



General Assembly

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

Draft programme of work for 2002

I. Mandate of the Committee

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the year 2002 is contained in General Assembly resolutions [56/33](#), [56/34](#) and [56/35](#) of 3 December 2001.
2. In its resolution 56/33 entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report; 1/ requested it to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to mobilize international solidarity with and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional NGOs in its work. The Assembly furthermore requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they had at their disposal. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.
3. In its resolution 56/34, entitled “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continued to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.
4. In its resolution 56/35, entitled “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat”, the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility, as may be required by developments, its special information programme for the biennium 2002-2003, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme.

II. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2002

5. The Committee has reviewed the various aspects of its own programme of work and that of the Division for Palestinian Rights, as well as of the mandates governing them. It will continue to make adjustments in this programme in order to enhance its responsiveness to developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as to raise its effectiveness in promoting the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.
6. In its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, the Committee stated that at the start of the twenty-first century and more than five decades after the adoption by the General Assembly of its [resolution 181 \(II\)](#), the Palestinian people was yet to see the promise of its own State fulfilled. Thirty-four years after the illegal occupation by Israel of its land, the Palestinians had yet to see their aspirations for self-determination and the exercise of their inalienable and natural rights realized. The Committee expressed great concern over the intensification of the crisis, the tragic loss of innocent lives, wide-scale destruction of Palestinian property and steady deterioration of the economy. As the core of the conflict remained the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, the Committee reiterated its position of principle that the question of Palestine should be resolved on the basis of Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) and [338 \(1973\)](#), as well as other relevant United Nations resolutions and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and their own independent State. The Committee also reaffirmed its long-standing position that the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

7. As the crisis continues, the Committee stresses anew the importance of compliance by the occupying Power with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention). In this regard, the Committee expresses full support for the results of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, reconvened in Geneva on 5 December 2001. The Committee calls upon all members and observers of the United Nations, as well as the Organization and its agencies to observe the Declaration adopted by the Conference. It feels strongly that the High Contracting Parties should remain fully engaged on the question of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, fulfil their obligations under the Convention and be prepared for follow-up steps, as required. In its activities during the year, the Committee will continue to put into focus the specific obligations of the occupying Power under the Convention, including the importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of Palestinian civilians. In addition, the Committee will stress the illegality of settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee will also be guided by the provisions of resolutions [ES-10/8](#) and [ES-10/9](#) adopted by the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly.

8. The Committee takes the view that its programme of activities, mandated by the General Assembly, has continued to make a valuable and positive contribution to heightening international awareness of the question of Palestine and in sensitizing public opinion in the various regions with respect to the relevant issues. The Committee will strive to work with maximum effectiveness in order to respond adequately and in a timely manner to the rapidly evolving situation on the ground and to developments in the peace process.

9. In this most difficult period, the Committee stresses the need to support the Palestinian people and the peace process through a variety of activities. In the course of the year, the Committee will lay special emphasis on the urgency of salvaging the peace process. In particular, it will continue to advocate the implementation of the [Mitchell Committee recommendations](#) and the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations towards concluding a final settlement. The Committee has always maintained that economic assistance to the Palestinian people was a critical underpinning of peace in the region. With this in mind, it will remain engaged on issues relating to the state of the Palestinian economy and the urgency of providing international assistance to the Palestinian people. Furthermore, in keeping with its mandate, the Committee will continue to work towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and statehood.

10. The Committee attaches great importance to enhancing the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in implementation of their respective mandates. In its resolution 56/35, the General Assembly requested the Department, inter alia, to expand its collection of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine and to continue the production and preservation of such material. The Division will cooperate with the Department on the project of preservation and modernization of the United Nations collection of films and videos on the question of Palestine.

III. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights

A. Action by the Committee

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

12. The Committee, through its Chairman, will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers this activity an important aspect of its work in promoting international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

13. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including civil society, in the areas under its jurisdiction and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. Following the practice of the previous years, the Committee will continue to invite Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to meetings with members and observers of the Committee and the Secretariat, as required.

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

B. Meetings and conferences

15. In response to the serious deterioration of the situation on the ground in 2000-2001, the Committee will focus its international meetings programme on the urgency of salvaging the peace process. It will stress the importance of implementing the Mitchell Committee recommendations, resuming the peace negotiations towards concluding a final settlement, mustering international support for the Palestinian economy and improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people. The Committee will strive to make its programme of meetings and conferences more reflective of the evolving situation, as well as forward-looking, and will continue to review and assess its effectiveness.

16. As authorized by the General Assembly, the Committee, in the past, has made adjustments in the programme in order to respond to new developments. In 2002, the Committee will continue to strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions, and the relevant Secretariat services, to limit costs of conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of its meetings and conferences.

17. The Committee will also continue to organize thematic events, and will make an effort to encourage participation by countries and organizations which so far have not engaged fully in its programme of work.

18. Accordingly, the Committee intends to organize the following meetings in 2002:

- (a) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, April, Nicosia. The Meeting will be followed by a one-day United Nations Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (b) United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, May-June;
- (c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People;
- (d) North American NGO Meeting in Support of the Palestinian People, September, Headquarters.

19. The Committee is grateful to the Government of Cyprus for having agreed to provide the venue for the aforementioned meeting in its capital.

C. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

20. The role of civil society organizations in educating their respective constituencies about the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in mobilizing public support for the Palestinian cause remains very important. Aware of the challenges that lie ahead, the Committee is particularly appreciative of those NGO contributions that are focused on mobilizing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights, as well as supporting the peace process and the work and objectives of the Committee. There is a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion and promoting national and international action in support of the peace process, the effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and of a just and lasting peace in the region based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As the peace process continues to experience serious difficulties and the Palestinian economy continues to disintegrate, the Committee believes that in 2002 the NGO community should focus its work on mobilizing support for the salvaging of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in

accordance with international legitimacy. The position of the Committee is that, at this crucial stage, civil society organizations should make a meaningful contribution to efforts at ensuring the safety of Palestinian civilians and providing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance aimed at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

21. The Committee intends to continue its practice of inviting civil society organizations to all international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. It will encourage them to use those events as a platform for discussing their own initiatives and campaigns, and for bringing forward their views and ideas on the issues at hand. The participation of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in those events provides civil society with a unique opportunity to support and strengthen, in particular, such positions and initiatives that are geared towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

22. The Committee encourages cooperation, coordination and networking among civil society organizations. It will maintain and develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. It will continue the accreditation of new NGOs and their umbrella organizations and will ask the Division for Palestinian Rights to intensify its outreach to civil society. Periodic meetings or consultations with civil society representatives will contribute to further review and enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with NGOs.

23. The Committee takes the view that regular exchange of information with the NGO community on respective initiatives and the various current and planned activities and their outcomes is crucial to its cooperation with civil society. The Committee will continue to encourage the accredited NGOs to keep it abreast, on a regular basis, of major NGO activities and initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. In this connection, the Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue to develop and regularly update its Internet web site on NGO activities on the question of Palestine (www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo) as a central tool for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society.

24. In the course of the year, the resources available for cooperation with NGOs on the question of Palestine will be used for the following activities:

(a) Organization, whenever appropriate and feasible, of meetings of NGOs in conjunction with international conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the Committee;

(b) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in important forums and other events worldwide organized by NGOs and other civil society organizations;

(c) Periodic meetings or consultations with various civil society organizations with a view to briefing them on the activities of the Committee and assessing those of their needs that can be met through the Division's programme of work;

(d) Providing assistance to Palestinian organizations in sending their representatives to meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or supported by the Committee.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

25. The Committee strongly believes that the role and contribution of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines constitutes an important source of upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee reaffirms the importance of developing closer cooperation with parliaments and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies in order to encourage the discussion of the peace process and the various aspects of the question of Palestine within the respective parliaments and among all the layers of society. To that end, the Committee intends to involve parliamentarians and representatives of inter-parliamentary organizations in its international conferences and meetings. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, to be held at international events sponsored by the Committee, should improve cooperation between the two sides.

D. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

26. The Committee has requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on further development, expansion and administering of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), an activity initially mandated by the General Assembly in 1991. This will include updating UNISPAL on a day-to-day basis with relevant new documents; improving the quality control mechanisms and user-friendliness of the system; and furthering the development and management of the "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet. The Division will focus on making the collection comprehensive through the inclusion of recently issued documents in the system and on improving its organization through a wider use of hyperlinks. Additional work will be required in order to make the UNISPAL web site more technically advanced and user-friendly. The Division will continue to administer the UNISPAL web site, upgrading the system's capacity to accommodate increased usage.

E. Other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights

Publications

27. The Committee considers that the Division for Palestinian Rights should continue to prepare and issue in a timely manner its periodic publications, namely:

- Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- Periodic bulletin on developments in the peace process;
- Monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine;
- Annual compilation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council;
- Reports of meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee;
- Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

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

29. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should continue to review the existing publications prepared by the Division and make proposals with regard to those that require updating. In particular, the Committee requests the Division to complete, in the first trimester of the year, its work on updating the study entitled "*The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1988*".

Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

30. The Committee considers that this useful programme, carried out in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, should be continued in 2002. The Committee considers that the experience of the previous years of the training programme should be evaluated, in consultation with the Mission, and used in such a way as to maximize the programme's effectiveness and usefulness for Palestinian Authority trainees.

Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

31. In accordance with the [General Assembly resolution 32/40 B](#) of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian

People will be observed on Friday, 29 November 2002. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna, and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

32. The Committee will once again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities. During the week beginning 25 November, a Palestinian cultural exhibit will be presented at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

33. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of new developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and the situation on the ground, and will make adjustments as necessary.

Notes

1/ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/56/35).*