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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF  
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF  
THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1998

I. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

1. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1997 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 52/49, 52/50 and 52/51 of 9 December 1997.

2. In its resolution 52/49, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee; requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as appropriate, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and to take the necessary steps to involve additional NGOs in its work. The Assembly also requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee.

3. In its resolution 52/50, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

4. In its resolution 52/51, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine", the General Assembly requested the Office of Communications and Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1998-1999, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America, and indicated a set of activities to be carried out under the programme.

II. PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE  
COMMITTEE FOR 1998

5. In its recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, the Committee expressed the greatest concern over the stalemate in the peace process and the exacerbation of tension and violence in the region. The Committee called upon the international community to intensify its efforts in support of the historic reconciliation process between the two sides and for the effective implementation of the agreements reached and for the resumption of the negotiations on the agreed basis. It also called for an end to the closures and other forms of collective punishment imposed by the occupying Power, which resulted in continuing deterioration in the economic situation and living conditions of Palestinians. It furthermore called for an end to the policy and practice of settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

6. The Committee reaffirmed that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached in accordance with international legitimacy. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee plays a role of even greater importance pending the achievement of such settlement. The Committee stated that it would continue to do its utmost to promote the achievement of Palestinian rights and the full implementation of the agreements reached, and to mobilize international assistance for the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. The Committee called for even greater support and participation in its activities by all States.

7. The Committee expressed its full support for the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session and stated that it would continue to remain engaged in the follow-up to those recommendations and to promote the necessary action.

8. The Committee expressed the view that its programme of seminars and NGO meetings had performed a useful role in informing and mobilizing public opinion about the objectives and priorities of the Committee, and stressed the need to continue the programme and to intensify outreach efforts to NGOs. The Committee also emphasized the valuable contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested the continuation of its various activities, including in particular its United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the programme of studies and publications, the training for staff of the Palestinian Authority and the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

9. The Committee also indicated its agreement that savings generated in the implementation of its programme of work should be redeployed towards the implementation of the Secretary-General's mandate for the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996.

### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

#### A. Action by the Committee

10. In implementation of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to participate in relevant meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Committee will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, requiring international action.

11. The Committee, through its Chairman, will again participate in relevant meetings of intergovernmental bodies, as considered necessary.

12. The Committee will continue, in cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including NGOs, in the areas under its jurisdiction. The Committee will consider inviting Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to special meetings of the Committee on particular occasions, as required. The Committee will also give consideration to the possibility of sending a delegation to visit the Palestinian territory at an appropriate time.

13. The Bureau of the Committee will continue its consultations with countries interested in the programme of work of the Committee, including members of the European Union, with a view to promoting understanding for its objectives and greater participation in its activities.

14. The Committee, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, has convened a high-level Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to be held at Brussels from 24 to 25 February 1998. The Committee expresses its great appreciation to the Government of Belgium for having agreed to provide the venue for this important event and hopes that it will make a positive contribution to sensitizing international public opinion with regard to the continuing plight of the Palestinian people and the urgent need to achieve a just and peaceful settlement of this question.

#### B. Seminars and NGO meetings

15. In accordance with the Committee's decision to streamline and refocus the programme of seminars and NGO meetings in the light of the evolving political situation in order to achieve maximum effectiveness, provision was made in the 1998-1999 programme budget of the Division for Palestinian Rights for the following meetings: an annual meeting of consultations between the Bureau and regional NGO coordinating committees; an annual seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people; an annual seminar or NGO symposium for the European region; an annual NGO symposium for the North American region; and a total for the biennium of three combined seminars/NGO symposia for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

16. The Committee will continue to strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions, and the competent Secretariat services, to limit costs for conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of the meetings.

17. For economy reasons, and also keeping in mind other changes in the programme which resulted in earlier dates than usual for several NGO meetings, the Bureau decided not to hold the meeting of consultations with

NGOs in 1998, without however setting a precedent for the future. In response to the wish repeatedly expressed by the NGO coordinating committees for the holding of the European symposium at Brussels and the International NGO Meeting in a Middle East country, rather than as a combined event at Geneva or Vienna as in the past, the Committee decided that these two meetings would be held in conjunction with the events to be held at Brussels and Cairo, respectively.

18. Accordingly, the calendar of seminars and NGO meetings to be held in 1998 will be as follows:

- The European NGO Symposium will be held at Brussels on 26 February 1998, immediately following the above-mentioned Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;
- The International NGO Meeting will be held at Cairo from 25 to 26 April 1998;
- The Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People will be held at Cairo from 27 to 29 April 1998;
- The Latin American and Caribbean Seminar/NGO Symposium will be held at Santiago from 26 to 29 May 1998;
- The North American NGO Symposium will be held at Headquarters in New York from 15 to 17 June 1998.

19. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Governments of Belgium, Egypt and Chile for having agreed to provide the venues for the above-mentioned meetings to be held in their respective capitals.

C. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

20. The Committee continues to attach the greatest importance to UNISPAL, which was originally requested by the Committee and mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, and subsequent resolutions. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the Division is continuing its efforts to make the system more comprehensive, and that provision for additional contractual scanning of documents was made in the 1998-1999 budget.

21. The Committee also notes with appreciation that the Division has initiated a home page on the Question of Palestine, which is planned to include the most important UNISPAL documents, as part of the United Nations home page on the Internet. The home page can be reached at the following address: <http://www.un.org/Peace/>.

22. The Committee requests the Division to make all efforts to proceed with the full implementation of these projects on an urgent basis.

D. Research, monitoring and publications

23. In accordance with existing mandates and earlier requests of the Committee, the publications programme of the Division in 1998 will include the following:

(a) A monthly bulletin on activities by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and others on the question of Palestine containing the texts of all relevant resolutions, statements and decisions;

(b) A periodic bulletin entitled Developments related to the Middle East peace process containing documents and statements relating to the peace process;

(c) A monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on news reports and other sources.

24. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to continue to prepare its informal periodic summary of information on significant activities of NGOs relevant to the question of Palestine for the information of the Committee and for communication to the network of non-governmental organizations.

25. The Division will also issue the report of the Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as well as reports of seminars and NGO meetings; a special bulletin on the observance in 1997 of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and a compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in 1997.

26. The Committee notes with appreciation that the Division has issued its study on The Status of Jerusalem as well as updated information notes on the work of the Committee and the Division, on the programme of cooperation with NGOs and on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

27. With regard to the studies on fundamental issues requested by the Committee, the Committee requests the Division to complete its work on the draft study on Israeli settlements.

E. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

28. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be observed on Monday, 30 November 1998. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna, and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

29. The Committee will again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities, including, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the presentation of a cultural exhibit at United Nations Headquarters during the week beginning on 30 November.

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[The programme was adopted by the Committee at its 235th meeting of 5 February 1998]