with a just, equitable and lasting peace with Israel, and called upon all to invest in that prospect.

Annex II

List of participants

Speakers

Reham Al Wehaidy	Chair, Al Athar Global Consulting, Inc. Gaza
Carlos Conde	Head of the Middle East-North Africa Governance Programme of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Paris
Mahmoud Elkhafif	Coordinator, Assistance to the Palestinian People Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Geneva
John Gatt-Rutter	Representative of the European Union to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Jerusalem
Amal Khreishe	Director General, Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development Ramallah
Ramesh Rajasingham	Head of Office, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Jerusalem
Charles Silva	Country Director, Action against Hunger, Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Chair, Association of International Development Agencies Jerusalem
Robert Turner	Director of Operations, UNRWA Gaza
Sergio Yahni	Co-Director, Alternative Information Centre Jerusalem

Discussants

Maria Grazia Enardu	Researcher, History of International Relations University of Florence Florence
Chantal Meloni	Professor of International Criminal Law, Universitt of Milan, and Russell Tribunal on Palestine Milan
Natalino Ronzitti	Professor of International Law, Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli, School of Law, and Scientific Advisor, Istituto Affari Internazionali Rome

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

Abdou Salam Diallo	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, New York Chair of the Committee
Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, New York Vice-Chair of the Committee
Zahir Tanin	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, New York Vice-Chair of the Committee
Christopher Grima	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York Rapporteur of the Committee
Riyad Mansour	Ambassador Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, New York

Representative of the Secretary-General

Oscar Fernandez-Taranco	Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs
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Governments

Afghanistan	Zia Nezam, Ambassador to Italy Fazull Mahmood Rahemme Pajwak, Second Secretary Embassy in Rome Nora Gordon, Secretary to the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations
Algeria	Rachid Marif, Ambassador to Italy and Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) Mellah Mohamed, Minister Plenipotentiary Hocine Latti, Minister Counsellor Karima Boubekur, Diplomatic Secretary Embassy in Rome
Argentina	Gustavo Infante, Deputy Minister and Permanent Representative to FAO Andreu Repetti, Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO
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Costa Rica	Orlando Guzman V, Chargé d'affaires Permanent Representation to FAO
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Cyprus	Leonidas S. Markides, Ambassador to Italy Christina Pitta, Alternative Representative to United Nations Agencies in Rome Meropi Christofi, First Secretary, Embassy in Rome
Czech Republic	Radka Bordes Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ecuador	Jenny Lalama, Counsellor Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations in New York
Egypt	Mohamed El Fiki, Embassy in Rome
Ethiopia	Abreha Aseffa, Minister Plenipotentiary, Embassy in Rome
France	Stanislas Alfonsi, Attaché, Embassy in Rome
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Greece	Nike-Ekaterini Koutrakou, Minister Plenipotentiary Ioannis Maloukos, Counsellor Embassy in Rome
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Hungary	Hamar Balázs, Permanent Representative to FAO
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Malaysia	Paduka Halimah Abdullah, Ambassador Ahmad Fahmi Ahmad Sarkawi, Counsellor Embassy in Rome
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Mauritania	Moktar Ould Dahi, Ambassador to Italy
Mexico	Alan Romero Zavala, Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO Benito Santiago Jiménez Sauma, Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO
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Mozambique	Carla Elisa Mucavi, Ambassador to Italy Lourenço Cumbe, Counsellor Embassy in Rome

Namibia	Jerobeam Shaanika, Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Namibia to the United Nations, New York
Oman	Said Alharthy, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to FAO Mahmoud Rasmi, Coordinator with United Nations Agencies Permanent Representation to FAO
Pakistan	Rahim Qureshi, Deputy Head of Mission Permanent Representation to FAO
Philippines	Grace T. Cruz-Fabella, Minister, Embassy in Rome
Russian Federation	Victor Fedorinov, First Secretary, Alternate Permanent Representative Ivan Konstantinopolskiy, Attaché, Alternate Permanent Representative Permanent Mission to United Nations Organizations in Rome
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Spain	Francisco Capote, First Secretary, Embassy in Rome
Sudan	Mohamed Seghairoon Elsheik, Minister Plenipotentiary Abla Malik Osman Malik, Agricultural Counsellor Embassy in Rome
Thailand	Wanlika Ungsakul, First Secretary, Embassy in Rome
Tunisia	Naceur Mestiri, Ambassador Embassy in Rome

Uganda	Mumtaz Kassam, Chargé d'affaires a.i. Robert Sabiiti, First Secretary, Agricultural Attaché Embassy in Rome
Ukraine	Yana Skibinetska, First Secretary, Embassy in Rome
United Republic of Tanzania	Ayoub Mndeme, Agricultural Attaché, Embassy in Rome
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Jorge Valero Briceño, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York, and Head of Delegation Gladys Francisca Urbaneja Duran, Permanent Representative to FAO Luis Álvarez Fermin, Minister Counsellor Claudia Silva, Assistant Permanent Representation to FAO
Yemen	Omer Hussein Saba'a, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Head of Mission Haytham Abdulmomen Shoja'aadin, Counsellor Responsible for United Nations Organizations Embassy in Rome
Zambia	Banda Alick, Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO Victoria Mushibwe, Counsellor, Embassy in Rome
Zimbabwe	Irene Bosha, Counsellor, Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO
<p>Non-member States having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters</p>	
State of Palestine	Nabeel Kassis, Minister of Finance Sabri M.S. Ateyeh, Ambassador to Italy Hussein Al Aflak, Ambassador to FAO, IFAD and WFP Ahmad Hamoudeh, First Secretary Jamal Jadallah, Press Officer
<p>Intergovernmental organizations</p>	
European Union	John Gatt-Rutter, Representative to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and UNRWA Jerusalem

League of Arab States	Ghanim Taha Al-Shibli, Ambassador, Head of Mission in Italy and Observer to FAO, IFAD and WFP Zouhaier Zouari, Minister Plenipotentiary
Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Fund for International Development	Souhad Khriesat, Technical Assistant Officer
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	Carlos Conde, Head of the Middle East-North Africa Governance Programme Miriam Allam, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate
Organization of Islamic Cooperation	Samir Bakr Diab, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine Affairs
Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean	Sergio Piazzi, Secretary-General Valerio Carafa, Assistant to the Secretary-General
Union for the Mediterranean	Rafiq Hussein, Deputy Secretary-General
United Nations organs, agencies and bodies	
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Vrej Jijyan, Country Programme Manager, Near East, North Africa and Europe Division
International Labour Organization	Luigi Cal, Director Office in Rome
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Ramesh Rajasingham, Head of Office, Occupied Palestinian Territory
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Mahmoud Elkhafif, Coordinator, Assistance to the Palestinian People, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies
Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat	Gherardo Casini, Head of Office, Italy
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Robert Turner, Director of Operations

National Committee for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Italy	Marina Calvino, Secretary-General Cayetana de Zulueta, President Giuseppe Cassini, Vice-President Ilaria Masinarra, Communication Manager Claudia Mauri, Fundraising Manager
World Food Programme	Oscar Ekdahl, Policy Officer

Civil society organizations

Action against Hunger	Charles Silva, Country Director
Al-Haq	Grazia Careccia, Head, Legal Research and Advocacy Department
Alternative Information Centre	Sergio Yahni, Co-Director
Arab-Jewish Movement for Social and Political Change	Roni Ball, Member of the Coordinating Committee
Association of International Development Agencies	Charles Silva, Chair
Assopace Palestina	Luisa Morgantini, President
Cooperazione Internazionale	Sabrina Munaó, Area Manager
Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergenti	Gianni Toma, Desk Officer for projects in the State of Palestine
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Egyptian Committee for Solidarity	Helmi Abdel Razzag Elhadidi, President
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Fundación Promoción Social de la Cultura	Rosa Miranda, Consultant Carmen Seoane, Consultant
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Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	Guillaume Charron, Country Analyst
International Association for Water Law	Dominique Alh�riti�re, Honorary Chair
International Committee for the Development of People	Gianluca Falcitelli, Area Manager for Asia and the Middle East
International Middle East Establishment for Academic Counselling and Guidance	Akram A.H. AlSarhi, Projects Coordinator Osama H.A. Madi, Democracy and Human Rights Programme Assistant
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National Centre for Community Rehabilitation	Khaled O. Abu Zaid, Director-General Sarhan Abu Kalloub, Capacity Development Programme Manager
National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training	Bassam Saleh
Norwegian Refugee Council	Charmain Mohamed, Advocacy, Information and Protection Adviser, Occupied Palestinian Territory
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Palestinians without Frontiers	Mahdi I.M. Kafina, Programme Manager Sameeh M.K. Al Masallati, Advocacy Trainer
Popular Struggle Coordination Committee	Mohammed Khatib, General Coordinator Yacoub Abu Hadwan, General Assistant
Russell Tribunal on Palestine	Chantal Meloni, Professor of International Criminal Law, University of Milan
Save Youth Future Society	Husam H.D. Abusultan, Capacity Development Programme Officer Wafa M.H. Halawa, Public Relations Officer
Civil Action Committees-	Ahmed R.A. Alhossary, Trainer
SAWAED	Ali M.M. Khalifa, Logistics Officer
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Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development	Amal Kreishe, Director General
Vento di Terra	Maria Luisa Rioli, Project Manager Giulio de Lieto Vollaro, Project Assistant
Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo	Emanuela Chiang, Middle East Desk Officer
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World Federation of Trade Unions	Mohammed A.M. Iqnaibi, Representative for Palestine and Adviser on Arab Issues

