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**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING  
IN SUPPORT OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE**  
**Kyiv**  
**13 and 14 May 2003**

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**I. Introduction**

1. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace was held in Kyiv on 13 and 14 May 2003, 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 [57/107](#) and [57/108](#) of 3 December 2002. It was followed, on 15 May 2003, by a Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace held at the Institute for International Relations in Kyiv.

2. The Committee was represented at the meeting by a delegation comprising Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Martin Andjaba (Namibia), Valery P. Kuchinsky (Ukraine) and Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The theme of the International Meeting was “*Promoting a comprehensive dialogue on the political, security and economic factors critical for resolving the current crisis and resuming the peace process*”. It consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were “The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem”, “Prospects for resuming the political process” and “Working for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

4. Presentations were made by 13 experts, including Palestinians and Israelis. Also invited by the Committee were three representatives of Palestinian NGOs from the ground. Haidar Abdel Shafie, Representative of the Palestinian NGO Network Gaza, as well as other Palestinian participants from Gaza had accepted the invitation by the Committee, but were unable to travel to Kyiv due to the Israeli closure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Committee noted with utmost dismay that the arbitrary action of the Israeli authorities had deprived the participants of first-hand accounts of the situation on the ground and their assessments of the current crisis. He denounced the Israeli policy of closures and other forms of collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Representatives of 45 Governments, Palestine, 2 intergovernmental organizations, 5 United Nations bodies and 13 civil society organizations, as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media and academic institutions attended the Meeting.

5. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. Mr. Papa Louis Fall, and the delegation of the Committee were received by H.E. Mr. Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine, and H.E. Mr. Anatoliy Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, both of whom stressed the importance of supporting peace in the Middle East at the current extremely difficult stage and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in that regard. The Committee delegation expressed its deep appreciation of the active and constructive role played by Ukraine, a member of the Committee since its inception, in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.
6. The main points of the discussion were highlighted in the Final Document of the Meeting (see annex I).

## II. Opening statements

7. **Anatoliy Zlenko**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, delivered at the outset a message by Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine, stating that the Meeting was being held against the backdrop of a worsening situation in the Middle East. Referring to the [Road Map](#) elaborated by the Quartet, the message stressed that prospects to settle the Middle East conflict had become increasingly stronger. The President expressed the hope that the peace process would be resumed, and that the sufferings of the Palestinians, Israelis and other nations in the region would end. Ukraine was strongly convinced that the starting point for the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations was Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#) and [1397 \(2002\)](#), as well as the principle of land for peace. The role of the United Nations, which continued to bear its responsibility for the final settlement, was extremely important. Ukraine reiterated its readiness to offer to the conflicting parties its good offices to hold their peace negotiations on its territory.
8. Speaking in his capacity as Foreign Minister, Mr. Zlenko said there could not be any military solution to the conflict. Violence and confrontation must give way to negotiations and compromise. He welcomed the Road Map and called upon the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to start implementing the plan without delay. Ukraine fully supported the approach of parallel responses to security, political, socio-economic and humanitarian issues and entrusting equal responsibilities to each of the actors. He noted that the approach of the plan largely agreed with Ukrainian proposals for a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict that had been put forth by the President last year.
9. He welcomed Palestinian statements on the acceptance of the Road Map and said that the Palestinian Authority must do everything in its power to combat terrorism. At the same time, he condemned acts of excessive and indiscriminate use of force against Palestinian civilians and called upon Israel to stop them immediately. Israel had to speed up the withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since September 2000, freeze all settlement activities and lift restrictions on the movement of people, goods and services. The international community must support the resumption of the Middle East peace process. The role of the United Nations was critical as the principal guarantor of the international legitimacy of the question of Palestine. The Security Council should play a leading role in directing and coordinating international efforts to those ends. Ukraine would continue to contribute to the efforts to relaunch the political process in the framework of the Road Map.
10. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message read out on his behalf by his representative, Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, emphasized that recent bold steps by the Palestinian leadership, such as the appointment of a Prime Minister, had led to the publication of the Road Map by the Quartet. That three-phase plan, part of a larger effort to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region, had been drawn up to assist the parties in realizing the vision of Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized borders. It was contingent on parallel and reciprocal steps by the parties in the security, humanitarian, institution-building and political areas, monitored and facilitated by the Quartet.
11. He pointed out that the responsibility for bringing this process to a successful conclusion rested primarily with the parties themselves. Terrorist attacks against civilians, arbitrary assassinations, arrests and detentions, house demolitions, stifling closures and blockades, and settlement activities should come to an end. The parties were expected to resume negotiations in order to work out the details of the final settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). Implementation of the Road Map would not be easy as it required painful decisions and determination and sustained activity on both sides. Stating that the United Nations remained committed to the tasks at hand, he called attention to the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others. The support of the international community remained crucial if the obstacles were to be surmounted and the desired results achieved.
12. **Papa Louis Fall**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, pointed out that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, remained extremely tense and uncertain. The whole region had been kept in a seemingly unending crisis. The blind and systematic use by the Israeli army of disproportionate force in the densely populated Palestinian areas, extrajudicial killings, restriction on freedom of movement, arbitrary detentions, and collective punishment measures, expansion of settlements, and the disastrous impact of the economic and financial blockade caused severe damage to the Palestinian infrastructure and fuelled desperation and anger in the Palestinian street. Terrorist acts against Israeli civilians, including suicide bombings, had claimed many innocent lives and injured many more. The Committee had condemned all those actions, which had resulted in a complete breakdown in mutual trust between the two sides and a stalemate in the political process.
13. He continued by stating that Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) was an important milestone on the chaotic road to peace as for the first time it clearly referred to a State of Palestine living in peace, side by side with Israel, and offered the Palestinian people a clear political horizon. He welcomed the Road Map put forth by the Quartet of international mediators, which, he said, raised the hopes and expectations for a tangible change on the ground and the resumption of a peace dialogue between the two parties. He hoped the two parties would accept the plan and work closely together and continue to cooperate with members of the Quartet as they implemented it. The Committee would support that effort to bring peace to the region.
14. He reminded participants that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, remained at the heart of the question of Palestine and Israel must not flout its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility for all the aspects of the question of Palestine until it was resolved in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions. He expressed satisfaction with the personal engagement of the Secretary-General and his effort on behalf of the Palestinians. He encouraged the Secretary-General to pursue his initiatives in the conviction that the Security Council would fulfil its own particular role in bringing about and hastening the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.
15. **Mitri Abu Aita**, Minister of Tourism, Palestinian Authority, said that since the outbreak of the intifada on 28 September 2000, more than 2,000 Palestinians had been killed and more than 37,000 had been injured. More than 650 Israelis also been killed. Describing life under the Israeli occupation, he said that recently the Israeli Government had launched its "new-old" policy of unilateral segregation between the Occupied Territory and Israel. Every day the Israeli Army demolished houses, uprooted trees and confiscated land to provide more land and spaces for the construction of the "Segregation Wall". Such actions provoked the Palestinians and showed no commitment to the proposed Road Map and the peace process.
16. He said that the Palestinian drive towards peace was based on the principles of legality and justice. Both peoples were destined to live together and needed to recognize each other's right to full sovereignty in the areas under their internationally recognized jurisdiction. A sustainable peace should be based on justice and equality, and a just peace provided the best security. The goal should be a comprehensive peace rather than non-

belligerency arrangements. Economic development was an essential ingredient for peace-building. And economic development needed an enabling environment. Fences were detrimental to economic development. A sovereign Palestinian State next to the State of Israel was inevitable and it must be viable and have enough resources. Both sides should recognize each other's security concerns.

17. He emphasized that the Palestinian people needed to feel the dividends of peace and to feel secure. They were determined to enter the twenty-first century as a free people. There was now a window of opportunity for reconciliation. The Palestinian leadership had gone all the way to accommodate Israeli fears and concerns and looked for reciprocity from the Israeli leadership. Israel should give priority to sustainable peace over short-lived gains of internal constituency matters.

18. Statements were also made by representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations. The representative of China said that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had resulted in heavy human losses and economic damage. His Government was alarmed by the situation and was against Israel's policy towards Palestinians. He appealed to Israel to withdraw its troops immediately. He called upon Israel and the Palestinian people to abandon the method of using violence against violence. China had provided humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians from the beginning and continued to help. There could be a just solution to the conflict but it could take place only when Israel withdrew. The only correct way to lasting peace was a political solution through dialogue, negotiation and pragmatism. He demanded immediate steps to end the violence. He hoped Israel would resume negotiations on the basis of United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. He welcomed and supported the Road Map as well as the United Nations role in the search for peace in the Middle East.

19. The representative of Malaysia said that as long as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land continued, it would remain the root cause of much of the violence in the Middle East. The international community could not allow that issue to remain unresolved indefinitely. The Palestinian Authority, the legitimate government of the Palestinian people, could not be sidelined from any negotiations if a lasting solution was to be found. Such a solution could not be arbitrarily imposed. He looked forward to the early implementation of the Road Map but was dismayed that it had been met with further violence against the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupying forces. The international community must send a clear and unambiguous message to Israel that it was not permissible for it to continue with its military operations against the Palestinian people. The statement by the Non-Aligned Summit of February 2003 regarding the issue supported a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the conflict. Malaysia as the new chair of the Movement would do its utmost to support the parties in the search for peace.

20. The representative of Brazil said that the escalation of violence imposed enormous suffering on the most vulnerable groups and strapped the Palestinians from exercising their most fundamental rights to a normal decent life. He strongly condemned any kind of extremism such as the terrorist activities in which many innocent Israeli civilians had lost their lives. He favoured the creation of an independent, democratic and economically viable Palestinian State, taking into consideration the right of Palestinians to self-determination and respect for the existence of Israel within safe and internationally recognized borders. He welcomed the formal launching of the Road Map as an important step and hoped that implementation of the plan would start with no further delay.

21. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that the Palestinian people, having lost faith in unjust and ineffective solutions, had no alternative but to stand up against the aggression and occupation and resort to stones to defend themselves. The intifada embodied the legitimate response to inhuman and racist policies and should not be construed as a temporary eruption of sentiment or protest. Israel's state terrorism gave the Palestinians the right to utilize the resources available to them to resist aggression and repression. Legitimate resistance should be strengthened. Efforts designed to derail that rightful means of defence should be distrusted. The solution to the Middle East crisis required the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories, the establishment of a buffer zone with United Nations peacekeeping forces, a democratic referendum with the participation of all original Palestinians and the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State.

22. The representative of Namibia said that the Meeting was taking place at a critical time and it was incumbent on the participants to ensure that the results of the Meeting helped bring about the resumption of the peace process. Since the beginning of the current intifada, thousands of Palestinians had been killed and injured and the economy was on the brink of collapse. Nevertheless, efforts to reach a settlement had been pushed to the back burner. Now that the Iraq war was over he would like to see greater attention and focus on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While the Road Map was not perfect, it pointed the way to an independent and viable Palestinian State. The appointment of the Prime Minister and the confirmation of the new cabinet were first steps in the implementation of the Road Map by the Palestinians. It was incumbent on the United States to ensure that Israel accepted the Road Map and began to implement it. He wanted to see a genuine and even-handed approach by all. He reminded the Security Council of its unique role and called upon it to ensure that its resolutions with regard to the question of Palestine were implemented. The Council should also immediately express its strong support for the Road Map.

23. The representative of the League of Arab States said that the meetings sponsored by the Committee played a vital role in clarifying the issues relating to the question of Palestine. The Israeli Government had taken advantage of the tense international atmosphere to escalate its actions against the Palestinian people, claiming that Iraq had presented a threat to the Israeli people. Iraq had posed no threat to Israel. Israel had always attempted to label the Palestinian struggle as violence and terrorism. It was essential to draw a line between terrorism and the legitimate national struggle of the Palestinian people guaranteed by international law. He called upon the Committee to hold a round table in cooperation with the League of Arab States on the right of the Palestinian people to legitimate struggle. The international community had stood silent and was unable to provide protection for the Palestinians and Israel was left to continue its unjust treatment of the Palestinian people. Although Israel continued to reject the Arab peace initiative, he reaffirmed the Arab commitment to peace as a strategic option.

24. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference said that Israel continued to blockade the entire Palestinian territory. Its actions included targeting humanitarian relief, medical crews and international journalists and its continued aggression had brought about the deterioration of the Palestinian economy. This was taking place while the Palestinian leadership was taking measures to form democratic institutions and when the international community was trying to implement the Road Map. Israel was now attempting to change sections of the Road Map in a way that would render it useless. He called upon the international community to institute the necessary oversight mechanisms to force Israel to stop its acts of aggression and measures against the Palestinian people and land. Israel must stop all settlements in the Palestinian lands, release all political prisoners and release Palestinian funds. The international community must assume its responsibility and pressure Israel to enter negotiations.

25. The representative of Egypt said that a real opportunity for peace had arisen in the form of the Road Map. The Palestinian people had started to implement the Road Map and she hoped that the Israeli Government would reciprocate. Egypt had spared no effort to help restart the peace process. It had also helped to overcome the obstacles facing the new Prime Minister. In that spirit, it had invited different Palestinian factions to a dialogue in Cairo. The success of the Road Map depended upon the installation of an international monitoring system.

26. The representative of Tunisia expressed his Government's appreciation for the efforts of the Ukrainian Government in hosting the Meeting and to the Committee for convening the Meeting. It drew attention to the Middle East region, which continued to experience a grave evolution of events and now a period that could be characterized as historic. Close cooperation of all the parties was necessary in order to take into account the new realities. Clarity and wisdom were needed to end the long conflict, which should lead to a global, just and comprehensive solution to guarantee the freedom of the occupied territories and peaceful coexistence for all the people of region. That in turn necessitated the implementation of resolution 1397 (2002), which called for Israel and Palestine to live side by side within secure and recognized borders. The recent Road Map required the common efforts of the international community. Israel must respect the provisions of humanitarian law. The international community must organize to provide urgent assistance to the Palestinian people.

27. The representative of Turkey said that her Government continued to follow the ongoing violence with increasing concern. Bringing violence to an end must be a first priority. The adoption of the Arab peace plan was a meaningful contribution to the search for peace and the normalization of relations. Turkey supported President Bush's statement in which he underlined the concept of two States living side by side. The appointment of the Palestinian Prime Minister and the presentation of the Quartet's Road Map increased hopes for a just and durable peace. Her Government had always remained in contact with the parties and had assumed a moderating role. Turkey's efforts in that regard would continue.

28. The representative of Japan said that there was no other way but to support the Road Map. Japan was firmly committed to a comprehensive peace. The international community must pledge further assistance. Japan called upon both parties to work for peace. It had also extended a new package of assistance to the Palestinians which included food, medicines and other basic human needs. It also included support for reform efforts, assistance in building a new Prime Minister's office, improving the administrative capability and help in constructing a courthouse and a judiciary agency office in Gaza. Furthermore, Japan would extend assistance to the humanitarian activities of Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organizations. Japan would also assist the joint efforts of Israeli and Palestinian groups tackling the environmental situation in the area. The international community must encourage the Palestinian Authority, the Government of Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to make efforts for a lasting peace in the area.

### III. Plenary sessions

#### Plenary I

##### The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

29. Speakers in this plenary examined the following sub-themes: The human cost of violence; creating facts on the ground: expansion of settlements and unilateral separation; the impact of the conflict on the Palestinian Authority; the destruction of the Palestinian economy; and the deepening of the humanitarian crisis.

30. **Mitri Abu Aita**, Minister of Tourism, Palestinian Authority, said that the twentieth century had witnessed dramatic geographical changes in the Middle East, where state boundaries which had been carved essentially by superpowers were a major source of conflict. Geographical Palestine, due to its strategic location at the crossroads of Africa, Asia and Europe and to its religious significance as the birthplace of the three monotheistic religions, had witnessed a parade of conquerors throughout its long history. Reviewing the history of the region, he said that Palestinians had rejected the 1948 United Nations partition plan, which had given the Jewish State, with 7 per cent of the people, 54 per cent of the land. The Arab State, with 93 per cent of the population, had been given 46 per cent of the land.

31. Using a projector to illustrate his points, he showed images of 24 new Israeli settlements and 113 outposts. Other maps showed the Israeli Master Plan for settlements in the West Bank, the Israelization of Jerusalem with an extension of the borders of East Jerusalem from 6.5 square kilometres to 71 square kilometres, and the Israeli plan of Metropolitan Jerusalem. Detailing the many financial incentives given to each settler, he said they included tax exemptions, housing budgets and the development of water resources. Israel could afford this as a result of a \$10 billion dollar loan from the United States, \$4 billion of which was to become a grant. In 1991, the United States had granted another \$10 billion to the Israeli Government as an inducement to attend the Madrid conference.

32. He highlighted the development of the peace process since 1991, noting that there had been considerable political amnesia about the terms of the various agreements. Israel continued its policies of cantonization, segregation and separation. There were 734 kilometres of roads within the West Bank on which Palestinians were not permitted to travel. The West Bank was divided into 64 cantons and there were 125 checkpoints within the West Bank. Through the Separation Wall, Israel was annexing, confiscating and levelling thousands of dunums of Palestinian land. It was part of a long-term policy of unilateral segregation. He pointed out that the logic of "might makes right" could not make a just and lasting peace. If peace was to be comprehensive and sustainable, it must rise up to the Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination, national independence and equitable distribution of resources.

33. **Issam Makhoul**, Member of the Knesset, Haifa, stressed that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was conducting a strong-arm and violent policy towards the Palestinian people and their leadership.

Mr. Sharon was convinced that Israel had the right to rule the 3.5 million Palestinians in the Territory occupied by Israel since 1967 and that it was possible to abolish national rights by means of military supremacy. He continued planning to achieve his political goals by waging a ruthless war. To remove the establishment of a Palestinian State from the agenda, Mr. Sharon had instructed the Israeli army to destroy all instruments of government and all civilian institutions in the Occupied Territory.

34. He said that Israel strove to acquire the status of the victim, denying the Palestinians even their right to be Israel's victims. It demanded that the issue on the table was not occupation but violence. The Labour school of thought gave priority to the demographic threat posed by the Arab population, leading to the proposed establishment of a Palestinian State. The current Government, however, advocated the "Greater Israel" ideology, leading to a systematic process of subjugation of the Palestinian people, keeping it outside the circle of national rights and political legitimacy, and pushing the Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel outside the sphere of democracy. Mr. Sharon was seeking ways to avoid the political process and to reduce the conflict to its security dimension, through maintaining the explosive situation, intensifying the bloodletting and committing war crimes.

35. He continued by emphasizing the importance of mobilizing support for the international protection of the Palestinian people. International peace and monitoring brigades and solidarity delegations constituted a real challenge to the apartheid policies of the current Israeli Government. The imperative of the non-violent International Solidarity Movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was to not let war and bloodshed silence the voices of American activists like Rachel Corrie, who had been killed by an Israeli bulldozer as it proceeded to demolish a Palestinian house. The Israeli Government tried to divert Israeli public opinion from the heavy social price of its policies, but it could not starve Palestinians without starving significant portions of the Israeli population. He emphasized that without the firm support of the American administration, Prime Minister Sharon would not be able to continue the war and further his plans of annexation and abolition of the rights of the Palestinian people.

36. **Geoffrey Aronson**, Editor, *Foundation for Middle East Peace*, Washington, D.C., pointed out that the continuation of the settlements required a political decision to protect the settlers by a substantial part of the Israeli army. All depended upon the perception of the Israeli army as a force to protect Israel proper or to be stationed outside the state borders to defend settlers. The main purpose of the army was the defence of Israel's eastern front. However, without a real threat from Jordan, he predicted that the army's role in the Jordan Valley would diminish. Moreover, Israel's arguments for maintaining the army there were losing ground in Washington and European capitals alike.

37. Turning to some statistics, he mentioned that the population of the settlement areas in Gaza was estimated at about 7000, but there was some suggestion that the populations had actually decreased, probably due to the intifada. There were also the phenomena of new "illegal" outposts. While they were small, it was to be noted that many of the current settlements had begun their existence in the same way. He observed that the rate of increase in the settler population had been three or four times the national Israeli average. While the population in the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip had continued to increase, the rate of increase had been cut in half. The Israeli economic recession had put a chill on the Israeli housing market. The settlements were not isolated from that market. The security concerns raised by the intifada were part of the calculations that potential settlers took into consideration.

38. Continuing, he said that the policy of closure was a direct consequence of the policy to protect Israeli settlers. That was, however, a dynamic process and Israel expanded in other ways such as the Separation Wall and bypass roads, which were meant to integrate the settlements with each

other and with Israel proper. The new outposts served to satisfy the politically strong settlement forces. Those settlements numbered about 70. Most were small, but two or three had upwards of 50 or 60 people. The Road Map addressed the issue by demanding that the settlements established after Sharon's election be evacuated, but complete evacuation of settlement expansion was something that would be much harder to implement than declare. The last element of the Road Map, with immediate reference to territory, called upon Israel to stop the confiscation of land, which could be interpreted as a demand to stop confiscating private lands for the construction of the Separation Wall.

39. **Grigor Hovhannisyan**, Deputy Head, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Jerusalem, noted that for the past two years humanitarian concerns had been seen as secondary to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and defined as a political crisis with humanitarian consequences. The aid and donor communities assumed that, once relieved of external shocks and pressures, the Palestinian economy would produce a quick fix to its own social and humanitarian problems. The aid communities' response consisted of budget support to the Palestinian Authority, continued technical assistance and medium-scale commodity support. By mid-summer 2002, the international community had become aware of the grave humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. It had gradually deteriorated to the current level due to massive access problems encountered by the donor and relief communities and significantly rising operating costs. The crisis was man-made and a direct consequence of movement restrictions imposed upon the civilian population. The continued disrespect for international humanitarian law was the single largest cause of the growing humanitarian emergency.

40. The fundamental challenge facing the aid community was the limited impact it could have in the absence of political decisions to lift closures, curfews and other restrictions. Without political decisions to address the cause of the crisis, the humanitarian crisis would continue to worsen. The dilemma was whether to finance the occupation and relieve Israel of its obligations to cater to the needs of civilians or to discontinue its relief efforts. The military occupation of Palestinian self-rule areas continued and movement in and out of the Palestinian population centres was highly restricted. The number of Palestinian attacks on Israeli civilians had decreased while Palestinian casualties had increased. The water and hygiene situation throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to degenerate. Meanwhile, accelerated impoverishment was reflected in a significant drop in the real per capita food consumption of Palestinians, currently estimated at 70 per cent of pre-September 2000 levels.

41. He drew attention to the systematic non-compliance by the Israeli army with the commitments made by the Government of Israel to the Secretary-General's Humanitarian Envoy, Catherine Bertini. Relief workers continued to be shot at, killed and denied access to Palestinians needing assistance. Nevertheless, the risk of a massive degeneration of the humanitarian situation was limited, thanks to the supply of goods to the local market, occasional employment opportunities, limited but stable salary payment and local charity networks. The successful implementation of the Road Map might bring substantial improvements to the security environment, and the lifting of internal closures might facilitate service provision in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the absence of a broader political settlement, however, the overall socio-economic situation would hardly improve in the short term, thus requiring continued humanitarian assistance.

## **Plenary II**

### **Prospects for resuming the political process**

42. In this plenary, the sub-themes put the focus on: Unblocking the political stalemate; addressing the security agenda: modalities for ending the violence; the restoration of the pre-September 2000 status quo; addressing the economic agenda: the urgency of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people; and progress in the reform agenda: critical steps by the Palestinian leadership.

43. **Ziad Abu Zayyad**, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Jerusalem, said that the Israeli Government was fixated on the ideology of expansion and continued annexation. In Washington the Christian right wing and the influential Jewish lobby saw the State of Israel as the achievement of a messianic prophecy. Meanwhile, despair in the Palestinian street, fed by Israeli killings and destruction, pushed some people to commit suicide attacks. Those attacks were then used as an excuse by the Israelis to justify further killings of Palestinians. At the same time, there was a continuation of Israeli activities to integrate the settlements with one another and with the rest of Israel. If that process continued, the idea of a two-State solution would become unrealistic. Currently, he could not see an area where there could be a Palestinian State.

44. The attack on Palestinian lands was intensified in Jerusalem, where there was an attempt to practise a policy of ethnic cleansing, forcing the Palestinians out and forming a belt of Jewish areas. The Israelis intended to destroy the infrastructure of the Palestinian people and stop the democratic process that was just beginning. As a member of the Legislative Council he knew that Council members could not function properly because they were not allowed to travel to meetings. The Israelis decided when the Legislative Council and the Palestinian Government could and could not meet. After the Iraq war and as a result of European pressure, the United States had announced the Road Map, but experience showed that the Israelis were experts in delaying tactics. They had successfully employed a major deception campaign to divert international attention from the Israeli crimes against what they described as Palestinian crimes. As an example he cited the concept of "illegal" settlements, which was a joke, as all Israeli settlements were illegal. The Israelis had succeeded in a character assassination of Chairman Arafat and representing him as if he were the problem. In actuality, there was no difference between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Abbas. The new Palestinian Government would not be able to do anything unless there was a change in Israeli policies. Furthermore, no new Palestinian Government could sign an agreement. Only the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had the power of attorney from the Palestinian people to strike a deal with the other side. As head of the PLO, only Yasser Arafat could sign an agreement.

45. In his view, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon believed that he should continue the vision of what David Ben Gurion had started and failed to complete. Israel should have total control over resources and continue settlement activities in the Palestinian Territory. Some Israelis believed that after the Iraq war, conditions were good for the fanatics in Israel and their allies in Washington. If the current situation was maintained, there would be no chance for peace. The Road Map should be for implementation and not for negotiation. The other side must begin implementation. He urged the United Nations not to give up.

46. **Yossi Katz**, former member of the Knesset, Kiryat Tivon, said anyone who wanted to present his/her position on the issue of the Middle East peace process could not ignore the global reality. The Americans and their allies, who had demonstrated that they were capable of independent action in opposition to international opinion, were willing to ignore large geographical distances and major differences in attitudes and politics and had determination in the face of apparent difficulties and obstacles. Many people now hoped that Americans would invest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict even half the energy they had put into Afghanistan and Iraq. Such involvement must include imposing a settlement that would bring both sides to the path of sincere and practical negotiations and lead to permanent arrangements; international participation including the use of an international policing force; and economic and financial aid. Without such involvement it would be impossible to create an atmosphere of peace or to defeat those who sabotaged the political process.

47. He noted that hatred had increased to an appalling level. The only chance of breaking down and reducing that hatred depended on the beginning of economic growth, side by side with the political process. If the world wished to have quiet in the region, it must invest a great deal of effort and resources in the economic area. Moreover, the Israelis must take immediate steps to send a positive message through the reduction of roadblocks, the ending of closures, easing of economic and humanitarian restrictions, more freedom of movement and withdrawal to the borders of September 2000. There must also be an uncompromising declaration of the right of the Palestinian people to live in their own viable State. Preventive revenge killings must be stopped.

48. Meanwhile, the Palestinian side must implement a total ceasefire. There could be no killings, controlled or regulated. Any level of violence

always turned into terrorism. The first step taken by David Ben Gurion after Israeli independence was to destroy the underground movement and to dismantle Jewish commandos. This was difficult but essential. The delicate and sensitive issues, the core of the conflict, could easily be resolved, but all the issues must be on the agenda of both sides. No one should be allowed to set preconditions. If Mr. Sharon was trying to remove the issue of the right of return, he was jeopardizing the process. As a matter of fact, the solutions discussed at Camp David under President William Clinton would be the guidelines of future settlements. For the first time in a long time, he said, there was some optimism in the Israeli public that the chances for the end of the conflict had improved. The establishment must be encouraged and society educated in how to meet the challenge.

49. **Oleg Ozerov**, Deputy Chief of the Middle East Peace Process Division in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the Road Map was a clear trade-off that hardly met the needs of Palestinians and Israelis. Its main value was that it served as a starting point for peace talks and building a sovereign, independent Palestinian state capable of cohabiting with Israel in peace and security. Russia had advocated such a solution for many years and viewed it as a radical step forward in forging an international consensus. He drew attention to the provision stating that it was important to move towards a comprehensive settlement on both the Palestinian and the Syrian-Lebanese tracks. The Palestinian leadership had already given its endorsement. Now Israel must follow suit.

50. He demanded that the construction of the so-called protective wall, which was contrary to the letter and spirit of the Road Map, must be stopped. The key objective at the current stage was to put in place the elements outlined in the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations. The Palestinians had implemented a significant number of provisions in the first part of the Road Map. It would be only logical for Israel to reciprocate by taking steps to lessen tensions around the Palestinian territories and setting the stage for the continuation of reform and the resumption of the political settlement process. Russia would fully support the implementation of the Road Map by both parties. In that regard, he called for an early start of informal monitoring and Quartet consultations with the parties on the institutionalization of a monitoring mechanism.

51. Continuing, he said that while implementing the Quartet plan the parties should review their progress in meeting their commitments and take into account the proposed time frame. That would help to avoid delay in the peace process and move forward to the next stage, which provided for normalization of Israeli relations with the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. The proposed settlement was neither a gift nor a sanction. It was based on the understanding that there was no viable alternative to a trade-off political settlement. Other options would imply a war that would last 100 years.

52. **Ihor Semyvolos**, Executive Director, Association of Middle East Studies, Kyiv, noted that President George W. Bush was not eager to speak about a Middle East peace conference. He was trying to achieve peace under United States conditions. He asked whether one side must undertake the first step towards compromise or whether the parties must act in parallel. Currently, Palestinian steps had preceded any Israeli steps. The impression was that the Quartet was trying to meet the demands of both parties. The new initiative must not become an endless loop of discussions. The role of the United States could be changed. Currently, it sought maximum progress with limited involvement. Mr. Bush Jr. would not risk his political image or take steps where success was in doubt. In his most recent speech about the Middle East, he had not mentioned the Road Map. If one step was not successful then the entire process was under threat. Formerly, American involvement consisted of short-term visits to the region over a short period, but this time, greater involvement was required.

53. He stressed that both Palestinians and Israelis must have a guaranteed right of self-defence. Currently, any manifestation of self-defence by Palestinians was viewed by Israel as terrorism. Should the intifada be described as a people's legitimate struggle or terrorism? If it were terrorism, then Abu Mazen could stop it. If it were resistance, then it could not be brought to an end. Steps to dismantle and disarm the armed resistance groups were not realistic, but rather provocative.

54. He said that Palestinians expected relief from their daily suffering and that the new Government would prevent Israeli punitive operations in the Palestinian Territory. Someone had to guarantee the return of Palestinian villages to Palestinian control and the withdrawal of Israeli forces. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom's approach had been more realistic. He had recommended that Israel undertake unilateral activities that would not affect security, but the Israeli army was against that approach. There was no other decision-making body that could be viewed as an alternative to the military. There was no third way. The cult of power in Israel was centred on the military; all its relations with its neighbours were based on military might, and the military solution to any problem was seen as inevitable.

55. **Edward Abington**, Political Consultant to the Palestinian Authority, Washington, D.C., said that the United States had created a new strategic reality in the Middle East. Last June, President Bush had made a speech committing United States policy to support the establishment of a Palestinian State as a way of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It was the first time that an American President had explicitly endorsed the creation of a Palestinian State. President Bush had also called for a transformed Palestinian leadership, thus contributing to the isolation of President Arafat. The Palestinian reform movement had gathered momentum in the past year, which had helped to create new openings for peace. Considering how little Palestinians had to work with, it was surprising that they had accomplished so much. Their accomplishments included a constitutional committee firmly rooted in the rule of law, transparent and accountable budget reforms, and the creation of the position of an empowered prime minister. Those reforms had opened the door for efforts by the Quartet to restart the peace process. President Arafat and Prime Minister Abbas needed to resolve their differences and unite behind a common strategy for achieving statehood and a negotiated final status agreement with Israel. For too long internal Palestinian divisions had weakened their hand and their negotiating position with Israel. Prime Minister Abbas would need not only Palestinian unity, but also the support of the Quartet, the international donor community, but especially of Israel. He also needed to show positive accomplishments to the Palestinian people, to demonstrate that their lives will begin to change for the better.

56. The response of Prime Minister Sharon, however, had consisted of a few cosmetic gestures that made little difference in the daily life of Palestinians. Meanwhile, large-scale military actions continued, as did assassinations and housing demolitions. Israel needed to stop provocative actions: take concrete steps to ease the grave humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, dismantle unauthorized outposts established during the past two years and totally freeze all Israeli settlement activity, including the seizure of any additional Palestinian land. It needed to end construction of the so-called security wall in the West Bank, ease the internal fragmentation of the West Bank and Gaza and quit treating the Palestinian Authority as an adversary but start working with it once again as a partner. Finally, Israel needed to accept the Road Map, as had the Palestinians, and get on with its implementation. Ending violence by both Palestinians and Israelis was critical if there was to be any chance to break the current deadlock. He expressed concern over a growing sense of nihilism among some young Palestinians who had a fatalistic belief that there was no alternative to the current conflict.

57. He opined that the Road Map was front-loaded with Palestinian obligations in the security field that would be very difficult for the Palestinian Authority to meet. Rebuilding security capability by the Palestinian Authority would be a slow and painstaking process, but it was a critical step that the Palestinians must take. The entire issue of the Road Map and international efforts to implement it were dependent upon the political will of Israel and the Palestinians, first and foremost, but just as importantly upon the determination of the international community to put an end to the conflict. It was far from clear whether any of the three sides had the will to do what was required. It also was not clear that the current Israeli Government was committed to a political solution that would be even minimally acceptable to Palestinians.

### **Plenary III**

#### **Working for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine**

58. Speakers in this plenary examined the following sub-themes: Establishing a viable framework for the political process: the Quartet's Road Map; the permanent responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council; the role of intergovernmental organizations and entities in



supporting peace in the region; and the contribution of civil society.

59. **Lucy Nusseibeh**, Director, Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy, Jerusalem, said that the peace process was at a critical juncture which could either lead to a real and self-sustainable peace or condemnation to more years of increasing frustration. For the majority of Palestinians, life had become unlivable and they were looking for an alternative way forward. There was an increased interest in non-violent activities that were about justice and not about victory. Violence could be stopped if civil society became engaged. It was only through constant and sustained effort that the cycle of violence could be broken and the path to peace unblocked. The Israeli public must know that trust and peace were possible. With or without progress on the Road Map, there was a need to rebuild trust and to prepare the ground for peace at all levels. That meant working for a self-sustainable peace that ended every form of Israeli control and that provided security, space and a viable future for both peoples.

60. She reminded participants that every single Palestinian was affected every day by the harsh Israeli occupation. The official casualty figures showed only the numbers killed, but Israeli soldiers and settlers knew they did not show all the people who had merely fallen ill and died from sheer misery and lack of hope. There was a growing understanding among Palestinians that there could never be a military solution. Violence had proved unproductive. Most Palestinians practiced non-violence every day. Occupation was worse than war. The occupied people were not only adversaries but adversaries in the complete control of their enemy. Turning to civil society, she said the term covered all people and groups who were not part of a government or intergovernmental body. It represented the choices people had in a society to work with a variety of alternatives. It implied a cross-national or transnational society and could refer to any group that was connected to the Middle East problem. Whereas Governments tended to be constrained by a formal mandate, civil society was flexible and could be responsive to any need at any moment. It could include far more input from women and women's groups and work around the assumption of shared universal values. Civil society could more easily focus on one particular value or theme and rally people towards it.

61. She stressed that cooperation among civil society groups could be productive in spite of the ongoing conflict. It had the advantage of being able to work around the assumption of shared universal values. There were more realistic and open contacts between Palestinians and Israelis as they realized that there was a way of pulling together out of the current conflict. Fear was a terrible master that deafened people to reason and security was an overriding concern of the Israelis. It was essential to break the stereotype of the Palestinian as a terrorist. Polls showed strong Palestinian support for non-violence. The majority of both Palestinians and Israelis thought that the basic problem was lack of trust. There were growing numbers of Palestinians who were turning to non-violence as the only way forward. If non-violence could be strengthened among Palestinians, Israelis could understand that with the end of occupation, there would be a real peace. There also needed to be an active engagement by the international community. The onus was on Palestinian civil society to dissuade Israeli fears. The onus was also on Israeli civil society to respond to that gesture.

62. **Said Kamal**, Assistant Secretary-General, League of Arab States, recalled that the organization was greatly affected by regional and international developments which might strengthen or weaken it. The Secretary General of the League of Arab States had direct and daily contacts with the Palestinians. The League had basic principles for a just and durable peace in the region. Peace was a strategic option attainable by implementing the principle of land for peace, enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights and the establishment of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. The Arab peace initiative adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut had provided a basis for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel had responded with a military campaign that caused the deaths of many Palestinians.

63. He said that the separation wall was an Israeli plan to annex additional large areas of land. It would destroy any viability of a Palestinian state by separating Palestinian lands that could be easily controlled by Israel. Israel must accept the achievement of a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. It must accept the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian State in the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967. At the same time, there must be acceptance of Israel by all Arab States. Since the announcement of the Road Map, Israel had attempted to obstruct it with a series of amendments. The Arab League's position was that the Road Map must be implemented and not negotiated. He reminded participants that the Arab League was calling upon the Palestinian Rights Committee to join it and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in organizing a round table to discuss the Charter's provisions on the right of self-determination and the illegality of occupation. The Arab League was ready to organize such an endeavour now. Recalling Deir Yassin and other massacres, he said that the killing had begun a long time ago.

64. **Theocharis Papamargaris**, Vice-Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, and President, Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity, Athens, drew attention to the fact that since the end of 2002, the Israeli Government had expelled activists working for the Palestinian people and for non-governmental organizations, trade unionists and human rights advocates. Since the beginning of the year, American and British activists and members of the international observer missions for the protection of the Palestinian population had been killed by the Israeli army in Gaza. As recently as 2 May 2003, a British journalist had been killed by the Israeli army in Rafah. Those killings and the great number of international civil observers injured were an act of deliberate Israeli policy to keep international observers and journalists away from the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

65. He called for an urgent response by the United Nations. Non-governmental organizations had prepared a plan of action and had appealed to the United Nations to create, as a matter of urgency, an international protection force. That force would constitute a first step in ending the occupation and applying United Nations resolutions for a just and durable peace. Non-governmental organizations had pressed for and managed to obtain in April 2002 a clear resolution from the European Parliament demanding the suspension of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Israel for as long as Israel occupied Palestinian land.

66. At the same time, non-governmental organizations had asked the United Nations to express its opposition to the Israeli occupation by resorting to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. They had asked the United Nations to concern itself with the application of the 1949 Geneva Convention. At the Nicosia meeting sponsored by the Committee in April 2002, non-governmental organizations had stated their position and since then had continued efforts for a just solution of the Palestinian problem. The United Nations had a mandate to bring peace to the Middle East. Addressing the United Nations, he said: "Road Map or no Road Map, it is your duty to do so and our obligation to remind you of it." He expressed the view that not much would come out of the Road Map. The non-governmental organizations had only non-violent tools. Their only possibility was to mobilize and remind Governments of their responsibilities. Non-governmental organizations must stand on the side of the Palestinians as well as on the side of courageous Arab and Israeli citizens inside Israel in their lonely fight against Israeli policies.

67. **Yuri Skorohod**, Professor at the Institute of International Relations, Kyiv, urged the international community to make efforts to solve the conflict without any further delay. Effective and productive methods were needed. Another failure would have grave consequences and strengthen advocates of the use of force. He noted that the current efforts to find a settlement were taking place in a situation that was different from that of the 1990s. The masses of Palestinians and Israelis no longer believed in the process as they had in the 1990s. A tactic of small steps was necessary to make it possible to move forward.

68. He said that the Road Map was based on an optimistic assessment. There needed to be favourable conditions established for Palestinian-Israeli relations and at the global and regional levels for the plan to succeed. It was important to develop the proper approach. The Road Map could be seen as a working document aimed at generating discussion or considered as a final document in which only small changes could be made. The plan was not perfect as it did not take in all the needs of the participants, but the sponsors must ensure that amendments did not undermine the time frame of the plan. The success of the Quartet would depend on willingness to go from unilateral action to a common search for a solution. The interests and needs of one side could not have priority over the interests and needs of the other. Israeli measures were a main reason for the worsening situation. Israel's policies had resulted in the radicalization of the Palestinians. It was up to Israel to change its approach. Israel now found itself in an escalation

trap and its position was fully dependent on its previous decisions. He continued that the Palestinian side should assume that its attempts to stop terrorism were in its own interest. At the global level, it was important to have a continuation of the concerted approach by the key players. That would deprive the parties from undertaking alternative, less desirable solutions. The Quartet must act on a consistent and constant basis.

#### IV. Closing session

69. **Victor Camilleri**, Rapporteur of the Committee, introduced the Final Document of the International Meeting (see annex I).
70. **Ihor Kharchenko**, Deputy Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, emphasized that the Meeting had been an open and constructive exchange of views and provided an opportunity to hear ideas that would facilitate movement towards a common goal. It recognized the significance of the Road Map. The settlement of the conflict should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the principle of land for peace, the Arab League initiative and the Saudi plan. The international community should commit itself to full, sustainable and impartial support to the conflicting parties. It should focus on helping the Israelis and Palestinians to rebuild bridges of mutual trust and understanding by providing them with channels of communication at different levels. The United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility on this matter. Each participant had a role in enforcing efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East. He hoped the Meeting had made an important contribution towards that goal.
71. **Mitri Abu Aita**, Minister of Tourism of the Palestinian Authority and Representative of Palestine, encouraged participants to continue a comprehensive dialogue to achieve peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. He reminded participants that the Palestinian leadership had accepted the Road Map and asked for the immediate implementation, without any amendments, of the Road Map. The United Nations played an important role in the Quartet and he hoped that the Organization and the Secretary-General would work hard for the implementation of all relevant resolutions. The Palestinian people also counted on the support of the European Union, the Russian Federation, Japan, Ukraine and intergovernmental organizations like the OIC. He appealed to the international community to stop the Israeli aggression and to pressure Israel to remove all of its forces from the territories occupied in 1967.
72. **Papa Louis Fall**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, noting the tightening of the vortex of violence since September 2000, the loss of life, wholesale destruction of infrastructure and private property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, said that the exchange of views over the past two days had highlighted the urgency of resuming talks and negotiations leading to a sustainable political process. He reviewed the presentations of the experts in the different plenary sessions and expressed the hope that the deliberations would contribute to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

#### V. Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace

73. The Committee held, in connection with the International Meeting, the Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace on 15 May 2003 at the Institute for International Relations of the Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University. Representatives of civil society organizations, the media and students of the Institute were joined by some of the speakers who had participated in the International Meeting.
74. Those experts were: Edward Abington, Political Consultant to the Palestinian Authority; Geoffrey Aronson, Director of Research and Publications at the Foundation for Middle East Peace; Gabi Baramki, President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace in Ramallah; Oleksandr Bohomolov, Vice-Director of the Association of Middle East Studies in Kyiv; Issam Makhoul, Member of the Knesset (Hadash); Lucy Nusseibeh, Director of the Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy in Jerusalem; Oleg Ozerov, Deputy Chief of the Middle East Peace Process Division in the Department of the Middle East and North Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Theocharis Papamargaris, Vice-Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and President of the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity in Athens; Ihor Semyvolos, Executive Director of the Association of Middle East Studies in Kyiv; Yuri Skorohod, Professor at the Institute of International Relations and the Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University; and Rema Tarazi, President of the General Union of Palestinian Women in Ramallah.
75. The Forum was also attended by a delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations. Members of the Committee delegation were Papa Louis Fall (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Martin Andjaba (Namibia), Valery P. Kuchinsky (Ukraine) and Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). Representatives of Brazil, China, Indonesia, Ukraine, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States participated in the Forum. Danilo Türk, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, also attended the Forum.
76. The Forum was opened by a statement by the Chairman of the Committee and chaired by Ambassador Valery P. Kuchinsky, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations. The participants discussed three topics: public perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - the unchallenged media; the impact and educational responsibility of think tanks and academic institutions; and the role of civil society in raising public awareness about the question of Palestine. The Forum used a round-table style and was open for interventions from all participants, including the audience.
77. **Papa Louis Fall** (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said in his opening statement that the global anti-war and peace movement had demonstrated its growing power in recent months. It was becoming a well-organized part of international civil society with considerable clout. Thousands of NGOs, faith-based organizations, political and university groups, think tanks, trade unions and concerned individuals were joining in initiatives for a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis. He said that civil society should become active facilitators in implementing the Road Map. Although monitoring its implementation was officially assigned to the Quartet, it would be supplemented, *nolens volens*, by many NGO volunteers, media organizations and other international representatives already working on the ground.
78. The experience of the recent years had shown that solidarity with and support for the Palestinian cause by the world community was of paramount importance for a just and lasting solution. Because of the stark disparity in the balance of power between the parties, the Palestinian people continued to count on the support and assistance of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations. There was a greater need for sustained and robust campaigns aimed at informing public opinion about the root causes of the conflict and the legitimate rights of the parties and at promoting national and international action in support of effective steps to end the crisis and to resume negotiations.
79. Mr. Fall expressed the Committee's belief that, in the months to come, civil society should support initiatives, such as the Road Map, mounted with a view to restoring a political process that would eventually lead the parties back to the negotiating table. Providing emergency relief and other assistance to the Palestinian people and rehabilitating the devastated Palestinian economy should be another important priority for civil society work. Given the current dangerous situation, particular attention should be given to mobilizing wider support for measures to protect the Palestinian people. Governments should be encouraged, through parliaments, NGOs and public opinion, to take immediate and effective steps to uphold the Fourth Geneva Convention and to live up to the Declaration regarding the Occupied Palestinian Territory unanimously adopted by the High Contracting Parties in December 2001 in Geneva.
80. **Edward Abington**, Political Consultant to the Palestinian Authority, speaking about public perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the unchallenged media, said that attitudes of the United States public were influenced by press coverage. For years, Israelis had tried hard to have an impact on that coverage, sending representatives to explain the Israeli viewpoint and casting the Palestinian side in the worst possible light. They



appeared on television and radio and set up interviews with important newspapers and influential people. The Jewish lobby was active with letter-writing campaigns and lobbying Congress. On the other hand, Palestinians had been relatively reluctant to present their point of view. Palestinians must talk to universities, newspapers, church groups and other groups to get their message out. Mr. Abington stressed that the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 had had a traumatic effect on the American psyche. The television networks concentrated on Palestinian suicide bombings, which Israelis paralleled to the 11 September attacks. Suicide bombers were put in the same light as Al-Qaeda. The Israeli campaign to sway the United States was countered by a relative vacuum on the other side. The impact of the 11 September attacks allowed Israelis to delegitimize the Palestinian position.

81. **Oleksandr Bohomolov**, Vice-Director of the Association of Middle East Studies in Kyiv, said that the Palestinian case was often under-represented. However, it was not just a question of quantity; quality was also important. It was not enough for Palestinians to deny being terrorists. They must provide another picture, different from the one portrayed by the Israeli media.

82. **Lucy Nusseibeh**, Director of the Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy in Jerusalem, said that journalists who wrote in support of Palestinians often had to pay a heavy price. They tended to be reassigned or heavily edited. Even the phrase "innocent Palestinian civilians" could be edited as some media outlets considered that there was no such thing as "innocent" in the Palestinian context. The international community must support the journalists who were willing to speak out. Conversely, journalists should try to enlist community support to preserve their right to speak freely. It was not enough to just deny guilt. Perhaps one should consider "paying the piper" or spending money to place advertisements in newspapers to make people aware of the humanitarian tragedy of Palestinians. If the Road Map was to work, the media must be engaged.

83. **Rema Tarazi**, President of the General Union of Palestinian Women in Ramallah, said that one of the problems was the use of language, and one must be careful in the choice of words. One of the common phenomena in the media was that while Israeli violence was referred to as "excessive use of force," Palestinian violence was called "terrorism". When Israelis killed civilians, it was described as "collateral damage" or "mistakes", while the same acts committed by Palestinians were called "terrorist acts". Furthermore, "occupied territory" was being changed to "disputed territory".

84. **Issam Makhoul**, Member of the Knesset (Hadash), said that actions were defined by perceptions. It was not so much a matter of what you did but rather who did it. "Violence and terror" defined Palestinian behaviour. "Killing by mistake" defined Israeli behaviour. Palestinians had to deal with that question seriously because the Israeli leadership was debating going to court to change the definition of their acts of assassination to "preventive actions".

85. **Theocharis Papamargaris**, Vice-Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and President of the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity in Athens, said that Governments should play a bigger role in influencing the distorted presentations of the media. Currently, in the so-called background briefings by official spokespersons, the line of the Administration was given to editors.

86. The representative of Egypt said that through the years, American movies had shaped public opinion by portraying Arabs in a negative light, depicting them as less than human. By making them inhuman, they had made it acceptable to kill them. The example of the body count during the recent war in Iraq illustrated that. The public had been informed of every member of the US-led force that was killed, but there was little mention of how many Iraqis had died.

87. **Edward Abington** added that a large group of western journalists was stationed in Jerusalem and Israelis made great efforts to influence them. Palestinians should use the same methods. Palestinians needed to understand who to talk to in the American media and how to make arguments that would appeal to Americans. Palestinians needed to talk the language of peace. That would put Israelis on the defensive. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas needed a spokesperson to orchestrate interviews with major US media outlets to get his message across to the American people and American politicians. Complaining about the media would not change the status quo.

88. **Nasser Al-Kidwa**, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, said that the international community had a serious problem with the current atmosphere surrounding the media. There was an increasing concentration of Government influence as well as heavy ownership influence. Larger media conglomerations were owned by fewer people. Worse, the increasing Government influence was open in terms of favours provided to journalists for "good" coverage or punishment for unfavourable coverage. Mr. Al-Kidwa said that Israelis had done a superb job with the use of words to shape understanding and deal with the subconscious. Israeli "invasions" had become Israeli "operations". Palestinians had to focus more on terms and their use.

89. A representative of a local Ukrainian media outlet said that the idea of state control of press coverage was dangerous. He asked if there was any United Nations programme that provided journalists with coverage methods.

90. **Danilo Türk**, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in response to the local journalist's question regarding United Nations programmes for journalists, said that the United Nations Department of Public Information had an annual training programme specifically designed for young Palestinian journalists. The programme was aimed at strengthening their professional capacity as information media personnel. He said that that programme was a very important part of capacity-building.

91. **Oleksandr Bohomolov**, speaking on the impact and educational responsibility of think tanks and academic institutions, said that think tanks should demonstrate neutrality and find a global perspective regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so that the conflict would be important to parties beyond Palestinians and Israelis. Think tanks could contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature of the problem. They could also try to help policy makers by trying to broaden their understanding and posing different alternatives. The different parties to the conflict had developed completely different vocabularies. There was a cultural dimension that was often neglected in the political texts. To observe a kind of cultural blindness, one should compare translations of the phrase "The Road Map" into Arabic and Hebrew. While the Arabic translation of the Road Map implied "one single road", the Hebrew translation implied "multiple roads", indicating that Israel would interpret the peace plan as it chose. Another problem was that the Arabic translation had a religious connotation - the one right road - and it unconsciously invoked that image. The Americans should have chosen a less culturally loaded word, as the Arabic word offered more than had been intended. Another word that caused difficulty was "incitement". While the Hebrew word was close to the meaning in English, the Arab word was very broad. Think tanks could make a contribution by clarifying language and translations.

92. **Gabi Baramki**, President of the Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace from Ramallah, said that in the past, Palestinians had not used think tanks well and they had suffered in negotiations because they had not been adequately prepared. They had not paid enough attention to the language and thus fallen into traps. Academic institutions were also important in influencing perceptions of the question of Palestine. Eighty universities now participated in a programme called PEACE in which young people, future leaders of the world, came together in a Palestinian city to learn the situation on the ground. When the facts were clear, one did not need to do much more to make the case, especially when there were human rights violations. He said that when Palestinian universities had been closed by Israeli curfews in the past, Palestinian students had been invited by European sister universities to study there during the curfews. That had helped draw the attention of the international community to the problem on the ground.

93. **Edward Abington** said that think tanks in the United States, especially those in Washington, DC, were enormously powerful, and they were often established to advance a political point of view. They conducted analyses of United States policies and presented them in public forums. More importantly, their outputs were emailed to hundreds of people, including congressmen, policy makers, congressional aides and the media. That was another tactic for Palestinians to employ.

94. **Rema Tarazi** said that one must stress the importance of local educational institutions where young men and women, the leaders of tomorrow, were taught to think and practise democratic thinking.
95. **Theocharis Papamargaris** said that to be credible, a think tank or a university must adhere to three criteria: a method of thinking - how to approach research or knowledge; absolute facts; and the ability to accept another point of view.
96. **Lucy Nusseibeh** said that Palestinians had an instinctive respect for universities. In terms of reaching out and changing the language, it was possible for universities to work on this problem. Their importance should not be underestimated. Ms. Nusseibeh also said that most of the think tanks focused on how to face Israel, rather than how to solve the Palestinian problems.
97. **Issam Makhoul** said that Israel did educate its people for peace. Without creating the context for peace, one could not progress. The Palestinian people had not addressed the Israeli people on this issue. They should create the context of peace for the Israeli public. The Israeli public was paying the price for the policy of its Government. Israelis should be convinced that there would not be a democracy without a solution to the question of Palestine.
98. **Rema Tarazi**, elaborating on the role of civil society in raising public awareness about the question of Palestine, said Palestinians had asked for international protection through the United Nations, but it was not forthcoming. Grassroots organizations had put together a group - Grassroots Protection for the Palestinian People - and appealed to people from all over the world to come and witness the reality on the ground. Many were now in the Occupied Palestinian Territory risking their lives to curb Israeli brutalities. The United Nations must raise its voice to protect those people who were coming to bear witness. Those activists who had come to protect Palestinians now needed protection for themselves.
99. **Theocharis Papamargaris** said that one of the tasks of non-governmental organizations was to monitor Governments' compliance with international law and principles. NGOs working for the Palestinian cause had mobilized to raise awareness about the Palestinian question and to state the facts clearly as opposed to the manipulated media coverage. Public opinion within individual societies must be mobilized. Those courageous Jews and Arabs within Israel supporting the Palestinian cause should be supported by international civil society.

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## Annex I

### FINAL DOCUMENT

1. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace was held in Kyiv, on 13 and 14 May 2003, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Participants in the Meeting included international experts, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system entities, Palestine, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the media.
2. The Meeting was convened by the Committee with a view to promoting a dialogue on the political, security and economic factors critical for resolving the continuing crisis and resuming the peace process. In the course of the Meeting, the participants have reviewed the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, discussed the Road Map, its significance and potential for resuming the peace dialogue, and exchanged views on modalities for a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
3. The Meeting was held at a time of renewed hopes following the formal presentation of the Road Map to the parties on 30 April 2003. The participants welcomed the plan as a positive development with the potential for attaining peace in the region. They saw it as particularly important that the Road Map was to lead the parties to the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, as affirmed in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002. The participants welcomed the acceptance by the Palestinian leadership of the Road Map and its readiness to implement it. They expressed their concern over the fact that the Israeli side had so far failed to accept the plan and urged the Israeli Government to do so without delay, so that the implementation of the Road Map could start in earnest with the help of the Quartet. It was also stressed that to avoid the failures of past peace efforts, parallel progress in the security, political and economic areas was seen as absolutely essential.
4. While encouraged by the positive political developments of the last weeks, the participants agreed that the continuing occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, threatening the security and stability of the entire region. The constantly expanding illegal settlement activities, with numerous outposts springing up throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and new Israeli-only roads and security zones cutting through Palestinian land, were consistently described as developments that endangered the chances for a political settlement. The controversial separation barrier planned and implemented with utter disregard for Palestinian interests and rights was seen as another serious obstacle to peace. The participants expressed concern that the suffering and dispossession of the Palestinian people continued unabated. They noted that since September 2000 more than 2,200 Palestinians and 700 Israelis had been killed and many more had been injured, and the participants deplored the loss of innocent lives. The continuation of such an appalling loss of life was seen both as a reproach to all concerned and as a reason to redouble efforts in promoting a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The participants further strongly emphasized their conviction that there could not be any military solution to the conflict; the lasting settlement could only be reached through a peaceful dialogue and political process between the two parties.
5. The participants also noted that because of an exceptionally high level of mistrust between the parties, the best hope was therefore seen in a continued international oversight and stewardship of the process, in particular through the Quartet, working closely with other international and regional actors. They appreciated Ukraine's offer of good offices to promote negotiations between the parties. The Meeting emphasized that an effective international monitoring mechanism was essential for any progress on the ground.
6. The participants urged the Security Council to endorse the Road Map, to call for its implementation and remain engaged on the issue, for as long as it might be required. They reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to all the aspects of the question of Palestine, until it was resolved in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and norms of international law, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized.
7. Participants voiced alarm over the many Palestinian civilians falling victim to the excessive military force used by Israel in densely populated areas. Moreover, those disproportionate actions resulted increasingly in casualties among United Nations personnel, international volunteers and journalists. They called upon Israel, the occupying power, to honour its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and immediately terminate all acts of violence against innocent civilians.
8. The meeting commended the international donor assistance to the Palestinian people and emphasized its vital importance during the current period of a virtual collapse of the Palestinian economy and large-scale destruction on the ground. The participants noted that harsh restrictions on the movement of people and goods, prolonged withholding by Israel of the Palestinian tax and customs revenues, and other measures of collective punishment had had a disastrous effect on the Palestinian economy as a whole, as well as on the livelihood of individual Palestinian households. Participants emphasized the responsibility of Israel to facilitate the efforts by the donor community and called for the implementation of the recommendations of the report by the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General Catherine Bertini. Donor assistance was considered a key factor in efforts at alleviating the current grave humanitarian crisis and supporting the political process.
9. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, H.E. Mr. Papa Louis Fall, and the

delegation of the Committee were received by H.E. Mr. Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine, and H.E. Mr. Anatoliy Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, both of whom stressed the importance of supporting peace in the Middle East at the current critical stage and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in that regard. The Committee delegation expressed its deep appreciation for the active and constructive role played by Ukraine, a member of the Committee since its inception, in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

10. The participants also expressed gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and to the Government of Ukraine for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

Kyiv, 14 May 2003

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## **Annex II**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### Speakers

Edward Abington  
Political Consultant to the Palestinian Authority  
Washington, D.C.

Mitri Abu Aita  
Minister for Tourism, Palestinian Authority  
Ramallah

Ziad Abu Zayyad  
Member, Palestinian Legislative Council  
Jerusalem

Geoffrey Aronson  
Editor, *Foundation for Middle East Peace*  
Washington, D.C.

Grigor Hovhannisyan  
Deputy Head, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
Jerusalem

Said Kamal  
Assistant Secretary-General, League of Arab States  
Cairo

Yossi Katz  
Former Member of the Israeli Knesset (Labour)  
Kiryat Tivon

Issam Makhoul  
Member of the Israeli Knesset  
Tel Aviv

Lucy Nusseibeh  
Director, Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy  
Jerusalem

Oleg Ozerov  
Deputy Chief of Middle East Peace Process Division  
Department of the Middle East and North Africa  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation  
Moscow

Theocharis Papamargaris  
Vice-Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs  
on the Question of Palestine, and President, Greek Committee  
for International Democratic Solidarity  
Athens

Ihor Semyvolos  
Executive Director, Association of Middle East Studies  
Kyiv

Yuri Skorohod  
Professor, Institute of International Relations,  
Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University

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Speakers of the Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace  
Kyiv, 15 May 2003

Edward Abington  
Political Consultant to the Palestinian Authority

Geoffrey Aronson  
Director of Research and Publications, Foundation for Middle East Peace  
Washington, D.C.

Gabi Baramki  
President, Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace  
Ramallah

Oleksandr Bohomolov  
Vice-Director, Association of Middle East Studies  
Kyiv

Issam Makhoul  
Member of the Knesset (Hadash)  
Tel Aviv

Lucy Nusseibeh  
Director, Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy  
Jerusalem

Oleg Ozerov  
Deputy Chief of the Middle East Peace Process Division,  
Department of the Middle East and North Africa  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation  
Moscow

Theocharis Papamargaris  
Vice-Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs  
on the Question of Palestine and President of the  
Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity  
Athens

Ihor Semyvolos  
Executive Director, Association of Middle East Studies  
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Yuri Skorohod  
Professor, Institute of International Relations and Kyiv Taras  
Shevchenko National University  
Kyiv

Rema Tarazi  
President, General Union of Palestinian Women

Ramallah

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

H.E. Mr. Papa Louis Fall  
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations,  
Chairman of the Committee and Head of Delegation

H.E. Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parilla  
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations  
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Victor Camilleri  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations  
Rapporteur of the Committee

H.E. Mr. Martin Andjaba  
Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Valery P. Kuchinsky  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa  
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

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Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Danilo Türk      Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs

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Governments

Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Ukraine, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, Viet Nam

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Non-member States maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters

Holy See

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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

Palestine

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Intergovernmental organizations

League of Arab States  
Organization of the Islamic Conference

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United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

United Nations Development Programme  
United Nations Environment Programme

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Non-governmental organizations

All Ukrainian Party of Peace and Unity  
Association for Promotion of International Business & Development  
Association of Middle East Studies  
General Union of Palestinian Students  
General Union of Palestinian Women  
Indo-Arab Islamic Association  
International Tribunal on Genocide of Iraqi and Palestinian peoples  
Neda Institute for Scientific Political Research  
Palestinian Council for Justice and Peace  
Palestinian Union Association  
Public Organization Arabic House  
The Humanitarian Centre  
Women's Association for Palestinian Rights

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Media

Agence France-Presse  
Associated Press  
BBC, Kyiv  
*Korrespondent*  
*Delovaya Nedelya* Business Weekly  
*Kievskie Vedomosti*  
IA Obozrevatel  
IA "Agroinform"  
Interfax-Ukraine  
Mayak  
Politic Hall  
"Pro UA" Internet newspaper  
Radio Liberty  
Radio Stolycyi  
Russian State Broadcasting Company  
Salon Dona Basa (Doneask)  
*Segment*  
*Tribune*  
"TV Inter"  
TV Novy Kanal  
*Ugolovnoe Delo*  
*Ukrainian Observer*  
Ukraine National Radio  
Ukraine National TV  
Ukrainian Passenger Magazine *SALON*  
Union of Journalists of Ukraine  
*Volunteers* magazine

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