



DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

**UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY
IN SUPPORT OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE**

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization headquarters, Paris
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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace was held at United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris on 12 and 13 July 2005, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 59/28 and 59/29 of 1 December 2004.
2. The Committee was represented at the Conference by a delegation comprising Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Diana Carmentate Perez (Cuba); and Somaia Barghouti (Palestine).
3. Eighteen representatives of civil society organizations were invited to serve as members of the Steering Committee of the Conference (see the list of participants in annex III). The Steering Committee members chaired different sessions of the Conference, conferred with other participants and drafted the Plan of Action in consultation with the United Nations Committee delegation, which was discussed and adopted by Conference participants with modification (see annex I).
4. The Conference consisted of an opening and a closing, two plenary and two workshop sessions. Summaries of discussions from the six workshops are attached (see annex II). Presentations were made by 9 panellists and 6 resource persons, including Palestinians and Israelis. In addition, representatives of 48 civil society organizations participated in the Conference. Representatives of 41 Governments, the Holy See, Palestine, 1 intergovernmental organization and 3 United Nations system entities attended as observers.

II. Opening statements

5. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a statement read out by his representative to the Conference, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, said that the Conference was a fine example of the evolution that had taken place in the relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Over the years, the United Nations had engaged increasingly actively with civil society in the search for solutions to common concerns.
6. He reiterated that the international community was strongly committed to the goal of two States – Israel and a sovereign, viable, democratic and contiguous Palestinian State – living side by side in peace and security, as stipulated in the Road Map and endorsed by Security Council resolution 1515 (2003). At its meeting in London in June 2005, the Quartet had reaffirmed its support for the Israeli initiative to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, and for an orderly Palestinian takeover of those areas. The Quartet had also emphasized the urgent need for the parties to work directly and cooperatively with each other, assisted by the Quartet’s Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, James Wolfensohn, with the support of international donors.
7. Mr. Annan said that despite some progress on the ground, the world community remained concerned about the continuing expansion of settlements, the construction of the barrier in the West Bank, and acts of violence. The parties had been reminded repeatedly of their obligations under the Road Map and of the need to refrain from actions that could prejudice the outcome of the final status negotiations. The United Nations, for its part, would spare no effort in advancing the peace process while continuing to help the Palestinians to cope with socio-economic hardship. He emphasized that the support of civil society was indispensable in all efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East.

8. **Ravan A. G. Farhâdi**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the Committee joined the international community in calling for the successful implementation of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, fully coordinated with the Palestinian Authority. Cooperation between the two parties throughout the withdrawal process should provide a basis for the next indispensable steps to revitalize the Road Map. The Committee believed that the most practicable means for the parties to seek a negotiated solution of the conflict remained the Road Map, which should lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

9. While the attention of the international media was focused on the disengagement, however, the Government of Israel had been pursuing its plans to expand major settlements in the West Bank and extend the boundaries of Jerusalem. The "Greater Jerusalem" settlements were being expanded with the Government's approval, in total contradiction of Israel's obligations under the Road Map. The Ministry of Construction and Housing had continued to issue tenders for the construction of hundreds of new houses in those settlements. The most worrisome was the so-called "E-1 plan" aimed at connecting East Jerusalem with the largest West Bank settlement of "Ma'ale Adumim" by building some 3,500 homes in the intermediary area. Completion of the project would effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, therefore thwarting the Palestinians' ultimate goal to establish the capital of their future State in East Jerusalem. Another issue of concern was the Israeli attempts to change the demographic composition of the city. A few months earlier, the Jerusalem municipality plan to raze an entire Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem with 88 homes had become public.

10. Mr. Farhâdi said that the Committee was of the view that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004 on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory provided all actors of the international community, including civil society organizations, with a powerful tool to pursue the various peace efforts at all levels and to strengthen the movement in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. First and foremost, there was a need for information and explanation to raise the level of understanding by the public at large. The Court had brought international law back to the forefront of the dialogue concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ruling provided solid arguments, emphasizing not only the responsibilities of Israel, but also the legal obligations of all States to restore international justice.

11. The long-standing position of the Committee was that the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the continued occupation of Palestinian land by Israel and, resulting from that, the denial of the inalienable rights of an entire people. A final and sustainable solution to the conflict required a complete end of the occupation, the creation of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, and the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right of return of Palestine refugees. A lasting solution had to be measured against the norms of existing international law, as it had been successfully implemented in many previous situations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

12. **Hind Khoury**, Minister of State of the Palestinian Authority, said that the Palestinians were determined to coordinate with Israel to assure its complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, as a first step towards implementing the Road Map. Nevertheless, in order for the Palestinians to be able to continue their reform process, and in order for any peace initiative to reach fruition, Israel should make a more serious commitment and bring about substantial changes on the ground based on international law. Despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Israel continued to build the wall, expropriating Palestinian land, severing Palestinian communities and isolating Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. Moreover, an entire Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem was under the threat of destruction by the Israeli authorities.

13. Ms. Khoury said that the international community had done nothing to stop Israel's human rights violations, condoning Israeli action as if the country were above international law. Nearly 40 draft resolutions of the Security Council critical of Israel had been vetoed, and there were over 80 Security Council resolutions and hundreds of General Assembly resolutions that Israel had never abided by. She said that effective global governance was important not only to defend those unable to do so themselves, such as the Palestinians under occupation, but also to act against other global threats, such as terrorism. The application of a double standard to Israeli violations of Palestinian rights would undermine efforts against terrorism because it would increase support for terrorist organizations relying on people's despair. Ms. Khoury called on all civil society institutions to encourage non-violent action such as morally responsible investment and boycotts in order to urge Israel's compliance with its international obligations.

14. **Phyllis Bennis**, Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and Co-Chair of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP), said that there were growing movements around the world supporting boycotts, divestment and sanctions aimed at forcing Israeli compliance with international law and ending the occupation. In the United States, for example, churches had taken the lead: a number of major church organizations, including the Presbyterian Church and the United Church of Christ, had adopted strong resolutions calling for divestment from corporations whose work extended the Israeli occupation. On its part, the ICNP had continued to anchor its work in human rights, international law and the role of the United Nations – a set of tools that it believed provided the best road map for ending the occupation and reaching a just and lasting peace in the region. Over the past year, the ICNP had successfully brought together organizations whose work in support of Palestinian rights and ending the occupation was framed by the common set of those tools, and had organized a series of events focusing on crucial issues.

15. She said the term “disengagement” implied that the Gaza Strip would be left without having to worry about Israeli forces, but the reality was far from it. It was a term of art for a slightly changed but continuing occupation. The entrance and exit of people and goods would remain under the control of the Israeli military authorities, the Palestinians would have no control over borders, water and airspace, and there would not be functioning air and sea ports. The Strip would be isolated into a huge prison, and the only difference from pre-withdrawal would be that the “prison guards” would let the “inmates” run around by themselves inside the prison. She anticipated televised scenes of chaos and weeping women and children being pulled out from their homes by Israeli soldiers during the withdrawal would give Prime Minister Sharon a good reason to convince President Bush that the costs of withdrawal were so unbearable that it would be impossible for Israel to withdraw from other parts of the Occupied Territory. In other words, Mr. Sharon's long-standing plan for a “permanent interim solution” would be imposed in the name of disengaging from the Gaza Strip.

16. Ms. Bennis said that in the wake of the reality of occupation, only international law stood to defend the Palestinian population when the occupation was defended by the most powerful country. Civil society actors around the world had an obligation to uphold international law in the face of Governments neglecting it. The goals of the Conference participants were to network with each other, exchange ideas, expand joint campaigns, consolidate the work of the ICNP, and build ties between civil society and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations in general.

17. The representative of Senegal said that his Government continued to play an important role in seeking a just and sustainable solution of the Palestinian problem. Senegal had held the chairmanship of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since its establishment in 1975 and had been a member of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories since its

establishment in 1968. Part of the cause of the Middle East problem was that there was a major misunderstanding in the minds of people on all sides. The President of the Republic of Senegal had therefore called on the international community to promote dialogue between peoples of all religions in order to advance tolerance.

18. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference said that NGOs had a crucial role in providing information, ensuring the objectivity of various reports from the ground and raising public awareness of the issue. Israel's disengagement plan was a positive development, but there were still crucial problems and issues that remained: the separation wall, settlement expansion, the right of return and the status of Jerusalem.

19. The representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said that the Agency was extremely worried about the consequences of the wall being built in Jerusalem. After completion, the wall would have only 12 gates for 140,000 commuters coming in and out of Jerusalem, but, according to UNRWA estimates, those gates would have the capacity to handle only 12,000 to 14,000 people per day. Palestinian hospitals and other institutions in Jerusalem built and maintained by European donors would be forced to close down or move out. The UNRWA field office in Jerusalem with 500 staff members from the West Bank would also have to move out of the city after the wall construction was completed.

III. Plenary sessions

Plenary I

The current situation on the ground and action by civil society

20. **Adi Dagan**, Spokesperson for the Coalition of Women for Just Peace, Tel Aviv, said that one of the goals of the Coalition was to bring about a political and social change in Israel by challenging the notion that what was good for Palestinians was bad for Israelis, and vice versa. For example, volunteers working for one of the groups comprising the Coalition, Machsom Watch (Checkpoint Watch), went daily to some 40 military checkpoints in the West Bank to document violations of Palestinians' human rights. The goal was to bring to light what was happening under the Israeli occupation through the media, public meetings and advocacy. They would also intervene when people were harassed, detained and prevented from passing. The group had chosen checkpoints as the focus of its activity based on the notion that they were one of the major forms of collective punishment of Palestinians. The message the group was trying to deliver to the Israelis was that that form of collective punishment was not only unjust and illegal but also negative for Israelis: the suffering, humiliation and poverty those checkpoints caused only deepened Palestinian despair and hatred towards Israel. She and her colleagues had heard so many times Palestinians at the checkpoints say, "In these places future bombers are born."

21. Ms. Dagan said that through another project of the Coalition, "From a Different Viewpoint," she and her fellow activists brought Israelis who did not know about the separation wall, had not seen the wall or had never even met the Palestinians before to the sites of the wall, in order to give them firsthand experience and have them meet Palestinians whose lives were affected by the wall. She said those activities of the Coalition were part of its long-term struggle to convince the Israelis that security, peace and tranquillity could be achieved not through dispossession of Palestinians but, on the contrary, only through justice, human rights for all and a political solution that could satisfy all parties.

22. **Hind Khoury**, Minister of State of the Palestinian Authority, said that the separation wall went deep into the West Bank: 22 kilometres to incorporate the "Ariel" settlement, and 14 kilometres to incorporate the settlements to the east of Jerusalem. The wall took up 9.5 per cent of the West Bank's

most valuable land, including East Jerusalem. For example, one per cent of the 9.5 was in the Qalqilya area, which was accountable for 14 per cent of the West Bank's agricultural produce. Transportation costs for all kinds of goods were excessive, and people in villages north of Jerusalem, for example, did not want to collect their produce any more and left it on their field. While Israeli products were dumped on the Palestinian market, Palestinian products often became valueless before reaching the market due to delay in transportation caused by the checkpoints and other movement restrictions. Also, Israeli settlements on the Palestinian side of the wall took up an additional 8 per cent of the land, and completion of the Israeli plan to control the Jordan Valley would take another 28.5 per cent. In total, the Palestinians would lose nearly half of the West Bank's valuable land.

23. Ms. Khoury said that Jerusalem was the political, economic and cultural heart of Palestine, and without it, there could be no viable Palestinian State and no peace. The metropolitan Jerusalem area, which included East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah, accounted for 30 to 40 per cent of the economy of the whole Occupied Palestinian Territory. Yet, Israel was building rings of human cordons around East Jerusalem by constructing illegal settlements and marking them with a concrete wall, in an attempt to isolate the city from the rest of the West Bank and make sure that the capital of a future Palestinian State would be entirely surrounded by the territory and citizens of a foreign state. Palestinians in Jerusalem were also facing a severe policy of expulsion. The Israeli Cabinet, a few days before, had approved the wall's routing that would exclude 55,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites. The Shu'fat refugee camp, for example, was being isolated by the wall from Jerusalem, and the people in the camp, who had been made refugees twice in 1948 and 1967, were becoming refugees for the third time. She said that, although Israel would provide "humanitarian tunnels" in the wall for those who had to go to work, school and hospital in Jerusalem to be able to come out on the Israeli side of the wall "like small rats", they would eventually lose their rights in the city because they did not have citizenship given by the occupation municipality.

24. Ms. Khoury stated that by ignoring the ICJ advisory opinion, the international community was unwittingly sending a strong message to the enemies of peace that violence was the only option. The wall and settlements were barriers to peace, and they were destroying any possibility for a two-State solution. If Israel wanted to build a wall to advance the cause of peace, all it had to do was to move it to the 1967 border. The newly elected Palestinian leadership was ready to negotiate a fair and sustainable peace with Israel, but the evolving facts on the ground were undermining Palestinian democracy and hopes for peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

25. **Gabi Baramki**, President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace, Ramallah, said that, regardless of their areas of activities, the fundamental cause of the Palestinian NGOs was to resist the occupation by simply keeping the population alive on the Palestinian land. They aimed to enable the community to maintain a normal frame of mind and refrain from slipping into acceptance of occupation as the normal state of affairs. In the area of health, NGOs had been quite active in providing support in primary health care, running clinics in rural areas and improving the accessibility of medical attention to the population as a whole. In the area of mental health, many civil society organizations were active in improving the skills of counsellors and social workers in order to reduce the effects of trauma resulting from the Israeli occupation and its acts of violence against the Palestinians, particularly children.

26. In the field of education, most of the Palestinian universities were supporting the Government in its strategic plan to maintain high-quality education for all qualified high school graduates. He said that high-quality tertiary education was essential for social development and for the creation of an independent State capable of peaceful coexistence with its neighbours. Another area to which NGOs made a very important contribution was art and culture. Thanks to the help of local and international organizations,

people had been able to organize exhibits, concerts, plays, dance events and film festivals, which helped them to elevate the spirit, maintain sanity and create a diversion in the present violent environment.

27. While United Nations resolutions and international law continued to be violated by Israel with little international reaction, Palestinian civil society had started a movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions. The campaign had been initiated by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) to boycott Israeli institutions and was now spreading to other areas, as had happened during the apartheid regime in South Africa. Mr. Baramki said that the campaign should be supported by international NGOs and, eventually, by their Governments, to force Israel to end the occupation and abide by United Nations resolutions.

28. **Achin Vanaik**, Professor of International Relations and Global Politics at Delhi University, said that NGOs needed to establish closer networks regionally, interregionally and internationally, to develop ties with the Israeli peace camp and, more importantly, with civil society in the United States. Effective two-way relationships should be established with different kinds of groups and networks in the United States to exert pressure on US policy: if things could be changed in the United States, that would certainly compel Israel to modify its policy.

29. In Asia, the Asian Peace Alliance had been established in 2001 as an umbrella organization for some 40 organizations from 19 Asian countries. The Alliance had then contributed to the “Jakarta Peace Initiative,” launched at a meeting in Jakarta in May 2003 with organizations and networks from other parts of the world. He acknowledged that while all those campaigns had important programmes on the question of Palestine as part of their broader focus areas, more concentrated focus on the question of Palestine was needed in Asia. In that context, the most important development had been the “Peace in Palestine” conference held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2005 by Peace Malaysia, a coalition of Malaysian civil society organizations, with the support of the Malaysian Government. The Conference, attended by more than 400 civil society organizations from some 35 countries, had decided to establish an Asian regional network – the International Centre on Palestine for Civil Society in the South.

30. Mr. Vanaik said that the goal of NGOs was not to revitalize the peace process or to get the Road Map back on track, but it was to promote a just peace. For that, NGOs had to highlight the Palestinian refugees’ right of return. He said that its implementation or exercise could be negotiated, but it could never be bartered away by anybody. In the context of the Palestine question, that right was as fundamental as the right of free speech. Another fundamental principle that needed to be highlighted was that there could be no transformation of the relationship between the Israelis and Palestinians unless Israel acknowledged its historic injustice against the Palestinians the same way colonizers in the past had acknowledged the wrongdoing. As one of the initiatives that could be taken by NGOs, he suggested that in the United States and the United Kingdom public inquiries of quasi-judicial character into the deaths of Rachel Corrie and Tom Hurndall could help influence public opinion, because people could easily identify what happened to their own nationals with the reality facing the Palestinians. He also advocated promoting opposition, within or outside the United Nations, to military dealings with Israel, and said that the campaign could be directed towards Asian countries that had military deals with Israel.

Plenary II

Strengthening civil society initiatives

31. **Pierre Galand**, Senator in the Belgian Parliament and Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, said that Israel’s disengagement was not being implemented along the lines of the goals of the Road Map and, on the contrary, the Road Map was being

cast aside. Prime Minister Sharon had clearly stated that there would be no second stage of disengagement, and the construction of the wall continued. While Israel only referred to the rulings of its Supreme Court, all aspects of its policy regarding the construction of the wall fully contradicted the ICJ advisory opinion. One year had passed since the issuance of the opinion, but no action had been taken by any Government or by the United Nations. What was being presented today as a new stage was only a unilateral step by Israel according to its own interest, which had very little to do with a genuine peace process. While Israel was disengaging from the Gaza Strip, it was reengaging in the West Bank by constructing the wall and expanding the settlements.

32. Mr. Galand said that Europe had taken bold action in the past against the apartheid regime of South Africa through measures such as sanctions. The same kind of measures needed to be taken against the Israeli occupation policy, but it had to be made clear that action was not against Israel per se but against its violations of Palestinian rights. The European public, whose main concern now was terrorism by Islamic extremists, needed to be well sensitized on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the obligations of the international community so that appropriate action could be taken in Europe to compel Israel to abide by international law. Important initiatives to urge Governments to uphold their obligations under international law were being taken in Europe. One example was an agreement obtained from the Russell Foundation to hold a quasi international tribunal on Israel's violations of Palestinian rights.

33. **Raji Sourani**, General Director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza City, said that after the disengagement, exports and imports from the Gaza Strip would be severely curtailed since there were no operational airports or sea ports. The "Erez" checkpoint between the northern Gaza Strip and Israel would be only for three categories of people: Palestinian officials, international aid workers, and diplomats. Starting in 2008, no workers would be allowed to enter Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Strip would be totally disconnected not only from Israel but also from the West Bank and East Jerusalem as well. The only crossing that would connect the 1.3 million people of Gaza with the outside world would be the Rafah crossing between the southern Gaza Strip and Egypt. The closest airport the people of Gaza would be able to use would be the Cairo airport, some 450 kilometres away from the Strip, and the closest seaport would be one in Egypt almost 350 kilometres away. Israel would retain control of land, sea and air, and simply, the occupation would continue.

34. Fifty-seven years after the Nakba (the Catastrophe), 38 years after the occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and 12 years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, the issue in focus now was merely the redeployment of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinians were expected to be happy about it. People were no longer talking about the construction of the wall, ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem, or settlement expansion. The de facto situation being created was leaving the Palestinians nothing to negotiate for. Israel's strategy behind the disengagement was to derail the entire discussion about the occupation. He stressed that there would not be any other Nakba because the Palestinians would never leave the land under any circumstances, and said that the Palestinians were a strong people but they would definitely be much stronger with the help of the international community.

35. **Na'eem Jeenah**, Spokesman for the Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa and Co-Chair of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP), said that the level of international coordination among solidarity groups had not been at its optimum and they had a severe weakness in developing singular and focused activities in support of the Palestinian struggle. The Plan of Action under discussion focused on activities NGOs could engage in as a unified collective. He drew the attention to a statement adopted on 9 July 2005, the one-year anniversary of the ICJ advisory opinion, by nearly 200 Palestinian organizations, including some in Israel and outside the region, calling for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel until it complied with international law and the universal

principles of human rights. The call had been inspired by the worldwide struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa, and it called also on conscientious Israelis to support it.

36. Mr. Jeenah said that the struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa had been based on two major pillars: internal resistance and international isolation of the apartheid State. Particularly relevant to and important for activities in support of the Palestinian struggle was the latter, international isolation of the oppressor. Calls for international isolation had already been responded to by some, an example of which was a recent decision by the Association of University Teachers in Britain to boycott two Israeli universities: Haifa University, for its alleged threat to fire an Israeli lecturer for supporting a student's research into killings of Palestinians by Israeli troops, and Bar Ilan University, for its alleged links to the College of Judea and Samaria in the "Ariel" settlement. A call for boycotts, divestment and sanctions ("BDS"), stipulated in the Plan of Action under discussion, should be the main focus of the NGOs' activities for the coming year as a coordinated international campaign. Product, cultural, and academic boycotts were for the individual level, divestment from companies supporting the occupation was for the institutional level, as had already been implemented by some church organizations, and sanctions were for the governmental level. He called on Palestinian civil society organizations to lead the coordination of the "BDS" campaign at the international level.

37. **Phyllis Bennis**, Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and Co-Chair of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP), said that lessons could be drawn from the global movement against the war on Iraq that had taken shape over the last few years. The question of Palestine, as part of the dual occupation issue in the Middle East, should be part of that movement, the most powerful social movement since the Vietnam War. On 15 February 2003, people all over the world had taken to the street in 665 cities across the world to say the same thing – no to war – and to tell their Governments not to give in. Because so many Governments had stood with their people, the United Nations had joined those Governments and said no to war. It was true that they had not been able to stop the war, but, because of the global movement, the war had never had legitimacy and the fact that the war was in violation of international law and the United Nations Charter had never been questioned anywhere in the world. That was the kind of movement needed to be created around the question of Palestine – to link the people, Governments and the United Nations.

38. Ms. Bennis said that the United Nations had a potential to play an extraordinary role on the question of Palestine, but it was under attack, now more than ever. Those right wing forces that tried to undermine the institutional legitimacy of the United Nations were focusing first on the question of Palestine: they were trying to undermine the institution's ability to enforce international law and its Charter and stand up against the occupation. The United Nations must not be even-handed between the occupier and the occupied and must stay on the side of the occupied. With the "BDS" (boycotts, divestment and sanctions) campaign as the focus of the coming year's activities, the ICNP had to make the United Nations accountable to be part of the global movement. She said that on the morning of 15 February 2003, as the wave of the demonstrations had reached New York, a small delegation led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa had visited Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the United Nations Secretariat Building. Looking at each other across the table, Nobel Prize laureates and old friends, Archbishop Tutu told Mr. Annan that they had come to claim the United Nations as their own in the name of the global movement for peace, on behalf of the millions of people marching in 665 cities all over the world. That was the kind of job the civil society movement supporting the Palestinian people was tasked with.

IV. Closing statements

39. **Phyllis Bennis**, Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. and Co-Chair of the International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP), referred to the just adopted Plan of Action and emphasized that as the “BDS” (boycotts, divestment and sanctions) campaigns were launched, civil society organizations needed to monitor the process of ending the occupation through the campaigns. As Israel complied with international law and ended the occupation, those campaigns would also be ended.

40. **Somaia Barghouti**, Chargé d’affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, said that that Mission endorsed the just adopted Plan of Action and the outcomes of the workshops. She called on civil society organizations to pressure their respective Governments to adopt effective national campaigns of support for boycotts, divestment and sanctions in any areas appropriate to their societies. The process could be gradual but needed to be sustained. Pressuring Governments to revoke trade, scientific and other agreements with Israel unless it respected human rights clauses in the agreements was another effective way. Also, Palestinian cultural events could deliver messages as strong as political and other means could.

41. **Hind Khoury**, Minister of State of the Palestinian Authority, assured that the Palestinian leadership was ready to support the endeavours of civil society organizations. She also expressed the leadership’s concern and anxiety regarding the threats faced by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and said she hoped all would stand firm behind it to maintain its good work, for the sake of peace, justice and human rights.

42. **Ravan A. G. Farhâdi**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the just adopted Plan of Action pinpointed issues of focus that urgently needed the attention of the international community. The Plan could be the navigator for all civil society actors in the world determined to bring peace to the region, including those who had not been able to attend the Conference, thus every effort should be made to disseminate the Plan as widely as possible. Undoubtedly, however, more important than discussions and the adoption of the Action Plan was the implementation phase.

43. Mr. Farhâdi said that the key to success was to create a series of influential international movements by bringing together those working on the same subject and ultimately to transform them into one global force in support of the Palestinian people. The International Coordinating Network on Palestine (ICNP) could play a major role in that regard. Maintaining contacts and coordination with those living far apart could be difficult, but there were many tools that could link civil society organizations around the world together, such as meetings and conferences organized by the Committee and the web site and e-mail list maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, through which it provided updated information on the activities of the ICNP and civil society organizations around the world.

ANNEX I**PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:
MOBILIZING TO END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION****International Coordinating Network on Palestine****2005 Plan of Action**

We meet again, civil society organizations committed to ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to achieving the still unrealized rights, including the right of self-determination, of the Palestinian people. We anchor our work in human rights, international law, the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, and a commitment to internationalism and the belief that the United Nations remains central to ending the occupation. We believe that these tools provide the only roadmap that can provide the basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

This week marks the first anniversary of the landmark advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which determined the illegality of Israel's annexationist Apartheid Wall, the settlements and occupation, and the consequences of that illegality. We are joining our colleagues around the world in this week of special events to commemorate the significance of that ruling and to rededicate ourselves to the work of enforcing it and bringing down the Wall.

But events on the ground in the occupied territories continue to deteriorate. Despite the clarity of the ICJ opinion, and the overwhelming support for the General Assembly resolutions affirming that opinion, expansion of the Wall continues. The Wall has become the symbol of the continuing crisis of Israeli settlements - ALL of which stand in violation of international law and specific United Nations resolutions - being built, expanded and transformed into armed centers of anti-Palestinian violence. Occupation on the ground means land confiscation, house demolitions, escalating violence at checkpoints and on roads, closures, curfews, a renewed Israeli policy of assassination, and other violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Plans for new settlement projects in the Jordan Valley, and especially in Jerusalem, show the duplicity of Israel's claimed commitments to a two-state solution, as Israel's settlement-based seizure of land continues and a viable Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution grows less and less attainable. There is a danger that the current de facto apartheid conditions on the ground could be transformed into a normalized reality.

We are especially concerned about the consequences of Israel's planned "disengagement" from Gaza, which will alter the form but not the essence of occupation and control. Certainly, as the Occupying Power, Israel bears a unilateral obligation to completely end its occupation of all the Palestinian territories. It is clear, however, that the "disengagement" from Gaza is not designed to end the occupation, but is a ploy to legitimize Israel's annexation of wide swathes of territory in the West Bank as a quid pro quo backed by the United States in the letter from President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in April 2004. It will have the effect of establishing even greater Israeli domination over Gaza's economy and society.

The urgency of implementing international humanitarian law that prohibits settlements, house demolitions, and violence against an occupied population and requires the creation of an independent, viable, contiguous and sovereign Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, remain our vital concerns. The need to pressure our governments to enforce the decision of the ICJ regarding the illegality of the

Wall remains. The need for developing new strategies to provide international protection for Palestinians living under the brutality of Israel's military occupation has never been greater.

Our work of building an international challenge to Israel's occupation is strengthened and empowered by our support from, and our participation in, the broad global movement against occupation and for justice throughout the Middle East.

Our work to end the occupation of Palestine remains our solemn commitment. We will work with solidarity campaigns, with civil society organizations, with parliaments, with governments and with the United Nations itself, especially the General Assembly Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, to build a movement strong enough to end the Israeli occupation.

We note that our constituent organizations are working on a wide range of issues including implementation of the ICJ advisory opinion on the illegality of the Apartheid Wall and settlements, campaigning for international protection for Palestinians living under occupation, mobilizing support for the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, strengthening the United Nations capacity to defend Palestinian rights, campaigning for the release of all Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, and commemorating the annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on November 29th. We support all of these important campaigns.

A CALL TO ACTION

We recognize that, as an international network, our strength lies in our ability to work collectively in unified campaigns and actions. To that end, we urge international, national and regional social movements, organizations and coalitions to support the unified call of Palestinian civil society for a global campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) to pressure Israel to end the occupation and fully comply with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions. We have identified the coming year to mobilize for and inaugurate this BDS campaign. We call on our partner organizations to intensify all our activities, focusing on the BDS campaign so that together we will end the Occupation.

ANNEX II

SUMMARIES OF WORKSHOPS

1. Participants in the workshop on the theme “Strategies to consolidate and broaden constituencies” came up with four approaches: consolidating the opposition to the Israeli occupation with mainstream anti-war movements; working against racism and the demonization of Islam; promoting linkages between civil society groups in the North and inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and focusing activities on issues of Palestinian prisoners, especially child prisoners. The group also discussed a number of specific campaigns that were being or could be initiated at the national level. In France, for example, there were initiatives in the medical community to focus on health aspects of the consequences of the occupation. Among others discussed were the possibility of exploring a public inquiry into the deaths of Rachel Corrie and others, academic exchanges between European and Palestinian universities, and municipal cooperation through twin city arrangements.
2. During the workshop on the theme “Strategies to mobilize public opinion,” it was argued that, even without radical changes, bringing the stance of public opinion from passive to neutral would make a difference, and that institutions such as universities and trade unions should be targeted for the sensitization efforts so that they could in turn educate their own constituencies. The workshop on the theme “Strategies to engage Governments” underscored the need to constantly remind Governments of their obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the ICJ advisory opinion, and also suggested that the media and public opinion should be involved in efforts to make the Government’s action towards ending the occupation one of the main discussion points for election campaigners in the country. Participants in the workshop on the theme “European civil society in support of Middle East peace” concurred that European civil society had a vital role to play since it had the most solid networks in support of the Palestinian people, and that it must be vigilant about how propaganda was used to make its work difficult and must find ways to deal with the fluctuation of public opinion. Civil society actors in Europe must work with their Israeli counterparts to ensure that their struggle was not dismissed as anti-Semitic. For the boycotts, divestment, sanctions (“BDS”) initiative against Israel, European civil society actors should campaign for their Governments’ cessation of weapon deals with Israel and also increase cooperation with trade unions.
3. Participants in the workshop on the theme “Cooperation with the United Nations” argued that non-governmental organizations should ask themselves to what extent they should cooperate with the United Nations on humanitarian and development work because it could perpetuate the occupation if there was not strong political will to end it. In order to strengthen the United Nations, NGOs should remind Governments of their responsibilities, especially on the basis of the ICJ advisory opinion. Serious attention should be given to the status of Israel at the United Nations, where the country had held the vice-presidency of the General Assembly, because Israel did not at all respect the Organization’s resolutions. The workshop on the theme “Campaigns in support of peace in the Middle East” focused on ways for the international community to support the call by Palestinian civil society for the “BDS,” and concluded that diversity, gradualness and sustainability of support campaigns were the key elements for success. It was also important that the “BDS” call was supported by the Israelis in order to prove that the call was not anti-Semitic but was rather anti-occupation.

ANNEX III
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Steering Committee

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| Mr. Ahmed Abdirahman | Project Officer and Director of Overseas Programme Alternatives – Action and Communication Network for International Development Montreal |
| Ms. Bahia Amra | Fellow, Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute Ramallah |
| Mr. Gabi Baramki | President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace Ramallah |
| Ms. Phyllis Bennis | Political Analyst, Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine Washington, D.C. |
| Ms. Lourdes Cervantes Vasquez | Head, Political Department Organization for the Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America Havana |
| Ms. Arlene Elizabeth Clemesha | Member, Cultural and Scientific Council Arab Cultural Institute Sao Paulo |
| Ms. Adi Dagan | Spokesperson, Coalition of Women for Just Peace Member, Machsom Watch; Editor, <i>Kibush</i> Tel Aviv |
| Mr. Pierre Galand | Senator, Belgian Parliament Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP) Brussels |
| Mr. Na'eem Jeenah | Spokesperson, Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa President, Muslim Youth Movement Johannesburg |
| Mr. Ram Karthigasu | Executive Director, Peace Malaysia Kuala Lumpur |

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| Mr. Yonatan Mendel | Intervention Coordinator Physicians for Human Rights – Israel Tel Aviv |
| Mr. Max Ozinsky | Chairperson, Not in My Name Cape Town |
| Mr. Bernard Ravenel | Chairman, French NGO Platform for Palestine Paris |
| Ms. Luisa Sirvent | Secretary-General, Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights - Spain Madrid |
| Mr. Raji Sourani | General Director, Palestinian Center for Human Rights Gaza |
| Mr. Achin Vanaik | Professor of International Relations and Global Politics Delhi University New Delhi |
| Ms. Caroline Vanquaethem | Coordinator, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine Brussels |
| Ms. Gillian Watt | Parliamentary and Information Officer Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding London |

Speakers/resource persons

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| Mr. Ahmed Abdirahman | Project Officer and Director of Overseas Programme Alternatives – Action and Communication Network for International Development Montreal |
| Mr. Gabi Baramki | President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace Ramallah |
| Mr. Omar Barghouti | Independent Palestinian political analyst Jerusalem |
| Ms. Phyllis Bennis | Political Analyst; Fellow, Institute for Policy Studies Co-Chair, International Coordinating Network on Palestine Washington, D.C. |

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| Ms. Adi Dagan | Spokesperson, Coalition of Women for Just Peace Member, Machsom Watch; Editor, <i>Kibush</i> Tel Aviv |
| Mr. Pierre Galand | Senator, Belgian Parliament Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP) Brussels |
| Mrs. Rema Jamous-Imseis | Legal Officer Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) Jerusalem |
| Mr. Na'eem Jeenah | Spokesperson, Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa President, Muslim Youth Movement Johannesburg |
| Mr. Ram Karthigasu | Executive Director, Peace Malaysia Kuala Lumpur |
| Ms. Hind Khoury | Minister of State Palestinian Authority |
| Mr. Yonatan Mendel | Intervention Coordinator Physicians for Human Rights – Israel Tel Aviv |
| Mr. Bernard Ravenel | Chairman, French NGO Platform for Palestine Paris |
| Ms. Elizabeth Sime | Country Director, Care International Chairperson, Association of International Development Agencies Jerusalem |
| Ms. Luisa Sirvent | Secretary-General, Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights – Spain Madrid |
| Mr. Raji Sourani | General Director, Palestinian Center for Human Rights Gaza |
| Mr. Achin Vanaik | Professor of International Relations and Global Politics Delhi University New Delhi |
| Ms. Gillian Watt | Parliamentary and Information Officer Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding London |

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

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| Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhâdi | Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations New York Vice-Chairman of the Committee |
| Mr. Victor Camilleri | Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations New York Rapporteur of the Committee |
| Mrs. Diana Carmenate Perez | Chargé d'affaires Permanent Delegation of Cuba to UNESCO Member of delegation |
| Mrs. Somaia S. Barghouti | Chargé d'affaires Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, New York Member of delegation |

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

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| Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze | Director-General United Nations Office at Geneva |
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Governments

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mexico, Maldives, Morocco, Niger, Norway, Oman, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe

Non-member States maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters or UNESCO

Holy See

Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions
and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer missions
at Headquarters or UNESCO

Palestine

Intergovernmental organizations

Organization of the Islamic Conference

United Nations bodies and specialized agencies

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Civil society organizations

Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization

Alternatives

Amnesty International

Arab Cultural Institute

Arab Lawyers' Union

Association Belgo-Palestinienne

Association française d'amitié et de solidarité avec les peuples d'Afrique

Association France-Palestine Solidarité

Association internationale des juristes démocrates

Campagne civile internationale pour la protection du peuple palestinien

Care International - West Bank and Gaza

Centre de droit international - Université Libre de Bruxelles

Centre Robert Schuman pour l'Europe

Coalition of Women for Just Peace

Comité de vigilance pour une paix réelle au Proche Orient

Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement

Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding

Enfants réfugiés du monde

European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Fair Go for Palestine

Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights

Fédération Syndicale Mondiale

French NGO Platform for Palestine

Groupement des retraités éducateurs sans frontières

Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute

Institute for Policy Studies

International Relief Friendship Foundation

Interreligious and International Federation for World Peace

Interreligious and International Peace Council International Coordinator

Machson Watch

Medecins du Monde

Mouvement de la paix

Muslim Youth Movement

Netherlands Palestine Committee

Not in My Name

Organization for the Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America

Palestinian Center for Human Rights

Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace

Palestinian Return Centre

Palestine Solidarity Committee of South Africa

Peace Malaysia

Physicians for Human Rights – Israel

Rosa Luxemburg Foundation

Saint Andrew Fund

Stichting Steunpalestina, NL

Union juive française pour la paix

Women's Federation for World Peace

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
