
**United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

**United Nations Forum of Civil Society
in Support of the Palestinian People**

Kuala Lumpur, 15-17 December 2006

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I. United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Introduction

1. The United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in Kuala Lumpur on 15 and 16 December 2006, 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 60/36 and 60/37 of 1 December 2005. The Meeting was followed, on 17 December 2006, by a United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People held at the same venue.

2. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Paul Badji (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Ravan A.G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Aloumkèo Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic); Rastam Mohd Isa (Malaysia); and Abdelaziz Abughoush (Palestine).

3. The Meeting 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 East Jerusalem”, “Realizing a shared vision of peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians” and “International efforts at salvaging peace in the Middle East: Support of the countries of Asia and the Pacific for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people”.

4. The Civil Society Forum consisted of an opening, two plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were “Initiatives by civil society in Asia and the Pacific in solidarity with the Palestinian people”, and “Joining forces — Asian and Pacific civil society and worldwide initiatives to support a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

5. During these events, presentations were made by 19 experts, including Palestinians and Israelis. Representatives of 80 Governments, Palestine, 2 intergovernmental organization, 5 United Nations bodies and 30 civil society organizations, as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media participated.

6. The Meeting adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration (see annex I). At the closing of the Forum, participants adopted a Call for Action (see annex II).

Opening session

7. **Syed Hamid Albar**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained the single most important factor feeding conflict, strife and terrorism not only in that region, but worldwide. A solution to this problem would not immediately end violence, but it would be a major step forward towards international peace and security.

8. He called on Israel to cease its extrajudicial killings, excessive use of force, and other practices which violated its obligations as an occupying Power. At the same time, the use of violent and terrorist methods to achieve a political goal would not be accepted by the international community, he said.

9. He pointed out that an eventual Palestinian State needed to be independent, sovereign, viable, and able to accommodate all Palestinians, both living within and outside the Occupied Territory. It needed to have territorial continuity and integrity; and be able to govern itself without foreign interference or force. A hobbled Palestinian State would not achieve the overall desire for international peace and security, he stressed.

10. He said Israel needed to recognize that a Palestinian partner to whom it could dictate terms would not be considered legitimate by the Palestinians and any peace achieved would be illusory. The withholding of funds to the Palestinian Authority by the international community further complicated the search for a peace partner, created hardship, and undermined the beliefs in the Palestinian society in peaceful coexistence with Israel. At the same time, Palestinians had to demonstrate that they themselves could unite and focus their actions on attaining their rights, he emphasized.

11. **Kofi Annan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message read out on his behalf by his representative, Angela Kane, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that the Middle East faced grim prospects as mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians had reached new heights. The despair of the Palestinians grew, as did their determination to resist the occupation. The Palestinian Authority faced a debilitating political and financial crisis, and showed little sign that basic law and order could be brought to the streets.

12. Israelis continued to live in fear of terrorism, alarmed that the Palestinian Authority Government remained at best ambivalent about a two-State solution and, at worst, refused to renounce violence and rejected the basic tenets of the Oslo accords, the message noted. Most Israelis genuinely believed in peace with the Palestinians while most Palestinians did not seek the destruction of Israel, only the end of occupation and their own State.

13. The message stressed that while the parties themselves bore the primary responsibility for peace, the Quartet needed to work harder to restore faith in its own effectiveness and also in the Road Map. The Secretary-General called on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to ensure that its efforts made a positive difference. Too often, the work of parts of the United Nations system was dismissed as one-sided.

14. **Paul Badji**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, stressed that the strategy of the Committee was not to perpetuate meetings, but to sensitize, persuade, and mobilize international public opinion to act decisively in support of the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as mandated by the General Assembly.

15. He looked forward to serious and concrete action by the General Assembly as it reconvened its tenth emergency special session to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the register of damage caused by Israel’s construction of the separation wall. He called upon the Quartet to take immediate steps to revitalize the Road Map. While a financial blockade put the very survival of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority at risk, the Temporary International Mechanism played a major role in addressing the urgent needs of the Palestinian population, he noted. He also welcomed the decision by the Arab League to resume direct financing of the Palestinian Authority.

16. He noted an emerging consensus in the international community on the need for an immediate cessation of all types of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, the formation of a Government of National Unity, an exchange of prisoners, a meeting between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas, opening the door to a political process, a deployment in the Gaza Strip of an international presence, and the lifting of the economic blockade, followed by an international conference which would establish a permanent, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions.

17. **Nasser Al-Kidwa**, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority and representative of Palestine at the Meeting, stated that the United Nations could not remain neutral because one could not equate the occupier and the occupied. The United Nations had to remain the embodiment of and uphold international law, ensuring the cessation of settlement activities and the construction of the separation wall, and consequently an end to violence and terrorism, he stressed.

18. He recalled the Israeli settlement activities and the continuing construction of the separation wall, and other Israeli restrictive and punitive practices impacting the daily lives of the Palestinians and destroying the Palestinian economy. He stated that in his opinion, it was essential to define and agree on the final outcome of a peaceful settlement: a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders was a sine qua non of a peaceful settlement. An international peace conference was a positive idea, he said, but it should not serve as a substitute for the clarity of the political horizon.

19. He stressed that it was equally important to establish a national unity Government based on a clear political platform that confronted the colonization of the land, the settlements and the separation wall, but was also reasonable and acceptable to the international community, contained clear positions defining the relationship between Israel and Palestine and rejected violence. Unfortunately, three attempts to form such a Government had not succeeded, but efforts in that direction would continue, he said.

20. Statements were also made by representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

21. The representative of Kenya expressed support of all United Nations resolutions promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. He urged Israel and the Palestinians to honour their commitments under the Road Map, and to put an end to violence against civilians.

22. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference condemned the Beit Hanoun massacre by Israel and welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly at the tenth emergency special session and the Human Rights Council of resolutions authorizing a fact-finding mission. He called for the lifting of the financial blockade on the Palestinians. He called for the convening of an international conference to establish comprehensive peace in the region and end the Israeli occupation, and pledged full support by the OIC.

23. The representative of Morocco said the systematic and blind violence against Palestinians and economic restrictions were issues the international community should address. He said that a negotiated peace was the only viable option and urged the resumption of the peace process based on the United Nations resolutions and the Road Map. As chair of the Al-Quds committee Morocco pledged to do its utmost to preserve the dual Jewish-Arab character of Jerusalem.

24. The representative of Saudi Arabia reiterated the call for the convening of an international peace conference bringing together all the parties and all the peace initiatives currently on the table to translate them into practical steps, and ensuring the protection of the Palestinians from Israeli punitive measures. The Arabs had chosen peace as a strategic choice as embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative. Israel, however, persisted in its aggression against the Palestinians and violations of international law under the guise of combating terrorism, aided and abetted by the passivity of the international community.

25. The representative of Cuba recalled the Declaration on Palestine adopted by Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Countries meeting in Havana in September 2006, which condemned grave Israeli violations of international law and aggression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He expressed hope that the creation of the Register of Damages would lead to the implementation of the injunction by the International Court of Justice for Israel to make reparations for the damages caused by its construction. Israel continued to act with impunity protected by some 40 United States vetoes and numerous threats of vetoes in the Security Council, he said. He stressed that the Non-Aligned-Movement would defend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its mandate. The solution to the Middle East conflict lay not in the reformulation of the basic principles of a peaceful settlement, but in their strict implementation, including the creation of a Palestinian State in all of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967.

26. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic said that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained fragile. He called on the parties to persist in negotiations and implement the Road Map. He called on the international community and the Quartet to remain engaged to promote confidence-building measures and peace negotiations between the parties.

27. The representative of Qatar stressed that the tragedy in Beit Hanoun which had killed 20 innocent Palestinian civilians was clear evidence of Israel's intent to violate all norms of international law. He warned of a complete collapse of the Palestinian economy next year, caused by Israeli restrictive measures and the donors' decision to withhold aid to the Palestinian Authority. The Temporary International Mechanism could not and would not be able to provide the services normally provided by a Government, he stated. He announced the invitation by Qatar to host the upcoming Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in February 2007.

28. The representative of Namibia stated that as long as the Palestinian people were deprived of their fundamental rights by the occupying Power and, their land illegally occupied by Israel, democracy in the Middle East would remain illusory. He underscored that the suspension of funding by major donors and Israel's refusal to release funds to the Palestinian Authority were sending the wrong message to the Palestinian people on democracy and its consequences. He regretted the fact that since the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/15 in 2004, no follow-up action had been taken by the international community to persuade Israel to stop the construction of the illegal wall, and urged the United Nations to establish the Register of Damages without delay.

29. The representative of Afghanistan stated that as an occupying Power, Israel stood to gain a clear advantage by recognizing the Arab Peace Initiative. Military operations by Israel in the Gaza Strip did not serve the cause of peace in the Middle East or achieve security objectives; instead, they simply poisoned the atmosphere. The Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative would allow peace to prevail and put an end to a tragedy which had lasted much too long, he emphasized.

30. The representative of Algeria said it was important for the work and the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to continue as long as Israel's occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory persisted. He highlighted the humanitarian crisis and the financial crisis that the Palestinians were faced with, aggravated by Israeli incursions and aggression. He called on the international community to apply pressure on Israel to dismantle settlements and the separation wall, and reiterated Algeria's support of the Arab Peace Initiative.

31. The representative of Indonesia said the constitution of Indonesia strongly opposed colonialism in all its forms. He condemned the Beit Hanoun attack, which had resulted in numerous civilian deaths, and welcomed the dispatch of fact-finding missions by the Human Rights Council and

the General Assembly. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate owing to the proliferation of checkpoints and the construction of the wall, he warned. The best hope for a peaceful settlement lay in a new peace process under United Nations auspices, he said. The United Nations should not be sidelined as was the case in the Quartet, he emphasized. Confidence-building measures like the recent ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians and a resumption of humanitarian assistance were vital to put the peace process back on track.

32. The representative of Timor-Leste recalled the late President Yasser Arafat's unwavering support for Timor-Leste's self-determination and reaffirmed his Government's unconditional commitment to the Palestinian right to their own State. He called on the parties to refrain from violence and urged donors to extend all possible assistance to the Palestinian people to help them overcome the humanitarian crisis.

33. The representative of Pakistan recalled the statement of President Musharraf of Pakistan that the cauldron of conflict in the Middle East with the Palestinian issue at its core was the biggest challenge to global security, the fight against terrorism, and to the credibility of the United Nations. The Palestinian people must be assisted in their legitimate quest for their own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital, he emphasized. Israel should release Palestinian prisoners, including Palestinian Authority officials, dismantle checkpoints, freeze settlement activities and the construction of the wall. Palestinians should take decisive steps against rocket attacks, release the captured soldier and achieve internal cohesion. He supported the call for an international peace conference involving all stakeholders and pledged Pakistan's full support.

Plenary sessions

Plenary I

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

34. Speakers in this plenary session examined the following sub-themes: action and strategies of the occupying Power; the state of the Palestinian economy and the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Palestine refugee camps.

35. **Dr. Sahar Qawasmi**, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that Israel pursued a strategy designed to take as much of the Palestinian land as possible with as few Palestinians as possible. Israel continued this policy during the Oslo years, building settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and increasing the settler population.

36. The construction of the separation wall, 80 per cent of which was located in the occupied West Bank, was the final element in that grand plan, she warned, cementing Israeli control over East Jerusalem, key Arab lands and water resources, and spelling an end of the two-State solution. Israel was also consolidating its control over the Jordan valley and building two connecting corridors across the West Bank.

37. Poverty had increased from some 50 per cent of Palestinians prior to the disengagement to more than two thirds; it exceeded 90 per cent in the Gaza Strip, all of which was part of a deliberate Israeli strategy to starve the Palestinians, she asserted. Israel was building an apartheid-like network of separate roads connecting the settlements with Israel and one another, further fragmenting the territory.

38. While the Israeli settlers were evacuated from the Gaza Strip, that was more than offset by the increase in the settler population in the West Bank. If allowed to proceed, the Israeli colonization project would be the death knell for the two-State solution, she concluded. What was needed was a new peace process with a clear understanding of the final destination and the full involvement of the Palestinians, Israel and the international community.

39. Omar Yousef, Board Member of the International Peace and Cooperation Centre in Jerusalem, spoke of the fragmented and truncated post-Oslo Palestinian geography as Israel imposed its matrix of domination on East Jerusalem. Urban planning was one of the weapons used by Israel, particularly in East Jerusalem, to limit and circumscribe the Palestinian development. It was easy for settlements to expand, while the development of Palestinian areas was neglected and fraught with legal obstacles.

40. The physical segregation of Jewish and Arab communities and the pervasive discrimination against Palestinians bred a sense of resentment and hopelessness among the latter. Settler-only highways crossed Palestinian areas, disrupting the existing networks of communication between East Jerusalem and its surrounding Arab villages. Normal life was turning into an illegal activity as Palestinians learned to evade checkpoints and bypass the separation wall. The space of Palestinians in East Jerusalem was dying a slow death, while the faith of the Palestinians especially among the younger generation, in the possibility of peace with Israel was waning.

41. He called for a Jerusalem housing fund to provide Palestinians with affordable financing options. He identified the need for training in urban planning, democracy, anti-corruption, and public participation, especially for the younger generation of Palestinians.

42. **Mohamed Barakeh**, Member of the Knesset, Secretary-General of the Hadash Party, said that Israel was doing everything possible to avoid engaging in a serious peace process with the Palestinians based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, he said, under the pretext that there was no Palestinian partner for peace. Israel was seeking a final settlement not through dialogue with the Palestinians, but through dialogue between the two main strains of the Zionist movement exemplified by Labour and Likud. The Labour party insisted on maintaining the Jewish majority in Israel and was ready to concede territories with large Palestinian populations, while Likud was championing "Greater Israel" and some right-wing Israeli political figures were advocating the forcible "transfer" of Palestinians. The current Israeli strategy represented an amalgam of the two approaches; the separation wall cemented Israeli control over land while the settlement expansion skewed the demographics in Israel's favour.

43. He called for an immediate deployment of an international force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, not to fulfil the Israeli security vision, but as a necessary precondition for a peaceful settlement and to provide protection to the Palestinians. He proposed that it be deployed along the Green Line, to protect the Palestinians and their institutions from daily attacks and guarantee the implementation of the ceasefire.

44. The countries of the Asian region could play a major positive role in promoting a peaceful settlement owing to their economic clout, he stated. Equally important were the countries of Latin America which could assert their regional influence vis-à-vis, the United States which was

providing blanket support to Israel. A united Arab and Palestinian stand could serve to restrain Israeli aggression.

45. **Luisa Morgantini**, Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of its Development Committee, said that the problem was not too many resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine, but their lack of implementation. Israel's creation of facts on the ground was rapidly closing the window of opportunity on the two-State solution and the vision of Jerusalem as a shared capital of two peoples.

46. She cited the deteriorated living conditions of the Palestinians under the oppressive Israeli restrictions regime; Palestinians were dying because they were unable to access desperately needed medical care. The Road Map did not exist anymore, she asserted. She proposed defining the final settlement, instead of fine-tuning steps which lead nowhere.

47. She identified the key issues as the continuing Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which precluded the movement not only of people but also of goods. She warned that Israel was using experimental weapons in the Gaza Strip inflicting grievous wounds, as documented by Italian television which Palestinian doctors were unable to treat. Foreigners married to Palestinians were denied Israeli permits to stay in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; as were foreign professors teaching in Palestinian universities, who were consequently leaving en masse; that was a practical matter which needed to be addressed urgently.

Plenary II

Realizing a shared vision of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians

48. The speakers in the plenary session addressed the following sub-themes: ending the occupation – a key prerequisite for achieving peace; Preserving and building on prior achievements in the peace process; current approaches to encouraging dialogue and negotiations; and strategies to garner public support for renouncing violence and returning to political dialogue.

49. **Naomi Chazan**, Professor, former Deputy Speaker of Knesset (Meretz) stated that the Achilles heel of previous and current peace efforts such as Oslo and the Road Map was their lack of clarity regarding the final outcome. It was imperative to stipulate that the final settlement envisaged two States within the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as capital of both, the removal of settlements and a just solution to the refugee problem.

50. All previous peace efforts had adopted a phased approach, which was a recipe for stalemate. She proposed to move to final status negotiations immediately; although the implementation phase could be staggered.

51. Another important issue she identified was jump-starting the negotiating process. She called for maintaining the ceasefire, a prisoner exchange, a major alleviation of the humanitarian situation, and serious efforts to convene an international conference. She stated that since Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had begun over a decade ago with high expectations, the situation of the ground had steadily deteriorated. It was imperative to reverse that trend, and in particular to halt the construction of the wall.

52. New impediments from recent years she identified were domestic political instability both in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She noted that the advocates of peaceful engagement attending the Asian Meeting represented the oppositions in their respective societies. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict had become regionalized and internationalized; it was therefore important to bring it back to centre stage. It was impossible to make progress as long as officials from the two sides did not talk to each other and civil society did not exert influence on policymakers. Each side had an acute awareness of its own suffering and an underdeveloped sense of its own responsibilities for its actions, she concluded.

53. **Matthew Hodes**, Director, Conflict Resolution Program, the Carter Centre, Atlanta, said that no matter how many billions were poured into the Palestinian Authority, no progress would be made unless there was a peace agreement and a Palestinian State. He cited such constraints as a lack of visionary and strong leadership in the region and internationally. There had been too much diplomatic emphasis on processes and too little on the results, he stressed. The Road Map suffered from a critical flaw as it was, in effect, a map to nowhere. Another impediment was the emphasis on preconditions, which had the effect of allowing extremists veto power over negotiations and resulted in stalemate. The internal Palestinian disruptions further complicated the picture.

54. He stated that the Bush administration drew the wrong lesson from the failure of Camp David and Taba talks: the Israeli-Palestinian issue was too difficult and best avoided. The war in Iraq led to the regionalization of the conflict. Another complicating factor was the policy of the United States Administration to use negotiations as a reward. The credibility of the United States in the region had been diminished as a result, he said.

55. On the positive side, he identified the Arab Peace Initiative and the Iraq Study Group report as major long-term factors continuing to shape the debate. The United Nations and the European Union could provide some of the missing impetus to move the peace process forward, he said. The experience of the Geneva initiative proved that the obstacles in the path of agreement were not insurmountable, as long as the process was results-oriented.

56. **Nasser Al-Kidwa**, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, said that ending the Israeli occupation and achieving national independence were key prerequisites for achieving peace. The window of opportunity for achieving the two-State solution was closing rapidly, as Israel continued to create facts on the ground. If that opportunity were to be missed, the only remaining options would be the Israeli solution, involving the creation of a series of Palestinian Bantustans, in some way linked together, or a bi-national State.

57. Oslo failed to achieve the desired results, he stressed, because it was built on a gradualist step-by-step approach to negotiations in the absence of a clear common understanding of the final result. The Palestinians assumed the end result would be an independent State within the 1967 borders; the Israelis, however, saw it as an entity within Israel with arbitrary borders. The parties went in opposite directions, as Israel colonized more Palestinian land, and the Palestinians resorted to tactics not conducive to peace. During Oslo, the Palestinians had to build the institutions of a State – a post-conflict task – while the conflict was still simmering, a task he described as “mission impossible.” The other weakness of Oslo was that it was left to the parties to negotiate the final settlement in the absence of clearly defined international legal terms of reference, leaving the Palestinians at

the mercy of the stronger party – Israel.

58. The final outcome had to be defined explicitly at the outset as a two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, instead of using vague terminology such as “a viable contiguous State”. It was also essential to ensure respect for international law, including humanitarian law. That would guarantee the cessation of settlement activities, of violence and counter-violence.

59. In his opinion, the United Nations and the Security Council were the appropriate forums for achieving a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Quartet mechanism had been devised as an alternative to Security Council involvement; however, it lacked effectiveness and too often mirrored United States positions, in his opinion. He welcomed the idea of an international peace conference; he cautioned, however, that mechanisms should not be a substitute for substance. He called for a unified Palestinian position on the use of violence grounded in international law. That would include, in his view, an end to attacks on civilians in Israel, upholding the right of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and calling for a complete mutual ceasefire.

60. **Pang Sen**, Vice-President and Director-General of the United Nations Association of China, stated that it had been agreed by all parties concerned that the Palestinian people should have the right to enjoy a secure and independent State living at peace with the State of Israel. A Road Map for the Middle East had been agreed upon. However, the way forward was not as smooth as one would have wished. Facts had proved that in the process of revenge and retaliation, no one came out a winner. While hurting others, people invariably hurt themselves. The only solution to a feud was not through retaliation, but reconciliation.

61. He observed that past history demonstrated that in Palestine no one party to the conflict could conquer the other or wipe the other party out. Israel should respect the choice of the Palestinian people and allow them to exercise their inalienable rights. Meanwhile, all Palestinian forces should recognize Israel's right to existence and its sovereignty.

62. He welcomed the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire and urged both sides to refrain from violent conflict. He called for steps to rebuild mutual trust, and counselled patience in the face of sporadic violations of the ceasefire. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the core and root cause of the Middle East issue, yet was closely connected with the Lebanese-Israeli issue, the Syrian-Israeli issue, and other regional issues in the Middle East. He emphasized the need for all the related issues to be addressed in a coordinated way to avoid complicating the already volatile situation in the region.

Plenary III

International efforts at salvaging peace in the Middle East: Support of the countries of Asia and the Pacific for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

63. The speakers in the plenary session addressed the following sub-themes: supporting the voices of reason and peace — the Arab Peace Initiative, the efforts of the Quartet; supporting international peace efforts through the United Nations — the central role of the Security Council; action by Asian and Pacific States within the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations; and the role of parliaments in promoting support by Governments for a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

64. **Ghada Karmi**, Lecturer at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter and Vice-Chair, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, said that the peace process meant different things to different people. The Palestinian and the Arab positions called for a Palestinian State within 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital; the right of the return of the refugees was paramount. The Quartet and the Road Map spoke of a Palestinian State, while leaving the specifics vague.

65. In 2004, the United States turned its back on decades of acceptance of United Nations resolutions by approving Israel's proposal that major West Bank settlements should remain under Israeli sovereignty. The Israeli proposals on the outlines of the future Palestinian State had never been officially articulated, she pointed out, but various statements and actions on the ground pointed to continued control over East Jerusalem and large West Bank settlement enclaves, and a rejection of the right of return.

66. As long as the powerful Israel-United States axis remained in effect and the rest of the international community was unwilling to challenge the *status quo*, a genuine two-State solution was impossible, she asserted. She identified several possible scenarios, including the continuation of the occupation with apartheid, *quasi* one-State situation continuing in which Israel continued to control the whole territory and the Palestinians lived as second-class citizens or no citizens at all. Other options included a Palestinian State of enclaves with a link to Jordan to ensure economic viability, with a symbolic Palestinian presence in East Jerusalem, and a package of measures to dispose of the refugee problem, or a single bi-national State emerging for all its citizens irrespective of race, creed or colour. There was nothing sacred about the two-State solution she argued, which had been born of political expediency and failed to meet the needs of the refugees.

67. **Andrew Vincent**, Director, Middle East Studies Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney, said that from 1994 to 2003 the Australian Government had voted “yes” in the General Assembly to the right of Palestinian self-determination, and did not exclude the option of a State. But in 2004, Australia abstained, and in 2005 and 2006, voted “no”. He identified two factors as being responsible for the change: the desire to please the United States and keep Washington on its side; and to placate the vocal and powerful pro-Israel domestic lobby.

68. He pointed out that Australia was a major trading partner with the countries of the Middle East and Asia and it would be only a matter of time before Australia's one-sidedness on the question of Palestine had commercial and economic consequences. It was already having consequences in Australia's social cohesion, as anti-Arab sentiment, stirred up by the “war on terror”, had become a fact of life in the multicultural suburbs of Australian cities, he noted with apprehension. On a popular level many Australians seemed to have accepted unquestioningly the position that Israel was in the front-line of the war on terrorism, and that Palestinians were little more than terrorists.

69. The one area where pressure could be applied was from the countries of Asia themselves. If Australia was really serious about being part of Asia, it needed to listen to its neighbours, especially on an important moral question like the question of Palestine.

70. **Chandra Muzaffar**, President, International Movement for a Just World, Kuala Lumpur, said that Israel was not prepared to relinquish control

over East Jerusalem or the settlements; the most it was prepared to give to the Palestinians was a Bantustan, as envisaged in Prime Minister Olmert's realignment plan. Even that was presented as a great concession by the Israeli leadership, which was driven by a theological claim to "Greater Israel" as well as a mindset which equated security with control over territory, and by the need for water resources.

71. That Israeli plan enjoyed the total support of the Bush Administration and the Zionist neoconservatives who surrounded him, he warned. To that end, they did everything possible to crush the Palestinian and Arab resistance, starting with the elimination of Yasser Arafat, followed by the Iraq and Lebanon invasions and an active attempt to destabilize the Hamas Government, he charged. That Israel was instigating the recent Hamas-Fatah violence was far from an impossibility, he alleged.

72. The neoconservatives and Israel pursued a strategy of regime change; the Iraq invasion, the United States-Israeli meddling in Lebanon, the confrontation with the Islamic Republic of Iran were all part of a plan for a "new Middle East," he continued. That diabolical plan had failed because of resistance in Iraq, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he concluded. He proposed holding an international conference hosted by Malaysia or China with the express purpose of creating a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. If a two-State solution proved to be impossible because of the global power structure, then a one-State solution was the way forward, as throughout history, partitions had always brought conflict, he concluded.

73. **Achin Vanaik**, Professor of International Relations and Global Politics, Department of Political Science, Delhi University, said that Israel had come into being in the course of an ethnic cleansing of the people of Palestine and then demanded to be recognized by the Palestinians without apologizing for its actions. Any prospective peaceful settlement would reflect the existing balance of power, which was heavily in favour of Israel, he warned.

74. Most of the more powerful States worldwide were backing Israel either explicitly or implicitly, he continued. To help redress that imbalance, the moral dimension and moral clarity were therefore paramount. There was no room for moral equivalence between the victim and the oppressor. It needed to be emphasized that Israel was a much more apartheid State than South Africa itself, he stressed.

75. He called for convening a conference of sympathetic parliamentarians from the various countries of Asia and the Pacific, to be hosted by Malaysia, to establish a network of parliamentarians, and to send teams to India, China, Japan, Australia and other regional countries to meet with local parliamentarians and civil society, in order to put those countries, which at best paid lip service to Palestinian rights, on the spot, and also to promote a nuclear-free Middle East. He called for economic sanctions to apply to companies involved in the construction of the separation wall. It was not for Governments like that of China to tell Hamas to recognize Israel, it was a matter for the Palestinians themselves to decide, he concluded.

Closing session

76. **Victor Camilleri**, Rapporteur of the Committee, introduced the Kuala Lumpur Declaration (see annex I).

77. **Rastam Mohd Isa**, Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the Meeting, which reaffirmed the collective continuous support for a negotiated solution and the creation of a Palestinian State. Malaysia was happy to extend all possible cooperation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in organizing the Asian Meeting, and reaffirmed its steadfast support for the Committee and its work.

78. Important ideas on ways and means of advancing a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been put forward; he promised to bring them to the attention of the Malaysian Government. He called on civil society organizations to bring pressure to bear on their respective Governments to address priority issues such as the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the cessation of violence, and the establishment of mutual respect between Israel and the Palestinians. The question asked by an audience member earlier "What is this meeting doing for the Palestinians?" was very much on the mind of all participants. In conclusion, he expressed his satisfaction with the success of the Meeting.

79. **Abdelaziz Aboughosh**, Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia, said that the peace process had not fulfilled its stated goals, as the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to suffer from violence, loss and despair as a result of Israeli occupation, military campaigns, violations of international law, disproportionate use of force against the defenceless civilian population, and destruction of vital infrastructure and institution, as over 9,000 Palestinians languished in Israeli prisons. Those Israeli practices amounted to State terrorism, he concluded.

80. The international community and the Security Council had failed to act to provide protection to the Palestinians, creating a culture of impunity among Israelis. The occupation could not continue forever, he stressed. The Palestinians were hoping for a better tomorrow, in which they lived in an independent State of their own, like other peoples of the world; they wanted to make Holy Jerusalem the meeting place for the dialogue of different religions.

81. **Paul Badji**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in closing the meeting, noted that participants had focused on the need to convene a broad-based international conference along the lines of the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference as the only realistic way forward towards a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement in the region. Recent efforts in that direction by the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, including the States of the Asia and Pacific region, some key European States, and other international actors, had been highlighted. He stressed that the relationship between various peace initiatives currently on the table was one of complementarity, not competition.

82. He emphasized that the inalienable Palestinian rights were firmly anchored in the Charter of the United Nations, and grounded in United Nations resolutions, going back some 60 years, as well as in international law. They were permanent and not subject to dilution with the passage of time or the creation of "facts on the ground" by the occupying Power; they were not for the occupying Power, or any other external Power, to grant, or take away. Any attempt to negate any of those rights would simply cause any prospective peaceful solution to fail.

II. United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People

Opening session

83. **Ravan A.G. Farhâdi**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that with the parties in the conflict so obviously unequal, the power of international public opinion in support of the just Palestinian cause was extremely important.

84. The role of civil society and its unique capabilities were being demonstrated by the various organizations active on the ground, including Palestinian non governmental organizations and the Israeli peace camp, he said. The presence of the International Solidarity Movement or the initiatives of various church groups had had an immense impact due to their non-violent nature; peaceful protests and legal action against the separation wall had been successful in challenging it and in mobilizing public opinion against it. Non governmental organizations working on the ground were in the forefront of the organizers of emergency relief and the delivery of basic services.

85. Internationally, civil society organizations worldwide had developed specific initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. The Malaysian NGOs had held a very important conference at the end of March 2005 in Putrajaya, "Peace in Palestine", attended by over 500 participants from 34 countries. He expressed the hope that the Forum would review the progress made and formulate new recommendations.

86. He expressed the Committee's appreciation to civil society for its initiatives to strengthen the central role of the United Nations; he also pledged that the Committee, in unison with the other United Nations entities active on the issue, would do its utmost to mobilize international action with the view to a serious engagement of the parties on a final settlement of the conflict.

Plenary sessions

Plenary I

Initiatives by civil society in Asia and the Pacific in solidarity with the Palestinian people

87. At the plenary session, the Forum considered the following sub-themes: legislative and political advocacy — reaching decision-makers and politicians; mobilizing public opinion in support of the Palestinian people — efforts by non governmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups and the media; the Malaysian experience; and the impact and educational responsibility of academic institutions and think tanks. The session was moderated by Ram Ganesan Karthigasu of PEACE Malaysia.

88. **Sarah Ozacky-Lazar**, Initiator and founder, All-for-Peace Radio Station, and Fellow researcher, Centre for Strategic Analysis and Policy Studies, Hebrew University, focused on the difficulties the Israeli peace movement was facing. She pointed out that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not just political, it also had religious, cultural and emotional dimensions. As violence climbed, distrust and even mutual hatred became entrenched. She noted a recent dramatic shift in Israeli public opinion in favour of the creation of a Palestinian State and the withdrawal from parts of the West Bank, which happened for the wrong reasons: convinced that coexistence with the Palestinians was impossible, Israelis sought physical separation from them, including the construction of the wall.

89. Suspicion, distrust and hatred between the communities ran deep, making it almost a "mission impossible" to bring Israelis and Palestinians together for joint activities, she noted with regret. Because of movement restrictions, Israeli and Palestinian activists could meet only outside the region, and funding for travel was in short supply. She expressed frustration that there was little coordination between the various peace NGOs in Israel. Another problem was the aging of the peace movement as young Israelis who had been involved in confrontations with Palestinians during their military service were reluctant to engage in peace work. A further issue she identified was the insularity of the peace movement; it was becoming increasingly difficult to reach out to conservative and religious audiences in Israel.

90. Nevertheless the Israeli peace movement was launching new initiatives, she noted, by reaching out to decision makers such as Defence Minister Amir Peretz, the self-described leader of the peace camp, albeit with mixed results. Israeli peace NGOs were planning to catalyze a worldwide campaign to commemorate the Fortieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation; she invited international and Malaysian NGOs to join in. The peace movement somewhat belatedly recognized the importance of the media in shaping public opinion, the creation of the All-for-Peace Radio Station was meant to give a voice to Israeli and Palestinian pro-peace NGOs.

91. **Maysa Baransi-Siniora**, Co-Director of the All-for-Peace Radio Station, Jerusalem, believed that Israeli and Palestinian media were nationalistic and biased, and engaged in finger-pointing, which was not unusual for a conflict zone. The radio station All-for-Peace presented an alternative view, giving voice to the other side, attempting to rebuild trust between the communities and provide a message of hope.

92. The station tried to promote mutual understanding and coexistence. It attempted to explain, in layman's terms, the significance of United Nations resolutions, and to provide the context that was often missing in mainstream Israeli media characterization of Palestinian terrorism. It was trying to bring home to the Israeli public the reality of the humiliations and hardships of daily life of the Palestinians under occupation, which were confined in the West Bank to several disconnected open-air prisons. It was striving to ensure that the Palestinian victims of violence were treated by the media not as statistics, but as real people.

93. **Mukhriz Mahathir**, Coordinator, Malaysians for Peace, said that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was not merely a geo-political issue involving the Palestinians, Israel and their immediate neighbours but a crisis that had far-reaching effects, and was perhaps the number one issue that caused anger towards the West among Muslims worldwide, and affected foreign and trade policies for many countries, even those far away like Malaysia, encouraged an arms race and nuclear proliferation; and was used to justify pre-emptive strikes by Israel and the United States. Certain parties had exploited the issue and used it as a pretext for terrorism and further violence in the region and elsewhere, he pointed out.

94. PEACE Malaysia had been established to be part of an international network of NGOs that acted as watchdogs and pressure groups for world Governments, he continued. Its projects included intellectual discourses such as the Peace in Palestine Conference and forums with the Perdana Global Peace Organization. It also conducted humanitarian missions to the Middle East. In the run-up to the occupation anniversary, PEACE Malaysia planned to organize more projects to increase awareness of the Palestinian issue among Malaysian youths, to teach them to look at it through a human rights and not a religious prism, to understand why the Israeli occupation was illegal and to be aware of disinformation in the media.

95. He felt that his organization should work closer with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and support its programmes. PEACE Malaysia would continue backing the Malaysian Government's efforts at the United Nations in calling for justice and a speedy resolution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and to continue opposing Israel's hegemonistic enterprise in the Middle East, he concluded.

96. **Yoshioka Tatsuya**, Director of Peace Boat, Japan, said that his NGO was working for peace with a global reach by organizing around-the-world voyages. It had developed a number of advocacy and educational tools with which it worked to promote peace, human rights and sustainability. Besides Japan-based advocacy activities, Peace Boat had visited the Middle East five times with its ship, carrying over 700 people each time, organized numerous youth delegations, and incorporated the question of Palestine into its onboard education programmes for over 15 years, reaching over 20,000 people.

97. While Japan and East Asia in general were geographically very distant from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, there were strong arguments for the countries in the region to become more involved in the work to find a peaceful and just resolution to the Palestinian question, he argued. Neither Japan, nor China, nor the other countries of the region had a colonial history in the Middle East or significant involvement in past warfare in the region. As economic superpowers, both Japan and China could play an important role.

98. However, the Governments in East Asia were unlikely to take on significant responsibilities in such a volatile region without there being more perceived domestic political benefit. Therefore, it was vital that civil society organizations in East Asia took the lead in raising awareness among the general public, to build the critical mass for the Governments of the region to become more involved. He proposed to hold regular brainstorming meetings aboard the Peace Boat together with United Nations officials, Government representatives, and civil society organizations (CSO) activists in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

99. Omar Yousef, Board Member, International Peace and Cooperation Centre, spoke about the geographies of oppression and ethnic segregation as practiced by Israel in Jerusalem (see para. 39 above).

Plenary II

Joining forces — Asian and Pacific civil society and worldwide initiatives to support a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

100. The plenary session considered the following sub-themes: the experience of ending occupation and nation-building in Asia and the Pacific — the role of civil society; mobilization of efforts for international protection of the Palestinian population — international grassroots movement; and participation in international campaigns to end the occupation.

101. **Achin Vanaik**, Professor of International Relations and Global Politics of the Department of Political Science, Delhi University, spoke about the role of India's civil society and its future plans regarding the Palestinian issue. There had been a sea change in the attitude of the Indian Government, elite and the media in favour of Israel, he noted. Progressive Indian non governmental organizations had organized a Peoples' Foreign Policy Forum and other events to counter that negative trend. His own organization was planning events for the anniversary of the occupation in 2007, highlighting the plight of the Palestinian people.

102. Given the existing global balance of power and geopolitics, a just solution to the conflict in the short term was unlikely, he argued. The non-governmental organizations had to look at the long-term solutions and the big picture. The non governmental organizations had to put the struggle for the Palestinian issue in the context of the resistance to American and Israeli hegemony in Lebanon, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the whole Middle East. He called for the Palestinians in the diaspora to be given a role in the Palestinian institutions. Weakening the United States Government hegemony was the area on which civil society had to focus, he stressed. He identified the Afro-Americans as natural allies who had a close affinity for the plight of the Palestinians. The United States anti-war movements should also adopt a pro-Palestinian stance, he emphasized.

103. He suggested using Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations by the General Assembly to set up a tribunal to investigate Israeli war crimes in Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Promoting a Middle East free of nuclear weapons was another promising avenue he identified. He also proposed staging an international concert for Justice for Palestine.

104. **Chandra Muzaffar**, President, International Movement for a Just World, Kuala Lumpur said that telling the whole world the truth about the Palestinians, and an honest appraisal of Zionism and Israel, were the greatest service that global civil society could render the Palestinians.

105. He called upon NGOs to make the Americans and Europeans aware of the extent of the Palestinian dispossession, and the huge sacrifice that the Palestinians were prepared to make for the sake of peace by settling for a small portion of the historical Palestine. The West should be told in unambiguous language that Israel was not interested in a two-State solution: all that it would concede to the Palestinian people was some sort of Bantustan under its effective control. He called for a massive campaign for a genuine two-State solution to be launched in a number of North American and European cities throughout 2007.

106. As economic power, which would inevitably be accompanied by political power, shifted to Asia, civil society in the region should pioneer efforts to raise awareness of the Palestinian cause there, he stressed. He supported a massive endeavour to produce television documentaries, films, radio programmes, books, magazines and newspaper articles on the Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice in all the indigenous languages of

107. He called for the establishment of networks among Asian NGOs and with other groups and networks in other continents campaigning on behalf of the Palestinian cause. Civil society groups should also open communication lines with legislators, civil servants, diplomats and Government ministers. The objective would be to persuade Governments, such as those of India, China, Indonesia and others to be more actively involved in the peaceful, diplomatic quest for a two-State solution. He expressed the hope that with the decline of American hegemony Asia, which was not burdened by Zionist and Israeli lobbies, would be able to expedite the implementation of a just solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

108. **Mohideen Abdul Kader**, Lawyer and Board Member, Third World Network, Penang, said that the case of Timor Leste illustrated how, with the intervention of the United Nations, a conflict that had been dragging on for decades, could be resolved successfully, if the political will was present on the part of the international community to apply pressure on the occupying Power to agree to a settlement based on Security Council resolutions and international law. It also showed how civil society organizations, through extensive networking and coordinating their activities, were able to influence national Governments and international institutions successfully.

109. He expressed frustration that the United States had obstructed any effective United Nations involvement in the negotiations for a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He called for an immediate ceasefire monitored by an international mission in the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and an end to the economic blockade.

110. He identified the need for grassroots movements in support of the Palestinian struggle, particularly in the United States and European Union, to intensify their activities to highlight the plight of the Palestinians to move the international community to take effective action to end the occupation. He called for more demonstrations, teach-ins, film festivals, and letter-writing campaigns.

111. He called on the international civil society and people of conscience worldwide to impose a broad boycott and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa during apartheid, and to pressure their Governments to impose embargoes and sanctions. He said the campaign should also target corporations and States that were responsible for the continuation of the Israeli occupation. He called on Arab Governments, which had close political, trade and security relations with the United States and European Union to use their leverage to influence them to adopt a just and equitable stand on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on international law.

112. **Tanya Reinhart**, Professor of Linguistics, Utrecht University, said that Israel was a rogue State, as it ignored the International Court of Justice ruling, violated agreements with the Palestinians, and brutally attacked a peaceful neighbouring country. Israel was perceived by the people of the world as posing a severe danger to world peace, she stated. In a just world, the international institutions would impose sanctions on Israel, as had been done with other rogue states in the past. But the West had decided to impose sanctions on the Palestinians instead, she continued. For Israel, the results of the Palestinian election were just a pretext to declare war on the Palestinians, she argued, Israel had been exploiting the wave of Islamophobia in the United States and Europe.

113. The struggle for Palestinian rights should be international, she emphasized. The South African white domination had collapsed and crumbled because of international pressure which started with small student groups calling for boycott and divestment, grew into pressure on companies doing business with South Africa and eventually forced Governments to act and impose sanctions. The divestment and boycott movement was still small, but it was growing, she noted. There was an international solidarity movement that sent people to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to help and protect the Palestinian people. There was the daily political struggle to change Governments policies, to demand freezing military aid to Israel, and most importantly, to demand an immediate end to the Western sanctions on the Palestinian people, she emphasized.

114. Ariel Sharon's evacuation of the Gaza settlements was not an act of free will, but a decision enforced on him at the peak of international pressure that followed Israel's sabotaging of the Road Map and its construction of the West Bank wall, she asserted. That turn of events showed that civil society pressure could have an effect and lead Governments to act. She applauded the actions of professors who signed boycott petitions, subjecting themselves to daily harassment, and the few courageous journalists who insisted on covering the truth, against the pressure of Israeli lobbies. Israel's policies threatened not just the Palestinians and neighbouring States, but also in the long run the Israelis themselves, she concluded.

115. **Ibrahim Khreisheh**, President, Al-Bashir Institute for Development and Creativity, and former Secretary-General of the Palestinian Legislative Council, spoke about civil society confronting the Israeli occupation by peaceful means. He expressed frustration that Palestinian civil society still did not have a unified strategy to confront the occupation.

116. He called on civil society organizations to do their utmost to disrupt the routine of the occupation by organizing sit-ins and demonstrations around checkpoints and the separation wall. He suggested that the action plan should concentrate on important segments of Palestinian society, such as women, youth and university students. The plan had to be multifunctional and cover several levels. Fostering democracy, human rights and modernity, promoting the rights of Palestinian women at the local level should be prioritized. Other important areas for civil society action he identified were capacity-building, developing the notion of dialogue, and accepting the other viewpoint, as well as the empowerment of vulnerable sectors.

117. Israel was applying a new policy by preventing the entry of foreign nationals and Palestinians holding foreign passports into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he stated. Therefore, more of the work had to take place abroad. The campaign against the settlements and the separation wall had to intensify and involve the media, and national parliaments and Governments. The assistance and solidarity of international civil society was particularly vital at a time when the Palestinian Government was going through a crisis, he concluded.

Closing session

118. **Ravan A.G. Farhadi**, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, expressed confidence that civil society organizations would join the other actors of the international community in demanding an end to violence and the resumption of the political dialogue, insist that Israel halt its incursions into Palestinian cities, the extrajudicial killings and house demolitions, stop and reverse the construction of the separation wall and end all settlement activity, and would put special emphasis on mobilizing public support for

international assistance to the Palestinian people.

119. He noted with appreciation the plans by the International Coordinating Network on Palestine and other civil society organizations, to mark 2007 – the fortieth year of the Israeli occupation – by undertaking multiple actions at the local, national and international levels to demand an immediate end of the occupation. The Committee would develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, continue the accreditation of new NGOs and organize forums and major conferences of civil society, he pledged. He encouraged organizations in the region active on the question of Palestine to seek accreditation with the Committee.

Annex I

Kuala Lumpur Declaration

adopted on 16 December 2006 by the United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

1. The United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 15 and 16 December 2006, 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, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, parliaments, civil society and the media.
2. The Meeting was convened by the Committee with a view to sensitizing international public opinion, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, to the situation of the Palestinian people and the urgency of resuming a meaningful political dialogue leading to a permanent two-State solution, based on the 1967 borders, in accordance with the Road Map and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).
3. In the course of the Meeting, the participants reviewed the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; discussed the action and strategies of Israel, the occupying Power; and the state of the Palestinian economy and humanitarian situation of Palestinians. The Meeting also addressed such issues as international efforts at salvaging peace in the region, including through the efforts of the Quartet, the Arab Peace Initiative, the role of the Security Council, action by Asian and Pacific States, as well as intergovernmental organizations and parliaments.
4. The participants emphasized that the continuing occupation of the Palestinian territory, now in its fortieth year, remained the root cause of the conflict. They expressed the view that this long-standing conflict would have no final settlement without the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, defined by the General Assembly in 1974 as the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property, from which they had been displaced and uprooted.
5. The participants expressed great concern at the escalation in recent months of Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip, particularly the tragic events that had taken place in the town of Beit Hanoun. Those military operations resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries among Palestinian civilians, including women, children and the elderly. The participants denounced the use of excessive and indiscriminate force, extrajudicial killings, and the vast destruction of homes, civilian infrastructure and agricultural lands. They reminded Israel, the occupying Power, that it had to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law. They also called for the cessation of rocket attacks on Israel carried out by Palestinian groups from the Gaza Strip. Those actions put civilians in serious danger and only aggravated an already grave security situation.
6. The participants welcomed the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which, they stressed, needed to be extended to the West Bank and supported by tangible political steps that would allow the parties to engage in a meaningful political dialogue. They called upon the international community, including the members of the Quartet, to establish a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism. They also urged the United Nations to establish in cooperation with the parties a general mechanism for the protection of civilians on the ground.
7. The participants condemned the continuing construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, in contravention of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. They welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006 on the establishment of the Register of Damages caused by the construction of the wall confirming the Secretary-General's report on the issue. They felt it was crucial to set in motion, without further delay, the establishment of the Register of Damages two and a half years after the landmark decision of the International Court of Justice. The participants were extremely concerned about the lack of action on freezing settlement activities, continuing in spite of repeated appeals by the Quartet and the wider international community. In addition to being illegal and causing daily hardship for the Palestinian population, those physical obstacles in the Occupied Palestinian Territory prejudiced the outcome of the permanent status negotiations and complicated efforts at establishing a contiguous and independent State of Palestine.
8. The participants expressed frustration at the deepening economic, social and humanitarian crisis and isolation of the Gaza Strip. They criticized Israel for withholding tax revenues due to the Palestinian Authority, resulting in an unprecedented financial shortfall for the Authority, which delivered basic public services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The participants also stressed the critical importance of the international donor assistance. In that regard, they urged donors to give generously to the recently launched emergency appeal by 12 United Nations agencies and 14 non-governmental organizations aimed at addressing a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation.
9. The participants expressed appreciation to countries, including in Asia, which had been generous providers of assistance to the Palestinian people. The participants also remained hopeful that the established Temporary International Mechanism, endorsed by the Quartet, would help alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation. They also welcomed the intention to extend the functioning of the Temporary International Mechanism for three months. At the same time, they urged the Government of Israel to fulfil its obligations under international law and lift its restrictions on the freedom of movement and other measures stifling the economic and social life of the Palestinians, and to resume the transfer of collected Palestinian tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority in keeping with signed agreements.
10. The participants strongly supported continuing efforts of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas aimed at forming a Government of National Unity that is capable of achieving maximum support of the Palestinian people and capable of fulfilling its responsibilities vis-à-vis the

international community.

11. The Meeting took note of the Declaration on Palestine adopted at the 14th Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Havana in September 2006, which reiterated the vital role of the Movement with regard to the question of Palestine and entrusted its Chairman to lead efforts of the Movement in the pursuit of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

12. The participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine, until it was resolved based on relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized in all aspects. They called upon the United Nations to promote the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. They commended the Committee for organizing meetings, such as the current one in Kuala Lumpur, that mobilized Governments and public opinion in the different regions in support of a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They urged the Committee to continue upholding the norms of international law, thus setting the standards for a final settlement of the question of Palestine, in conformity with international legality.

13. The participants welcomed the pledge of Governments of Asia, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society representatives to support Israelis and Palestinians in their quest for a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict. The participants also urged them to continue their moral, political and material support of the Palestinian people.

14. The participants voiced their appreciation for the active and constructive role played by Malaysia, a member of the Committee, in efforts to assist the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights. The personal engagement and support of H. E. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, contributed significantly to the success of the Meeting. The participants expressed their deep gratitude to the Government of Malaysia, its Ministry for Foreign Affairs for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the Committee and the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

Annex II

Call for Action

Adopted by the United Nations Forum of Civil Society
in Support of the Palestinian People

1. The participants in the United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People for the Asian and Pacific region collectively agree to the present Call for Action to contribute to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The participants demand an immediate end to the Israeli occupation, the establishment of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, in conformity with United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the realization of the right of return of Palestine refugees. The participants also call for an end of the current sanctions imposed on the Palestinian Authority by major donor countries. They support the immediate resumption of the political dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian decision makers, which should lead to tangible progress in the peace process.

2. The present Call for Action focuses specifically on tasks to be performed in 2007, which marks the 40-year anniversary of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territory.

3. *We call on all civil society organizations in Asia and the Pacific:*

(a) To mobilize public opinion and demand that from our Governments urgently adopt effective measures to provide international protection to the Palestinian people living under occupation, such as the establishment of an international peacekeeping force. Our Governments should also resume and increase direct assistance to the Palestinian people and its institutions, in order to stem the aggravating humanitarian crisis.

(b) To develop a cohesive strategy towards the media and other structures for public information (universities, associations, etc.) to increase a greater level of awareness of the Palestinian struggle and to ensure the dissemination of accurate, unbiased information. One suggestion would be to bring Palestinian and Israeli peace non governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts to Asia, as well as to organize fact-finding missions that include journalists, parliamentarians and civil society leaders to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. To gather first-hand experience of the situation on the ground, the missions would be facilitated by Palestinian partner organizations and the Israeli peace movement that both play an important role in developing courageous initiatives to confront the daily challenges of occupation.

(c) To establish an Asian Coordinating Network on Palestine in order to ensure better coordination among groups in different parts of the continent in preparation of major campaigns. It would coordinate its work with Palestinian, Israeli, European, North and Latin American, as well as African civil society organizations to mark the fortieth anniversary of the occupation in June 2007. That commemoration will include a wide range of activities culminating in the Global Day of Action, held under the slogan "The World Says No to Israeli Occupation" on 9 June 2007. The Asian Network should be linked with the International Coordinating Network on Palestine.

(d) To strengthen the centrality of the United Nations for a peaceful solution of this long-standing conflict in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions; to cooperate with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to heighten international awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people; and to support all local, national and international efforts to alleviate the humanitarian hardships of the Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

List of participants

Speakers

Mohideen Abdul Kader
Lawyer and Board Member, Third World Network
Penang

Nasser Al-Kidwa
Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Palestinian Authority
Ramallah West Bank

Mohammad Barakeh
Member of Knesset, Secretary-General of the Hadash Party
Jerusalem

Maysa Baransi-Siniora
Co-Director, All-for-Peace Radio Station
Jerusalem
Naomi Chazan
Professor, former Deputy Speaker of Knesset (Meretz)
Tel Aviv, Israel
Matthew Hodes
Director, Conflict Resolution Program
The Carter Center
Atlanta, Georgia
USA

Ghada Karmi
Lecturer, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter and Vice-Chair
Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding
London, UK

Sahar Qawasmi
Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council
Hebron

Ibrahim Khreisheh
President, Al-Bashir Institute for Development and Creativity, Former Secretary-General
Palestinian Legislative Council
Ramallah, West Bank

Mukriz Mahathir
Coordinator, Malaysians for Peace
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Luisa Morgantini
Member, European Parliament
Chairman of the Development Committee
Brussels, Belgium

Chandra Muzaffar
President, International Movement for a Just World
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Sarah Ozacky-Lazar
Initiator and founder, All-for-Peace Radio Station and Fellow researcher,
Centre for Strategic Analysis and Policy Studies, Hebrew University
Jerusalem

Tanya Reinhart
Professor of Linguistics, Utrecht University
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Pang Sen
Vice-President and Director-General, United Nations Association of China
Beijing, China

Yoshioka Tatsuya
Director, Peace Boat

Tokyo, Japan

Achin Vanaik
Professor, International Relations and Global Politics
Department of Political Science, Delhi University
New Delhi, India

Andrew Vincent
Director, Middle East Studies Centre
Macquarie University
Sydney, Australia

Omar Yousef
Board Member, International Peace and Cooperation Centre
Jerusalem

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

Paul Badji
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, New York
Chairman of the Committee

Ravan Farhâdi
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, New York
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, New York
Vice-Chairman of the Committee

Victor Camilleri
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York
Rapporteur of the Committee

Aloumkèo Kittikhoun
Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations, New York

Rastam Mohd Isa
Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia

Abdelaziz Aboughosh
Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Angela Kane
Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Governments

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia, Brazil, Brunei, Cambodia, Chile, China, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor Leste, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Non-member States having received a standing invitation to participate as observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining permanent observer mission at Headquarters

Holy See

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

Intergovernmental organizations

Organization of the Islamic Conference, Islamic Development Bank

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Office United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United Nations Children's Fund
World Food Programme

Civil society organizations

Advocate & Solicitor, Messrs Chooi & Co.
Al Quds Institute Malaysia
Australia Friends of Palestine
Australians for Palestine
Darbar-E-Chishtia Complex
Department of Statistics Malaysia
EAFORD (International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)
Egyptian Council for Human Rights
Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers,
Indo-Arab Friendship Association
International Islamic University
International Movement for a Just World
Islamic Outreach ABIM
Institute of Strategic and International Studies
Malaysian Chamber of Muslim Professionals
Malaysian Research Institute
MERCY Malaysia
Muslim Professionals Forum
National Council of Women Organization
Neda Institute for Scientific-Political Research
PEACE Malaysia Student Representative Council
The Palestinian Return Center
Third World Network
United Malay National Organization (UMNO Youth)
University of Malaysia
United Nations Association of Malaysia
Women's Institute for Research Development and Advancement
Women for Palestine
