



## Secretary-General SG/SM/15427

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's remarks at a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, in New York on 25 September:

I am pleased to welcome Foreign Minister Eide of Norway, Prime Minister Hamdallah of the State of Palestine and Minister Steinitz of Israel.

I also welcome Secretary John Kerry, High Representative Ashton, Quartet Representative Tony Blair and other distinguished guests.

I am grateful to Norway for convening and chairing this important forum.

This meeting comes at a time of renewed hope. Though many challenges remain, the resumption of negotiations is a step in the right direction. As the talks continue, it is crucial to make visible progress on the ground to foster badly needed trust.

The situation is volatile, and the status quo in the occupied Palestinian territory is not sustainable. In the long run, the occupation is deeply damaging to both Israelis and Palestinians. I am extremely concerned that without political progress, there could be dire consequences for both peoples.

I hope today's meeting will point the way towards increased Palestinian and Israeli economic cooperation, an easing of restrictions on access and movement of Palestinians, and tangible improvements in both the West Bank and Gaza. Such positive measures would mutually reinforce each other and usefully complement the political track.

I welcome the Government of Israel's decision to allow 350 trucks per week of construction material into Gaza for private sector use. A sustainable recovery also depends on restoring the Gaza Strip's ability to trade externally. Ultimately, real and lasting progress can only be realized through the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1860 in all its elements, building on a full calm and a lifting of remaining closures.

The parties themselves bear the primary responsibility to make the most of the current opening. Both should act responsibly and with restraint, and refrain from incitement and other actions that risk undermining the negotiations or prejudging final status issues. Stability is critical, and maximum efforts should be made to avoid violence and reverse negative trends.

The international community, for its part, must work in concert, including through the Quartet, to assist the parties in forging a way forward.

Foreign Minister Eide, I welcome Norway's continued effort to promote trilateral dialogue. I hope the Committee's discussions today will help ensure continued support for the Palestinian Authority while strengthening the necessary cooperation with Israel.

In closing, let me reiterate what I said to the General Assembly yesterday: we must do all we can to save the two-state solution. If we truly believe in that solution, we must also recognize that the window for achieving it is closing fast.

The more we defer the tough decisions, the likelier it is that dire predictions become dreadful reality. Complacency only breeds more conflict.

While we desperately need steps that feed the hunger for economic progress, we are especially starved for leadership – statesmanship – the recognition of the two peoples' shared fates and interests.

The knowledge and experience in this room can make a difference. I appeal to all of you to rise to the current moment.

Finally, I would like to thank the leadership and strong commitment of Secretary John Kerry, who has been consistently, quite consistently, travelling many, many times to the region to make some breakthrough in the stalled peace process. I myself visited the region last month just to lend the United Nations' – and also as a part of the Quartet – my strong support to this ongoing process. Harder decisions should be made, but that requires leadership.

I am going to convene a Quartet principals meeting this week, with all the principals participating, for the first time in one and a half years. I hope this Quartet principals meeting will also give some political impact to these ongoing negotiations. Thank you again for your support, and I wish you well in your deliberations.

\* \* \* \* \*

For information media • not an official record