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Friday, 26 September 2014, 9 a.m.

New York

President : Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 9 a.m.

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Address by Mr. Donald Rabindranauth Ramotar, President of the Republic of Guyana

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The situation in the Middle East is the most disturbing. Still at the heart of it is the great tragedy that is the plight of the Palestinian people. Once again, we have seen the bombing of an almost unarmed population in Gaza by one of the world's most powerful military machines, supported and replenished by even more powerful military forces. Guyana calls for the end of the apartheid-like situation that exists in Palestine, where poverty and degradation are weapons used to repress a whole people. The people of Palestine have a right to live with dignity in their own country, and the United Nations must never compromise on the principle of self-determination.

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Address by Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus

/...At the same time, we should not ignore that deep-rooted and long-standing conflicts possess the ability to instantly ignite regional instability, cause bloodshed and endanger the lives of thousands of innocent civilians, including children. Regrettably, such events sow the seeds of animosity and of further violence that render dialogue and negotiations more difficult to conduct and to eventually bring to success.

Specifically with regard to the Middle East peace process, the right of the Israeli people to statehood should not be called into question, nor should the same right for the people of Palestine. We commend the very positive role of the Egyptian Government in mediating between the two sides. At the same time, we strongly urge all interested stakeholders to discourage the activities of terrorist groups that oppose the Middle East peace process.

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Address by Mr. Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea

I should like to stress in particular the unacceptable suffering that our Palestinian brothers are experiencing. Guinea has always clearly and unambiguously expressed its unconditional solidarity with the just Palestinian cause and firmly condemns the heinous acts committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, which is now suffering under the yoke of a cruel and vile embargo. My country remains convinced that any viable and lasting solution to the situation in the Middle East hinges on the creation of two States living side by side within secure and internationally recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders.

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Address by Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo

In turn, they make us put our faith in the United Nations, the only instrument available to the world in its search for solutions to those many problems. In that universal quest, the priority action of States must be directed above all to peace, security and the conservation of nature. For the world needs peace and security, especially wherever senseless conflicts have developed, such as in Syria, Ukraine, Iraq and between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

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Address by Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the State of Palestine.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Abbas (*spoke in Arabic*): In this year 2014, proclaimed by the General Assembly as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Israel has chosen to make it the year of a new war of genocide perpetrated against the Palestinian people. It is the year in which the Assembly, on behalf of the countries and peoples of the world, conveyed the world's yearning and determination to make a just peace that would achieve freedom and independence for the Palestinian people in their State of Palestine alongside Israel. The occupying Power has chosen to defy the entire world by launching its war on Gaza, in which its jets and tanks brutally destroyed lives and devastated the homes, schools and dreams of thousands of Palestinian children, women and men and, in reality, destroying any remaining hopes for peace.

I addressed the Assembly on similar days in 2012 ([see A/67/PV.12](#)), when I cautioned that the colonial occupying Power was preparing a new Nakba against the Palestinian people. I appealed to the Assembly then to prevent a new Nakba and to support the establishment of a free and independent State of Palestine. I returned to the Assembly Hall two months later ([see A/67/PV.44](#)) as Palestine was healing its wounds and its people were burying their beloved martyred children, women and men after yet another war waged then against the Gaza Strip. On that day, I stated that there was certainly not a single person in the world who needed the loss of the lives of thousands of Palestinian children in order to confirm that Israel insisted on occupation. The international community also did not need thousands of deadly raids and tons of explosives to remind it that there was an occupation that must end and a people who must be freed.

Again today, we find ourselves full of grief and bitterness, raising the same long-standing conclusions and questions after a new war, the third in five years, waged by that racist occupying State against Gaza, a small, densely populated and precious part of our country. The difference today is that the scale of that genocidal crime is larger. The list of martyrs, especially children, has grown, as has the number of the wounded, the disabled and the dozens of families who have been completely decimated. The difference today is that approximately half a million people have been displaced from their homes. An unprecedented number of homes, schools, hospitals, public buildings, residential buildings, mosques, factories and cemeteries have been destroyed — the Israelis pursued their vengeance against our young even into the cemeteries. The difference today is that the devastation caused by that recent aggression is unmatched in modern times, as confirmed by a witness, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

The latest war against Gaza constituted a series of absolute war crimes, carried out before the eyes and ears of the entire world, moment by moment. It is inconceivable that anyone today could claim not to grasp the magnitude and horror of the crimes. No one can support Israel's right to self-defence without regard for the fate of the thousands of victims of our people. No one can ignore the simple fact, upon which we insist, that the life of a Palestinian is as precious as the life of any other human being. Ignoring the facts on the ground cannot erase such facts. We must also assume that no one can continue to wonder why extremism is rising and why the culture of peace is losing ground and receding, while efforts to achieve it are collapsing. And yet we continue to believe and hope that this time no one will try to help out the occupation by supporting its impunity and its attempts to evade accountability for its crimes.

Here, today, in the name of Palestine, I affirm that we will not forget or forgive, and we will not allow war criminals to escape punishment. Before the Assembly, I affirm that the Palestinian people will hold fast to their legitimate right to defend themselves against the Israeli war machine and to resist Israel's colonial, racist occupation. At the same time, I want to affirm that not for one moment will our grief, trauma and anger make us abandon our humanity, our values and our ethics. We will always maintain our respect for and commitment to international law, international humanitarian law and the international consensus. We will maintain the traditions of our national struggle established by the Palestinian martyrs, to which we have been committed since the start of the Palestinian revolution in early 1965. In the midst of a torrent of massacres and the turmoil of vast destruction, we saw the peoples of the world gather in huge demonstrations on the streets of many cities to announce their condemnation of Israel's aggression and occupation and their support of freedom for Palestine. We also saw how an overwhelming majority of countries around the world declared themselves for the same noble position and rushed to give our people all kinds of support and assistance. And we saw a qualitative and quantitative expansion in the activities of the international grassroots boycotting campaign against Israel's policies of occupation, apartheid and colonial settlement, especially among academic, cultural, student and youth groups. In the name of Palestine, we pay tribute to all who chose to stand with human values and demanded freedom, justice and peace. All of those manifestations of true solidarity constituted an important message to those who faced genocide in Gaza, helping them to feel that they were not alone.

The recent war confirmed on the ground the essence of what the Israeli Government had been saying behind closed doors in negotiations. It came after long, difficult negotiations held over more than eight months under the auspices of the United States and through the efforts of President Barack Obama and his tenacious Secretary of State, John Kerry. We engaged in that endeavour and with the American Administration's efforts with open minds and in good faith and a positive spirit. We laid out firm positions based on resolutions of international legitimacy. We genuinely respected all our commitments and understandings. Even as we watched the ongoing and escalating Israeli violations, we exercised incredible self-restraint, silencing our cries and tending to our own wounds in order to give the American efforts the best possible chance for success.

However, as usual, the Israeli Government missed no opportunity to undermine the chances for peace. Throughout the months of negotiations, settlement construction, land confiscation, home demolition, killing and arrest campaigns and large-scale forced displacement in the West Bank continued unabated. The unjust blockade of the Gaza Strip was tightened. The occupation's campaign specifically targeted the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, attempting to artificially alter the spirit, identity and character of the Holy City and focusing on Al-Aqsa Mosque while threatening grave consequences. At the same time, armed gangs of racist settlers persisted in their crimes against the Palestinian people and their land, mosques, churches, property and olive trees.

Again as usual, the Israeli Government failed the test of peace. It breached an agreement with the United States Administration regarding the release from the occupation jails of a number of Palestinian prisoners, who we continue to insist should all be released. When confronted with simple questions during the direct negotiations or through the United States mediator, Israel had no hesitation in revealing its true positions. It refuses to end the occupation of the State of Palestine that began in 1967; rather it seeks to continue and entrench it, rejecting the Palestinian State and refusing to reach a just solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees. That is the Government of Israel's official position. At best, the future it proposes for the Palestinian people consists of isolated ghettos for Palestinians on fragmented lands, without borders or sovereignty over its air space, water and natural resources, under the subjugation and control of the racist settlers and the army of occupation; at worst, it is a totally abhorrent form of apartheid. Some of the Israelis say they are for two States. Where is the State of Palestine? This is what they intend for the State of Palestine.

Israel confirmed during the negotiations that it rejects making peace with its victims, the Palestinian people. All of this has been carried out along with an attempt to brand the conflict as a religious one against a background of increasingly rampant racism in Israel's political and media discourse, as well as its entrenchment in the school curriculum and a series of laws and practices in favour of the occupation and its settlers. This culture of racism, incitement and hatred was glaringly apparent some months ago in an appallingly despicable crime committed by fascist settlers, who abducted Mohammed Abu Khdeir, a young boy from Jerusalem, burned him alive and killed him.

This brings me to another fact of history. Over the years, the occupying Power has pursued a policy aimed at deliberately weakening the Palestinian National Authority in order to undermine it and make its role irrelevant. The occupation has targeted our relentless efforts to establish the foundations for the kind of State of Palestine that we want — a sovereign and independent State living in peace and building bridges of mutual cooperation with its neighbours, respecting its commitments, obligations and agreements and strengthening the values of citizenship, equality, nondiscrimination, the rule of law, human rights and pluralism. We want a State that deepens Palestine's enlightened traditions of tolerance, coexistence and non-exclusion, strengthens the culture of peace, promotes the role of women, establishes an effective administration committed to the standards of good governance, and cares for the needs and interests of its people. The occupation struck, and continues to strike, a blow at this effort because our quest is the antithesis of Israel's settlement policies, and because Israel seeks to destroy Palestine's chance of creating an independent State within the framework of the two-State solution.

When our efforts to end the internal division through national dialogue succeeded a few months ago and we prepared to restore the unity of our land, nation and institutions, we formed a national-consensus Government and began a process that was to lead to presidential and legislative elections. All countries around the world welcomed this achievement, with the exception of Israel, which has constantly sought to fragment our land and our national unity.

Where do we go from here? The idea that one can simply return to the past patterns of actions that failed repeatedly is naive at best and, in any case, wrong. For it ignores the fact that it is no longer acceptable or possible to repeat methods that have proved futile, or to continue with approaches that have repeatedly failed and that require comprehensive review and radical correction.

It is impossible — I repeat, impossible — to return to the cycle of negotiations that failed to deal with the core of the Palestinian question. There is neither credibility nor seriousness in negotiations in which Israel predetermines the results via its settlement activities and the occupation's brutality. Nor is there meaning or value in negotiations in which the agreed objective is not ending the Israeli occupation and achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the entire Palestinian territory occupied in the 1967 war. Moreover, negotiations that are not linked to a firm timetable for the implementation of this goal have no value. The time has come to end this colonial occupation.

Palestine refuses to have the right to freedom of its people, who suffer terrorism at the hands of the racist occupying Power and its settlers and remain hostage to Israel's security conditions. The Palestinian people are actually the ones who need immediate international protection — a protection they are seeking through international organizations. They are in need of the security and peace that they more than any other people are denied. And the children of Palestine are worthy of the world's efforts to ensure that their childhood, dreams and lives will not once again be destroyed. It is time for the chapters of this renewed, ongoing tragedy to be closed.

Those who were uprooted from their warm homes, good land and beautiful country in Al-Nakba 66 years ago, who were pushed into the misery of exile to live as

refugees, and are now being forced into new waves of expulsion or onto ships of death on the world's seas, need assurances. They need to be assured that they will not be displaced from their homes again, that their homes will not be destroyed again, and that they will not spend their lives waiting for the outbreak of a new war. Is it not time for this long tragedy to end?

We will not forever accept demands to prove our good intentions by making concessions at the expense of our rights, to remain silent as we are killed and our land is stolen, and to understand the conditions of the other party and the importance of preserving its coalition Government, while its occupation becomes more entrenched. We are exhausted by the additional tests that we must undergo to prove our efficiency, competence and eligibility to earn our natural, simple right to live a normal life; our inherent right to expect a stable and ordinary tomorrow and to dream about more beautiful days; and the right of our youth to plan their future safely with peace and freedom prevailing over our land, like other peoples of the world. The time has come for a genuine and just peace to prevail in the land of peace. As I have said more than once, we are the only people in the world that remain under occupation.

All the Arab countries and ourselves have constantly warned about the disastrous consequences of the continuing Israeli colonial occupation and the denial of freedom and independence to the Palestinian people. We have repeatedly pointed out that allowing Israel to act as a State above the law without being held accountable or punished for its policies, aggression and defiance of the international community's will and legality has provided fertile ground for, and an environment conducive to, the growth of extremism, hatred and terrorism in our region.

Confronting the terrorism that plagues our region by groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and others, which have no basis whatsoever in the tolerant Islamic religion or humanity, and whose members are committing vile and heinous atrocities, requires much more than military confrontation. The matter is of the utmost urgency and requires much more than condemnations and declarations of positions, which are of course necessary. What is needed, first and foremost, is a comprehensive, credible strategy to dry up the sources of terrorism and eradicate its roots in all political, intellectual, economic and social spheres in our region. It requires the creation of solid foundations for a practical consensus rendering the fight against all forms of terrorism everywhere a collective task to be undertaken by an alliance of peoples, nations and civilizations. It requires, as a priority, ending the Israeli occupation, that in its practices and perpetuation, constitutes an abhorrent form of State terrorism and a breeding ground for incitement, tension and hatred.

At a time when we are still suffering from the horrors of war, we face a formidable challenge to reconstruct what has been destroyed by occupation. This is the third time we are attempting to rebuild after the destruction inflicted on us by the occupation. We greatly appreciate the fact that next month, at the invitation of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Kingdom of Norway, the city of Cairo will host an international conference on relief and reconstruction for the Gaza Strip. Our Government will present comprehensive reports to the conference on the losses the acts of aggression have inflicted on various sectors of society, and it will provide details of plans and programmes to be rapidly implemented in the Gaza Strip, aimed at meeting immediate relief needs and the requirements for reconstruction, in full coordination with and under the supervision of the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies.

The President returned to the Chair.

Just a couple of days ago, the Palestinian faction emphasized its support for Gaza in order to facilitate reconstruction. While we reiterate our appreciation and gratitude to all the countries and organizations that hastened to help the Palestinian people both during and after the war, we are confident that brotherly and friendly countries will not waver in their support for the plans and programmes we will present, and that the conference will have practical results that can meet the expectations and needs of the victims of this act of aggression.

We reaffirm here that the chief prerequisite for the success of all these plans and efforts is an end to the despicable ongoing Israeli blockade that has suffocated the Gaza Strip for years and turned it into the largest prison in the world for nearly 2 million Palestinian citizens. At the same time, we affirm our commitment to and the importance of consolidating the ceasefire through the negotiations being conducted under the auspices of Egypt. However, in order to avoid a repetition of the cycle of war and reconstruction every two or three years, it is imperative that we focus on the fundamental issue and starting point, which is that Gaza's suffering will never be completely over until the occupation is ended and the State of Palestine's independence achieved.

During the past two weeks, Palestine and the Group of Arab States have been working intensively with the various regional groups in the United Nations to prepare for the introduction of a draft resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for adoption by the Security Council and to advance efforts to achieve peace, which we still believe can be accomplished through international legitimacy. This endeavour reaffirms our commitment to achieving a just peace through a negotiated solution and a diplomatic and political effort through United Nations bodies. It is inspired by and based fully on the spirit and provisions of the many resolutions that have been adopted in the General Assembly and the Security Council, laying the foundations for a lasting solution and a just peace. There is nothing new here. All of these are previously adopted resolutions.

This endeavour hopes to correct the failure of previous efforts to achieve peace by affirming the goal of ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a two-State solution for the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, over the entire territory occupied in 1967, alongside the State of Israel, and with a just and agreed-on solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees on the basis of [resolution 194 \(III\)](#), with a specific time frame for implementing those objectives, as stipulated in the [Arab Peace Initiative](#). There must be a time frame. That will be linked to the immediate resumption of negotiations between Palestine and Israel in order to demarcate the borders, reach a detailed and comprehensive agreement on all final status issues and then draft a comprehensive peace treaty between us and them.

We are confident that this endeavour will enjoy the full support of those who are committed to ensuring that our country will not witness new wars and atrocities, who wish to support a campaign to combat terrorism, who believe we must act expeditiously to rectify the historical injustice inflicted by the Nakba on the people of Palestine, and who wish to see peace prevail in the land of monotheistic religions. The adoption of that draft resolution will affirm that this year the Assembly is striving to realize the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, who will continue to be steadfast in their struggle and will rise brave and strong from the rubble of destruction. As our poet Mahmoud Darwish has said, we are infected with the incurable disease of hope, and we love life if we are given a chance at it. There is an occupation that must end now. There is a people who must be freed immediately. The hour of independence of the State of Palestine has arrived, and I believe you are listening for it.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the State of Palestine for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

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Address by Mr. Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Independent State of Samoa

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A durable peace settlement in the Middle East continues to elude us, but that is not grounds to be pessimistic. We should support every effort to create conditions conducive to the successful establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside a secure and safe State of Israel.

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President of the Republic of Iraq

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In the Middle East, it hurts us to see the recent suffering of the fraternal Palestinian people in Gaza and other Palestinian territories. We therefore renew our call on the international community to honour its commitment to the Palestinian people and exert concerted efforts to restore peace and return to the negotiations table in order to end the conflict and achieve lasting peace and security./...

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Address by Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

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This past summer, the people of Gaza were subjected to mass atrocities by Israel. We condemned the indiscriminate killings of civilians — which amounted to genocide. From this rostrum, I once again convey Pakistan's condolences and sympathies to the people of Palestine over their continuing plight.

We welcome the ceasefire between Gaza and Israel, but the next steps must also be taken. The blockade of Gaza must be lifted, Palestinian prisoners must be freed and illegal settlements must be halted. The United Nations should facilitate a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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Address by Mr. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Malta

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Undoubtedly, the first challenge is the conflict in the Middle East. We need a return to meaningful negotiations, and I stress the word meaningful. The ongoing tit-

for-tat, the culture of hatred and intolerance, the self-righteous proclamations and the recriminations are leaving nothing but death and destruction. If we build walls around people, it is no wonder that they will dig tunnels to escape. The current frame of mind will lead nowhere. Too many innocent civilians have died, too many children have been buried. We need statesmanship from the politicians on both sides to resolve the conflict. Risk-takers and courageous negotiators must be willing to make the right choices — not the most convenient choices, and not the most popular, perhaps, but the most enduring ones — that will bring about change leading to peace.

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Address by Mr. Tammam Salam, President of the Council of Ministers of the Lebanese Republic

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Last month, the Gaza Strip was subjected to a new Israeli aggression, which killed hundreds of civilians, displaced more than a quarter of the population and destroyed homes, hospitals and infrastructure. Lebanon, which has paid dearly as a result of the repeated Israeli attacks, calls for legal accountability for the war crimes committed by Israel and for that country to be held accountable for its actions in order to prevent impunity.

Lebanon believes that Israel is responsible for frustrating all efforts to reach a peaceful settlement based on the two-State solution. It stresses the need for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions [242](#) (1967) and [338](#) (1973), the Madrid terms of reference for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted at the Beirut summit in 2002.

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Address by Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia

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Malaysia, like so many countries around the world, was appalled by the brutal violence against Palestinian civilians in Gaza. We strongly condemn Israel's disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks on Gaza and its continuing violations of international and human rights law. The use of heavy weapons in civilian areas and the obliteration of houses, mosques and schools were an affront to common decency. We condemn such acts not just for the innocent lives taken but for the message that they send, namely, that religions cannot coexist and that the international community cannot enforce international law and protect the rights of Palestinians. Their plight is one of the most effective rallying calls for those who claim that the international system is broken.

Let us therefore unite to find a peaceful, just and lasting outcome that brings dignity and security to the people of Palestine. That should be predicated on a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. That will bring dignity and security for the people of Palestine, who have suffered so much, and will allow us to redouble our efforts to bring peace to other parts of the world where conflict fuels extremism.

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