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**UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE**

*“Peace is possible – frameworks for a way forward”*

United Nations Office at Geneva, 29 and 30 June 2016

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## Executive Summary

The United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in Geneva against the backdrop of new initiatives by the international community to reinvigorate the peace process, including the Quartet report and the French initiative for an international peace conference, and spark renewed interest in the [Arab Peace Initiative](#). Participants agreed that the two-State solution remained the only way forward but hope was waning due to past failures of negotiations. Warnings were sounded that the status quo was unsustainable, and that if the political stalemate continued, the situation could explode on the ground.

Participants analysed the evolving context of Israeli-Palestinian peace-making. The Oslo accords were signed at the peak of US influence when major powers had the political will and the financial means to reinforce progress on the peace track. The positions of the parties have since undergone major changes, marked by an Israeli drift to a hardline stance and a damaging Palestinian internal split.

Participants called for a more inclusive approach to Israeli-Palestinian peace-making. It was felt that the potential of the bilateral model of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had been exhausted and should be replaced by a multilateral framework; the French initiative was supported in this regard. A proposal was made for broadening the Quartet's composition to include key regional and European countries. Palestinian citizens of Israel could play a positive role as a bridge between Israel and Palestine. Unofficial track II and track III (people-to-people) diplomacy could fill the vacuum created by the absence of official negotiations. It was important to reach out to legislators, civil society and traditional and religious leaders, and to achieve intra-Palestinian reconciliation in order to build broad support for the two-State solution.

The issue of Israel's accountability for policies that contradicted peace was raised, with some speakers arguing that incentives and disincentives should apply equally to both parties. The updated [Arab Peace Initiative](#) represents the most comprehensive peace proposal to date, but warnings were expressed regarding the danger of the initiative being diluted by having the Arab countries recognize Israel before the end of the occupation. A proposal was voiced to have the [Arab Peace Initiative](#) endorsed by the Security Council and within the context of the French-led peace conference.

Experts enumerated a number of steps to facilitate a return to negotiations and improve the situation on the ground. Hope was expressed that the upcoming Quartet report would contain practical recommendations leading to engagement with the parties to encourage them to return to negotiations. A new Security Council resolution outlining the parameters of the "end game" could create a new momentum for peace. A renegotiation of the interim agreements was further suggested to achieve additional Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and a more equitable distribution of water, and to improve economic conditions.

### I. Introduction

1. The United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace was organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 29 and 30 June 2016, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly Resolutions [70/12](#) and [70/13](#). The theme of the conference was "Peace is possible – frameworks for a way forward".

2. The Conference consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were: Learning from Madrid to the present; Emerging approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and Ideas for the future: the next steps.

3. Representatives of 86 United Nations Member States and two non-member Observer States, six intergovernmental organizations, eight United Nations bodies and 32 civil society organizations took part in the Conference (annex II).

4. The Summary of the Chair on the outcomes of the Conference (annex I) was published soon after its conclusion and is available on the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, as are the full texts of papers of the speakers who provided a copy.<sup>1</sup>

### II. Opening session

5. The Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations, **Ambassador Fodé Seck**, chaired the opening session.

6. **Mr. Michael Møller**, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, delivered a message on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations **Mr. Ban Ki-moon**, whom he represented at the Conference. He referred to the international community's latest efforts to revitalize the peace process such as the upcoming report of the Middle East Quartet and the recent French-led Ministerial meeting. He highlighted that the [Arab Peace Initiative](#) could also be an important forum for dialogue. The Secretary-General in his message recalled his visit to Israel and Palestine during which he had reminded the leadership on both sides to take prompt action to preserve the two-State solution. The continued designation of land in Area C of the West Bank under Israeli control for exclusive Israeli use, the growth of settlements, the legalization of outposts, and the spike in demolitions of Palestinian homes jeopardized a future Palestinian State and undermined trust. There could be no justification for terrorism, nor glorification of those who committed such heinous acts, said the Secretary-General's message. The Palestinian leadership needed to speak clearly and act firmly against violence and incitement, he stressed. He added that the recent reduction in attacks against Israelis was encouraging. Israel needed to calibrate its response to attacks in line with international law to avoid unnecessarily harming civilians.

7. Turning to Gaza, he said that the situation after nine years of closures and three rounds of hostilities was untenable. Most Palestinians in Gaza needed humanitarian aid. He called on donors to fulfil their Gaza reconstruction pledges: on Hamas to end its military build-up and the construction of tunnels; on the Israeli Government to end its closure of Gaza in line with Security Council resolution [1860](#) (2009); and on Egypt to open the Rafah crossing on a regular basis. Reuniting the West Bank and Gaza under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian Government based on Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) principles was critical for relieving the suffering of Gaza, the message said, but also for empowering the Palestinian leadership to negotiate a resolution to the conflict with Israel.

8. Mr. Ban Ki-moon stressed his personal commitment to working with the leaders of Israel and Palestine, and with the international community to advance the two-State solution until the last day of his tenure as Secretary-General.

9. **Mr. Fodé Seck**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that in light of the deteriorating situation, the Committee had redoubled its advocacy for an immediate end to the nearly 50-year-old Israeli occupation, which was one of the root causes of the instability, extremism and terrorism affecting the region. The Committee also worked for the just resolution of all final status issues and for the mobilization of assistance to the Palestinians. He added that the Conference was timely given the forthcoming [report](#) of the Quartet, the French Initiative, and a renewed interest in the [Arab Peace Initiative](#), which the Committee supported.

10. The Committee called on Israel to stop settlement activities and urged that indiscriminate attacks against civilians must cease immediately. Although the Committee welcomed the reduction of rockets from Gaza and of knife attacks in recent months, a danger of escalation remained as long as East Jerusalem remained occupied, the status quo of Holy Sites was challenged, and Gaza remained blockaded, suffering from the impacts of several wars and from environmental damage, which put the survivability of the territory in doubt. Mr. Seck said that recent resumption of the private import of cement into Gaza was welcome but insufficient. The Committee urged donors to fulfil their financial pledges for the reconstruction of Gaza. The Committee also called for Palestinian reconciliation and reunification under a single legitimate and accountable Palestinian Government.

11. He stated that the Committee remained committed to an independent State of Palestine based on the borders of 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. He noted that the parameters of a final settlement were well known, but what was required was a strong push by the international community to make that vision a reality.

12. **Mr. Nabeel Shaath**, Member of the Fatah Central Committee, representing the State of Palestine, referred to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's ongoing visit to Gaza, a territory that was undergoing a tragedy and may not be fit for human habitation by 2020 according to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The United Nations and the international community would be critical to achieving peace, he said. He also questioned the Israeli Government's commitment to the two-State solution. Historically, ending an occupation had been impossible without the intervention of the international community or the incidence of catastrophe, he argued. He called on the international community to pressure Israel, as had been the case with apartheid South Africa.

13. He then argued that Israel had signed agreements based on the land for peace formula with neighbouring countries except Palestine, where Palestinians were offered limited self-rule or some economic benefit for peace. There was never a real willingness to recognize the State of Palestine, even under Yitzhak Rabin, the "father of peace". The settler population had grown from 20,000 in 1979, to 160,000 in 1993, and to the 600,000 at present. Furthermore, 92 per cent of the water in the West Bank was used by the settlers and only 8 per cent by Palestinians.

14. Despite these discouraging circumstances, Palestine still hoped for peace, yet this hope was predicated on the commitment by the international community, particularly by the United Nations. The comparison with the Iran talks was instructive. In Iran's case, the negotiations had involved many States; there had been clear references to international law; efforts were being made to ensure the implementation of the agreement; and sanctions had played a major role. By contrast, none of those practices had applied to Israel. The United States was neither an effective nor an impartial broker, and had failed to pressure Israel sufficiently, he said. He ended his intervention by emphasizing that there was no alternative to peace, and that lessons needed to be learned from previous mistakes.
15. Mr. Samir Bakr, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine Affairs, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, reiterated the necessity and possibility of peace in the Middle East. Palestine was facing a deteriorating situation due to Israeli unilateral actions undermining the credibility of peace efforts. He stated that the rejection of the Arab Peace Initiative over the past 14 years was due to lack of commitment, procrastination in favour of the status quo, racist policies, and unilateral actions by the State of Israel. A lack of a defined end game, international terms of reference and of a time frame had compounded the failure of the peace process, he added. The Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) drew attention to the escalating Israeli settlement activities: the number of settlers was around 700,000, half of whom resided in and around Jerusalem, jeopardizing the two-State solution.
16. He stressed that the colonial settlements policy could not be seen in isolation from the Israeli racist policies aimed at altering the demographic and geographic character of East Jerusalem, distorting its Arab character and religious and historic status. He emphasized that such actions violated international law and United Nations resolutions and fuelled religious conflict endangering international peace and security. It was no longer morally acceptable for the international community to remain silent or merely express condemnation or concern about the Israeli war crimes and atrocities. He emphasized that the 5th Extraordinary Summit on Palestine in Jakarta had supported the French initiative. The OIC supported efforts in the Security Council to adopt a resolution to reaffirm the inalienable Palestinian rights and condemn the Israeli occupation, and efforts to promote the diplomatic recognition of Palestine. It is the responsibility of all States and institutions to deal with Israeli violations, which endangered international peace and security. The continuation of the status quo deepened the suffering of the Palestinian people and Israel's isolation, and entrenched its racist apartheid policies.
17. The Foreign Minister of the Maldives, **Ms. Dunya Maumoon** reiterated her country's support for Palestinian self-determination. She noted that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized that all persons possessed certain inalienable rights. If peace were to be sustainable, it should be rooted in mutual respect by peoples. However, Israel had violated the most basic human rights of the Palestinians on an unprecedented scale. She wished that the Human Rights Council would give greater attention to the plight of the Palestinians whose rights to life, liberty and security were being repressed due to the continued excessive use of force by Israel. Humanitarian agencies were facing greater impediments to their work on the ground in Palestine. Demolitions were on the rise. Israeli repressive practices generated resentment and perpetuated the very cycle of violence from which Israel claimed it needed to protect its people, she concluded.
18. The representative of the **Holy See** stated that the lack of substantive negotiations taking place lately not only indicated that the Palestine question had not been resolved, but that it was becoming increasingly intractable. The Holy See favoured a two-State solution, which had been supported by Pope Benedict and Pope Francis. The Holy See, he said, believed that the peace process can only move forward if peace is directly negotiated between the parties with the strong support of the international community. He noted that the Holy See stressed the importance of civil society and track II diplomacy in peace-making and peacebuilding in the Middle East. The Holy See called on all religious leaders to also condemn the manipulation of religion to justify acts of terror and violence.
19. The representative of **Turkey** reiterated that the Palestinian State should be independent, sovereign and secure. He noted that 137 countries had recognized Palestine as a State; nevertheless, its existence on the ground remained challenged by the occupation, the settlements and land confiscations. He noted that Turkey supported the French initiative to restart the peace process and was dedicated to creating a better future for the Palestinian people. Accordingly, he noted that Turkey was progressively disbursing US\$200 million in support to the Palestinian people.
20. The representative of **Cuba** stated that peace required solidarity, cooperation, international assistance and the recognition of the Palestinian State as a full member at the United Nations. She stated that the international community was calling on the United Nations to fulfil its responsibility in making every effort necessary to end the Israeli aggression. Cuba reiterated that the Palestinian State should be independent, sovereign and secure, and exist within pre-1967 borders. Cuba also noted the need to recognize the Palestinian refugees' right to return.
21. The representative of **Thailand** reiterated the need to make peace a reality. Peace could only be achieved by political means, and the international community needed to induce an environment that allowed for productive negotiations. The representative indicated that the Quartet could play a crucial role in the peace process. Thailand provided humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians and support for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Thailand also supported both bilateral and multi-lateral efforts to make Palestine a viable, secure and democratic state.
22. The **United Arab Emirates** representative emphasized the country's consistent and principled stance in support of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, and the need for full international recognition of an independent Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. He stressed that the Israeli violations and practices presented a major obstacle to all attempts to bring peace and security to the region. Israel's occupation was a war machine of aggression and illegality. Unfortunately, no action was being taken by the international community, he noted. The United Arab Emirates called on donor states to increase funding in order to rebuild the Palestinian State.
23. The representative of **Qatar** argued that the situation of Palestinians was an issue of concern to the whole international community, a colonial legacy, and not just a Muslim concern. The conflict has been ongoing for 68 years; it has borne witness to numerous tragedies yet no solution had been reached. Qatar thus called on the international community to take serious measures, not merely make empty promises, to prevent Israel from continuing its violations of international law and to achieve an independent Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.
24. The representative of **Indonesia** stated that the political process must be revived. He noted that the OIC Summit held in Jakarta in March 2016 had emphasized that the status quo was unacceptable, the occupation must end, and key actors should transform their political commitments into reality. A solution should be comprehensive and just, and be based on the French initiative, the Arab Peace Initiative, and United Nations resolutions. Indonesia stated that the role of non-State actors must be further elevated. Additionally, the role of civil society and the channels of communications must be utilized in furthering the political process in order to give the children of Palestine and Israel the future they deserve, a future of peace and prosperity.
25. The representative of **Sudan** noted that Palestine was the essence of the Middle East conflict; he argued that all the conflicts in the Middle East today could be traced back to the ongoing conflict in Palestine. Peace could not be achieved unless Israel changed its policies, he said. Sudan also hoped that the outcome of this Conference would be different than the various previous conferences that had had no effect on the situation in Palestine.
26. The representative of **Zimbabwe** reiterated the need to have the suitable conditions in place for a viable peace process and stressed that the two-State solution would only become viable if Israel were pressured to return to the negotiating table. There needed to be an international framework to save the peace process, he said. He also called on Israel to halt the settlements; Israeli actions to isolate Palestinian villages from their neighbours must cease.
27. The representative of **Mali** aligned herself with previous statements. Suffering in occupied areas must come to an end, and people needed to live in dignity, she said. She called upon the international community to create a conducive atmosphere for negotiations.
28. The representative of **Oman** reaffirmed his country's support for the Arab and international efforts, and for the French initiative to establish peace. Oman called on the international community to fight the injustices and achieve a dignified life for the Palestinians in their sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. He expounded on the notion that Israel was to blame for all the current conflicts in the Middle East and the deteriorating situation of the region. He also referred to the Israeli occupation as the longest occupation of our time.
29. The representative of **Jordan** stated that only by resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would the resolution of the current regional issues and threats be facilitated. She stressed that Jordan's national interests were affected by all the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including security, water, borders, and in particular, Jerusalem and refugees. Jordan supported all diplomatic efforts to realize the two-State solution and revive the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks including the French initiative and the other initiatives to ensure that they flowed in one common direction, she said. She said that all the countries represented at the current Conference could count on Jordan to support every sincere effort that would bring the peaceful two-State solution closer to becoming reality.
30. The representative of **Malta** reiterated his country's support for the French initiative and the Quartet report, and for direct negotiations aimed at fostering the dynamics of the peace process. Ongoing settlement activities were not conducive to the peace process, he said. As long as living conditions remained dire, as they are, no progress could be expected on the political front.
31. The representative of **Lebanon** stated that throughout the years, the Arab world had been continuously welcoming initiatives aimed at fostering a two-State solution; however, Israel, with its aggressions, settlements, separation wall and demolitions, had been halting the peace process. She called for the international community to pressure Israel to accept a fair two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.
32. The representative of **South Africa** concurred with previous statements that the central responsibility for peace rested with the Palestinians and Israelis. The international legal framework including General Assembly and Security Council resolutions; the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative provided guidance for these negotiations. He welcomed the French initiative. In the past, South Africa had organized dialogues with Palestinians and Israelis to share its experiences in negotiations, peacebuilding and reconciliation, he said. South African presidential envoys had travelled to the region to explore ways to revive the peace process. South Africa would host a UN Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in late August, he informed the participants.

33. The representative of **Pakistan** spoke on behalf of the membership to the OIC. She called for the implementation of a binding obligation under international law to permit the return of Palestinian refugees. She condemned Israel's violations of the most fundamental rights of Palestinians to life and self-determination, and reaffirmed the illegality of settlements, of the disproportionate use of force, and of measures to eliminate the religious and cultural heritage of Palestine. Leaders at the OIC Extraordinary Summit in Jakarta had committed themselves to support the convening of an international conference to advance peace. The OIC demanded an end to settlement activities and the Gaza siege and the release of Palestinian prisoners.
34. The **Nicaraguan** representative affirmed his country's absolute and unconditional support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle for inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right to live in peace. Nicaragua called for an end, without delay, to the occupation. While reiterating that peace was possible, he stated that the remaining critical situation in the Palestinian territories including Gaza could not be ignored. Nicaragua called for a peace conference that would supervise the negotiations and the adoption of a peace agreement.
35. The **Venezuelan** representative reiterated that peace was possible and expressed support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. She stated that Israel needed to vacate the occupied territories, and expressed solidarity with the Palestinians, who needed to live with dignity, freedom and economic security.
36. The representative of **Madagascar**, a member of the Palestinian Rights Committee, expressed the strong desire of his country that a peaceful solution be found to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-State solution. He called upon the parties to engage in dialogue and negotiation, and upon the international community and donors to provide increased support to the Palestinian people.
37. The representative of **Ecuador** said his country maintained a strong position in defence of the sovereign rights of Palestine. Ecuador condemned settlements, violence and human rights violations by the Israeli armed forces and settlers, and the destruction of houses and livelihoods to forcibly displace Palestinians. Ecuador fully recognized the State of Palestine with 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The delegation strongly rejected the violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people committed by Israel. The only solution to stop these violations was the full recognition and respect of self-determination of the Palestinians.
38. The representative of **China** called on both sides to resume the peace talks. The situation of "no progress, no way forward and no one cares" could not last long, he warned. China reiterated its support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and called for the early realization of the two-State solution. China called for an end to the violence, an end to the settlements and an end to the blockade on Gaza. He stressed the need for the Arab League and the OIC to play more active roles in the peace process, and the need for a new resolution to be passed by the Security Council. He concluded by highlighting Chinese contribution to the installation of solar power stations in Palestine, and China's pledge of 50 million yuan for reconstruction and economic development.
39. **Algeria's representative** supported Pakistan's previous statement on behalf of the membership of the OIC. He reaffirmed support for a sovereign Palestinian State, referred to Security Council resolutions [242](#), [338](#), [1397](#) and [1515](#), and stressed that international law supports the sovereignty of Palestine. Israel's violation of international law was resulting in the lack of a viable two-State solution.
40. **Malaysia** stated that despite the many initiatives aiming towards peace over the years, peace prospects were becoming dimmer due to the occupying power's illegal actions towards the Palestinians and the denial of their basic rights, in an atmosphere of impunity. She stressed the need for all parties to respect and adhere to international law in a non-selective manner. Malaysia was looking forward to the Quartet report and commended the French initiative to convene a peace conference.
41. **Kuwait's representative** stated that peace would only be achieved when Israel ceased its aggressions and violations. He said that Israel should be held fully responsible for the failure of many peace negotiations and initiatives. He called on Israel to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law. He concluded by stressing that the Palestinian cause was at the core of Kuwait's foreign policy.
42. **Libya's representative** said that the Israeli war crimes, the denial of basic Palestinian rights and violations of international law were the impediment to successful peace talks and a two-State solution. He underlined Libya's longstanding solidarity with the Palestinians and called for an end to the occupation and for the realization of the right of return of the Palestinian refugees.
43. **Iraq's representative** stated that Israel had been incessantly ignoring international human rights law in Palestine. He also touched on Israel's nuclear arsenal and material. He noted that the occupation of Palestine was the longest occupation in modern era and it must come to an end. Iraq emphasized its full support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, as well as for the right of Palestinians to a sovereign State and the right of return.
44. The representative of **Somalia** stated that Somalia would continue to stand in solidarity side by side with the Palestinians until they reached their sovereignty. She reaffirmed Somalia's support for the various Security Council resolutions that envisage a Palestinian State on 1967 borders. Security measures alone were inadequate to address the current tensions and violence. She emphasized the urgent need for the international community to take concrete steps to consolidate the peace process.
45. The representative of **Tunisia** emphasized that the Palestinian cause must be at the centre of efforts for peace in the region. For this peace to be fully realized, the international community, international organizations, and most importantly, the Security Council need to pressure Israel into complying with the relevant resolutions so that it would not continue acting as if it were above the law.
46. **The Gulf Cooperation Council** representative called for a complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied areas. He noted that Israeli aggressions were not only an obstacle to peace, but also violated international conventions including Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention. He reaffirmed that the Palestinian State should be able to exist in peace alongside the State of Israel. He concluded by emphasizing that the international community recognition of the State of Palestine is a crucial step towards peace.
47. The representative of the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** said that the Committee had been working in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT) since 1948 to alleviate the suffering of civilians, in partnership with sister organizations – the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Magen David Adom. The ICRC was the guardian of international humanitarian law, building discreet, yet frank relations with all the parties on the ground. But humanitarian action alone could not provide the hope the affected people needed most; it was high time to start a meaningful political process, she stressed, which was the responsibility of governments.
48. The representative of the **International Telecommunications Union (ITU)** cited the support of his organization for Palestine. One of the recent achievements was the 2015 agreement allocating new frequencies for Palestinian mobile operators, facilitated by the ITU, which would allow the deployment of 3G services. The process appeared to be on track due to the spirit of cooperation displayed by the parties and the support by ITU Member States.

### III. Plenary sessions

#### A. Plenary session I

##### Learning from Madrid to the present

49. The plenary session entitled "Learning from Madrid to the present" was chaired by Ambassador Maria Rubiales de Chamorro, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations.
50. **Mr. Mohammad Shtayyeh**, former negotiator and a senior advisor to President Mahmoud Abbas, offered a Palestinian perspective on the Oslo accords of 1993 between Israel and the PLO. He said that depressing realities on the ground worked against hope. At the same time, the French Initiative, the Quartet report and the Egyptian efforts represented attempts to move ahead. The Oslo accords, he argued, had three components: political, economic and security. On the political front, he recalled that 25 years after the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, which marked the beginning of the peace process, Israel had yet to recognize Palestine as a State in its pre-1967 borders. In economic terms, trade went predominantly in one direction only with Israeli exports to Palestine of up to US\$6 billion, while Palestine was allowed to export only US\$800 million to Israel. In terms of security, the Palestinian Authority had been expected to gain full control over law and order over Area A. Yet since 2002, the Israeli army had regularly made incursions into that territory. The Netanyahu Government, he said, worked every day to erode the possibility of a Palestinian State by destroying its four pillars: Jerusalem, Area C, Gaza and the Jordan River Valley.
51. Mr. Shtayyeh stressed that the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 had been possible because of Secretary of State James Baker's personal commitment. Mr. Baker had been unafraid to threaten Israel with refusing US\$10 billion in US loan guarantees if settlements continued. Oslo had benefitted from the political will of Yitzhak Rabin, who had been credible to Israelis as a former military officer and at the same time believed in the peace process. However, the recent Israeli leaders either lacked credibility (Ehud Olmert) or were not ready for peace (Benjamin Netanyahu).
52. In Mr. Shtayyeh's view, the bilateral paradigm of negotiations was no longer achievable. This explained the reason for which the French initiative was so important: if a multilateral effort seemed to have worked in Iran and Libya, why not in Palestine? Moreover, the international community gave aid money to Palestinians if the peace track was perceived to advance, but withheld it when it did not. In this way, the Palestinians were punished twice, he argued, whereas Israel, the party that caused the failure of the process, was never held responsible.
53. Accordingly, Mr. Shtayyeh advocated for a new paradigm linking the Israeli behaviour with respect to the Palestinians with its international economic relations, which could take the form of sanctions. Sanctions had been successful in the case of apartheid South Africa and the Iran nuclear file, he said. Finally, negotiations needed clear, agreed upon terms of reference so that everyone would read from the same book. Confidence-building measures would help. The peace process needed an honest broker, he said, but not one in a strategic alliance with one of the parties.
54. Israel needed to take into account demographic realities, he concluded. Netanyahu must choose the two-State solution, he said, or the world will see one de jure



apartheid State, claiming that “Israel is already a de facto apartheid State”. Finally, Mr. Shtayyeh called on President Obama to recognize Palestine as a State before he left office and before the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

55. **Mr. Michael Molloy**, former Ambassador of Canada and founding member of the multilateral track Refugee Working Group, spoke about the experience from the multilateral track negotiations established in the wake of the Madrid Peace Conference. He said that the working groups that were launched at the 1992 Conference in Moscow had dealt with economic development, environment, water, arms control and security, and refugees (chaired by Canada). Governments of Arab countries participated, with the exception of Syria and Lebanon. For the United States of America and Israel, the multilateral process was a vehicle for overcoming Israel’s isolation within the Middle East. For the Europeans, this process provided an opening for involvement in the peace efforts. For Palestinians, the multilateral framework ensured the involvement of other members of the international community, Europe and Russian Federation, in particular, to counterbalance the United States and Israel.

56. Differences over Israel’s undeclared nuclear arsenal soon caused the arms control working group to be discontinued. While it lasted, the working group facilitated a significant transfer of knowledge on arms control challenges and how they might be managed. The economic working group was more successful, with its work culminating in a series of economic summits or trade fairs in Casablanca, Amman, Cairo and Doha, which attracted thousands of private sector participants. The water working group, in addition to specific water projects, produced a Declaration of Principles for Cooperation on Water adopted by Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority in 1996. The Environment Working Group developed the Bahrain Environmental Code of Conduct, adopted in 1994. The refugee working group focused on economic development and the humanitarian situation in the camps. Progress was made on family reunification, medical care and education opportunities for Palestinian refugees.

57. Following the deterioration of the situation on the ground and the suspension of Arab participation in the multilateral negotiations between 1997 and 2000, the Canadian Foreign Ministry focused its attention on funding research by Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutions on the implications of refugee return to the West bank and Gaza, and engaged the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to produce studies on compensation for refugees. A track II exercise chaired by Canada developed a series of ideas that were later adopted by the Quartet for the Roadmap.

58. In conclusion, Mr. Molloy said that the fate of the multilateral process was closely tied to that of bilateral talks: once the latter foundered, the former collapsed as well. Arab Governments perceived the multilateral engagement as a concession to Israel, which made them an obvious target when relations deteriorated. The most lasting benefit of the multilateral process may be that a generation of Western and Middle Eastern officials had established a network of contacts and an understanding of each other’s needs. In his opinion, the peace process had come about at a unique moment: a high point of US global power while Europe and Japan enjoyed considerable economic prosperity. The donor world then had the political will and the means to reinforce success in the peace process. Unfortunately, that moment had passed, he said.

59. **Mr. Gadi Baltiansky**, Director-General of the Geneva Initiative, provided an Israeli perspective on the Oslo accords. He called for continued engagement of the international community, which would encourage Israelis and Palestinians to continue working for peace. Referring to the recent Israel-Turkey reconciliation agreement, he said that the lesson learned, also applicable in the Israeli-Palestinian context, was that national interests were stronger than slogans and public opinion, and that in the end red lines were crossed. Referring to the upcoming [Quartet report](#), he expressed hope that it would contain the right language condemning violence and settlements, which was important. But the challenge would be to translate the report into concrete action, preferably by the Security Council; otherwise it would join the pile of previous reports which had had no effect. The length of the road was not as important as the destination, he argued, and the Geneva Initiative had formulated a proposal backed by prominent Israelis and Palestinians, indicating a possible end game on all the contentious issues, including Jerusalem, borders and refugees, and the sensitive issues of mutual recognition. Israelis and Palestinians would be willing to travel the road to peace as long as the destination was known, he argued. A new Security Council resolution to replace resolution [242](#), which was almost 50 years old, was overdue. The parameters of a final status agreement, which were well-known, should be endorsed by the Security Council, thus generating new momentum and a new hope, he said.

60. Referring to the Madrid Conference, he said that Yitzhak Shamir, a hawkish Israeli Prime Minister, had been opposed to Madrid but participated nevertheless due to international pressure especially by the United States. The Geneva Initiative organization supported the French initiative for a new peace conference; its members had met with French officials and saw their determination, but more support was needed. He said that the Oslo agreements had been an important breakthrough but it was time to update them by expanding the scope of Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank beyond what had been agreed to in the 1990s, expanding the mutual recognition by bringing in additional Arab countries, and moving towards a regional peace. He said that the two-State solution, the only viable solution, was in the national interest of both Israelis and Palestinians, and still enjoyed majority support; however, there was increasing public scepticism regarding whether it was achievable. Such disbelief risked becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. He cautioned against fixating on specific leaders, arguing that national interests were more powerful than rhetoric in the end. Despite a very problematic situation on the ground, Israeli and Palestinian members of both peace camps were meeting regularly to consider how to influence decision-makers. But the international community had to demonstrate its commitment, and hope needed to replace despair. If the two peoples saw that the international community was serious about peace, going beyond routine statements and declarations, they would also become serious about peace, as they had done in the past.

61. The representative of **Egypt** emphasized that the Palestinian issue was at the crux of the problems in the Middle East; a widespread sense of injustice in the region was being fuelled by the Israeli occupation and violations. He stressed that the two-State solution was the only viable one notwithstanding what some academics might be writing. He warned about the alarming rise in the Middle East of non-State actors who were extremely violent and opposed to peace: Israel no longer had to deal just with the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. He stressed that the time for reaching peace was limited before the situation deteriorated for Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians and others in the region. Security Council Resolution [242](#) had laid down the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative built on this principle. He felt that there was no need for another Council resolution setting forth the parameters of a peaceful settlement.

## B. Plenary session II

### Emerging approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

62. The plenary session “Emerging approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” was chaired by Ambassador Wilfried Emvula, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations.

63. **Mr. Denis Bauchard**, former Ambassador of France to Jordan and Advisor for the Middle East at the French Institute for International Relations, speaking about the French initiative, referred to the various inconclusive peace initiatives over the years such as the European Union (EU) Venice declaration of 1980, Oslo Accords, Camp David Summit, Taba Talks and the [Arab Peace Initiative](#). The two-State solution was the only way to assure Israeli security and Palestinian rights, he stressed. While the contours of the solution were well known, its realization appeared increasingly problematic. The French initiative was an attempt to respond to this stalemate, which was fraught with violence. The status quo was unsustainable, he underlined. There were no negotiations despite assurances of good will by the parties. The Israeli Government had announced its readiness to negotiate without preconditions, while at the same time putting forth preconditions such as the Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish State, the demilitarization of Palestine, Israeli control over Jordan valley, and indivisibility of Jerusalem. In his view, the Palestinian issue was not a priority for the Israeli Government who saw it as a low-intensity conflict manageable by military means. Israel’s priority appeared to be the Iran agreement, which it viewed as an existential threat. Hamas and Hezbollah were seen merely as pawns of Iran.

64. He added that Palestinian internal divisions were weakening their negotiating position. In addition, the separation wall and settlements were diminishing the space available for a Palestinian State. Beitar Ilit, Ariel and Ma’aleh Adumim settlements were particularly problematic due to their size and strategic location. These factors drove many Palestinian youth to despair and radicalism. The escalation of violence during the recent “war of the knives” should be a red flag, he warned.

65. He evaluated the outcome of the Paris Ministerial Conference of 3 June 2016 as positive. First, the Conference reflected a sense of alarm, an attempt to resume negotiations before the window of opportunity for the two-State solution closed, leaving a situation of permanent occupation, extremism on both sides, violence and disproportionate military responses by Israel. Second, the Conference had ended with a strong call to resume negotiations. This approach was preferable to the road of sanctions, adopted by an increasing number of organizations within the framework of the “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” movement. Third, the Conference promulgated a new approach. Recognizing that there was no alternative to direct negotiations, the international community could provide an appropriate framework and guarantees. The EU could use its economic leverage to enhance the living standards as well as influence the behaviour of the negotiating parties. The EU could also contribute to building the Palestinian capacity and institutions. Regional security arrangements involving Israel, the Palestinians and Arab countries should also be examined. Three working groups comprising various interested countries would be established in the coming months to tackle various aspects of the peace process. All interested countries and actors of good will should be involved in this exercise, he said, including NGOs and think tanks engaged with the region. The status quo was unsustainable, he also warned, and threatened to generate chaos, which would endanger the security of Israel and other neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

66. **Mr. Nathan Stock**, Israel-Palestine Field Office Director of the Carter Centre, spoke about the role of the Quartet for Middle East peace. He argued that the Quartet had been handicapped by the dominance of the United States, which promoted policies that impaired Palestinian democracy while failing to advance a resolution to the conflict. The Quartet had failed to meet the expectations to bring together the “power of the United States, the money of the European Union and the legitimacy of the United Nations”. Since decisions were based on consensus, Quartet positions reflected the lowest common denominator.

67. Mr. Stock said that the United States had failed to hold Israel to account for its settlements. There was no public monitoring of the Quartet's [Road Map](#) commitments implementation: monitoring reports were kept confidential. In his view, however, the Quartet's greatest failure came in 2006, after Palestinian legislative elections. Hamas' prior pragmatic shifts, in Mr. Stock's opinion, suggested that a compromise could have been found. But despite reservations by other Quartet members, the United States pushed through the Quartet principles, demanding the Hamas-dominated Palestinian Authority to recognize Israel, accepting prior peace agreements, and renouncing violence. Quartet policy then ensured that the Hamas Government was diplomatically isolated, facing cuts in aid, and Israeli-transferred tax revenues. He claimed those external pressures added to the tensions, which led to the 2007 Palestinian civil war. Since then, US and EU ambivalence regarding a possible Palestinian Government including Hamas had been a major factor preventing new elections.

68. Mr. Stock proposed restructuring the Quartet into a contact group with principal roles reserved for the United States and Russian Federation. Key Arab States, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, should be added. The EU should be replaced by the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Norway could be helpful, given its chairmanship of the group of donors to the Palestinians and its contacts with Hamas. The United Nations, in his opinion, should be in the Quartet in a supporting capacity, separate from the principal State parties. In Mr. Stock's view, the United Nations' association with a US policy to isolate Hamas and effectively repudiate Palestinian elections had damaged its credibility. However, the United States, the EU and the Russian Federation had opposed French efforts in 2015 to reformulate the Quartet, making such a restructuring unlikely.

69. He noted that with the United States reassessing its Israel/Palestine policy since March 2015, the Quartet seemed powerless to respond to events on the ground as violence was reaching levels not seen since the Second Intifada. In conclusion, he stated that the political will to pressure the two sides – particularly Israel, was far more important than the specifics of the international coordination mechanisms. But since the United States was unlikely to pressure Israel in a meaningful way, in his estimation the best case scenario was that the forthcoming Quartet report would include serious criticism of the settlements, laying a foundation for a Security Council resolution on the parameters for resolving the conflict, to be adopted after the US elections in November. Then, France, the United States and the rest of the Quartet could rekindle a new multilateral approach to the conflict.

70. **Mr. Nabil Shaath**, Member of the Fatah Central Committee, addressing the Arab Peace Initiative, said that critical times always brought forth peace initiatives, be it in the form of the Quartet, the Arab Peace Initiative or the French initiative. The challenge was to overcome the limitations of these initiatives. Echoing the previous speaker, he said that the Quartet was based on the idea of unanimity. The United States had adopted the position of Israel in all Quartet meetings, which led the other three members to use their veto. It was impossible to reach any agreement in the Quartet that was meaningful and implementable. To make matters worse, none of the other Quartet members had any first-hand experience with Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

71. Turning to the Arab Peace Initiative, he revealed that in 2001, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah had written to US President George W. Bush complaining that Saudi Arabia had been its faithful ally but that the United States had failed to deliver the one requirement – progress on the Palestinian track. Therefore, it would be difficult for Saudi Arabia to remain in that alliance. The letter constituted a threat, and President Bush offered a meeting with Prince Abdullah; however, the 9/11 events destroyed Saudi's ability to push the issue.

72. Subsequently, he said, the Saudis decided to turn their threat into a promise of rewards for Israel for an end of the occupation and to turn it from a Saudi initiative into an Arab initiative. The Secretary-General of the Arab League, Mr. Amr Moussa, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, Mr. Shaath and [the then deputy Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee] Mahmoud Abbas were invited to Riyadh to fine-tune the initiative, which was later presented to the 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut, where it was unanimously adopted as the Arab Peace Initiative. It offered Israel full diplomatic relations with the Arab world in return for ending the occupation of Palestinian territory. Later, the initiative was endorsed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Some Israelis saw enough rewards in the initiative to support it, but it was never officially accepted by the Government. In subsequent years, there was pressure by Israel, with the help of the Americans, to "turn the initiative on its head", he said, so that Israel would receive Arab recognition and normalization even before negotiations. The same attempts continued now, he added, with calls for normalization with Arab countries to encourage Israel to participate in the French Initiative. He argued that this would completely destroy the effectiveness of the Arab Peace Initiative. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius had said that France would recognize the State of Palestine if its peace efforts failed, but this promise was later dropped. There was therefore no "stick or carrot" for Israel to participate in the French initiative. He expressed the hope that efforts to dilute the Arab Peace Initiative would not succeed.

73. **Ms. Galia Golan**, professor at Herzliya University Interdisciplinary Centre, also speaking on the subject of the Arab Peace Initiative, said that there had been four truly important decisions in the history of Israel – General Assembly Partition Resolution 181, Security Council "land for peace" Resolution 242, the PLO decision of 1988 accepting a Palestinian State alongside Israel, and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which took it one step further, making it possible to end the Israeli-Arab conflict on terms that did not threaten the future, welfare of the security of Israel or nations in the region. The initiative confirmed that there is no military solution and called for an Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967. Half a million illegally implanted settlers were expected to render a Palestinian State impossible, however. In order to deal with this unfortunate reality, the idea of land swaps was introduced in 2012 to update the initiative. East Jerusalem was to become the capital of Palestine. These were all solutions that Israeli leaders had accepted in principle in past rounds of talks, even though important details remained to be negotiated. Regarding the return of millions of Palestinian refugees, which provoked existential fears in Israel, the Arab Peace Initiative introduced a new formulation calling for an agreed upon, just and fair solution in line with General Assembly resolution 194. This solution could not be imposed; Israel would have to agree with it.

74. Ms. Golan said the Arab Peace Initiative had opened the door for negotiations. It did not threaten Israeli security and it offered normal relations with the Arab world, peace and security at little or no cost for Israel. Israel would return to 1949 borders, but those would not be the volatile, unrecognized and challenged borders of the previous era, with Israel isolated and boycotted yet expansionist. Normal State-to-State relations with neighbours would be established. This was no utopia, she stressed. Regional countries wanted to see the conflict ended as they had to attend to other pressing matters. Both peoples wanted an end to the bloodshed. The Arab Peace Initiative identified the end game, and provided legitimacy and regional backing for the parties. The Arab Peace Initiative had been endorsed by the Islamic Conference including Iran. Ms. Golan concluded by calling for a widest possible endorsement of the initiative by the French organized conference and by the Security Council. She called for pledges of its implementation by nations so that Israelis could see that the Arab Peace Initiative was serious and that there would be guarantees of its implementation.

### C. Plenary session III Ideas for the future: the next steps

75. The plenary session "Ideas for the future: the next steps" was chaired by Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations.

76. **Mr. Alvaro de Soto**, an international mediator and a former United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, addressed lessons learned from the United Nations' involvement in the Middle East peace process and elsewhere. He recalled that United Nations Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar's last three years in office culminated in a flurry of peace-making activity unparalleled during the entire history of the United Nations. The Secretary-General, however, adhered to a few hard and fast rules, one of which was "Don't jump into empty pools". One had to choose the situations for mediation and gauge the timing, opportunity and the ripeness of the conflict for resolution. "Ripeness" meant that the parties to the conflict had come to the conclusion that it would be more costly to continue their conflict, financially, militarily and politically, than to negotiate a solution. Thus, not all conflicts are ready for third party intervention. Ill-timed initiatives could do harm in the long run, he stressed.

77. The second rule was that a mediation effort had to have unity and integrity. If there was another mediator involved, the Secretary-General would not get involved even despite encouragement to do so. He was also profoundly sceptical about multilateral efforts that, in his view, blurred strategy and diluted responsibility. Repetitive efforts at mediation were counterproductive, Mr. de Soto said, and as he put it "throwing a fruit at a wall repeatedly won't make it ripe". Public opinion could also be detrimental because it pushed the international community in the direction of a humanitarian response, at the expense of finding a durable solution.

78. Turning to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he described it as one where parties had "more history than they could digest". He felt that third party mediation efforts may not have been solely to blame for the stalemate: important processes had taken place within the parties themselves that made an agreement more remote. Israel had the most right-wing Government in its history. Despite numerous efforts, not much progress seemed to be achieved on the Palestinian reconciliation front. He felt that in the El Salvador example, the unification of the various rebel groups had made all the difference between the failure and success of the peace process. He also felt that the polls overstated the actual support for the two-State solution among both the Israeli and Palestinian public.

79. Expressing scepticism about multilateral efforts that several speakers had supported, he said the Quartet had struck him as a clever idea at the time, but he felt that the United Nations had lost its legitimacy by associating itself with the Quartet policies following the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections. The United Nations found itself in an uncomfortable situation of coordinating humanitarian aid to help Gaza cope with the effects of the very Quartet policies the United Nations had supported. He felt that it was not a good idea for the Secretary-General to continue in the Quartet or in any other grouping that he was not a leader of. Also, he felt that the Quartet had served a limited time purpose and should have been disbanded.

80. **Mr. Ayman Odeh**, head of the Joint List faction in the Israeli Knesset, spoke about his role in the peace process as an Israeli-Arab legislator in the Knesset. "Israeli-Arabs know their Arab history," he said, "yet they don't know anything about the Palestinian history, nor do they empathize with the Palestinian cause". This represented a crucial challenge to the prospects of Israeli-Palestinian peace. What was needed to create peace, he said, was an alliance between Israeli-Arabs and Jews to counter the occupation as well as the Government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

81. He noted that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the architect of Oslo, had led a coalition of only 56 Knesset members in 1992-1995, with 61 needed to form a government. Mr. Rabin thus counted on the support of Arab legislators to stay in power. During the 1996 elections, Mr. Netanyahu's Likud defeated Labour by a mere 30,000 votes, which indicated that Israeli-Arabs could have swayed the election. Mr. Netanyahu recognized this danger and took steps to ensure that this would not occur. Mr. Odeh recalled that each time Mr. Netanyahu spoke at the Knesset, he incited against "the Arabs", going as far as to claim that some Knesset members were raising ISIS flags. Moreover, Mr. Odeh said that Mr. Netanyahu had pushed through a dangerous law that allowed the Knesset to expel legislators via a vote and that targeted Israeli-Arab legislators.
82. Mr. Odeh stated that in order to move forward with the peace process, it was necessary to increase Israeli-Arab voting, to as high as a 75 per cent turnout, which was the case at the time of the Oslo process. Also, Israeli-Arabs must fight for legitimacy as full citizens – their exclusion only favoured the right wing, Mr. Odeh observed. Finally, Israeli-Arabs and Jews must work together as democrats. Mr. Odeh then stated that for the occupation to end, three elements were needed: resistance, influencing the Israeli public opinion, and the international dimension. The Palestinians, he said, had chosen peaceful resistance, even though they had the right to choose any other form. He then explained that Israeli-Arabs, including himself, were currently trying to influence public opinion within Israel; they wished for pressure to be applied in order to put an end to this "heinous" occupation. He concluded by saying that the occupation also hurt the Israeli population, not only from an ethical point of view, but also economically, because Israel spent too much money on the occupation, weapons, and settlements. During Oslo, it was obvious that the situation of Israeli-Arabs as citizens improved, yet whenever tensions mounted again, their situation declined. Hence, "we need to put an end to the occupation", he concluded.
83. **Mr. Yair Hirschfeld**, a former Oslo peace negotiator and currently a senior lecturer at the University of Haifa, offered his prescriptions for track II diplomacy as part of the peace process. Track II, he explained, referred to informal diplomacy by non-officials, academics or retired officials who could assist official (track I) diplomacy. He added that track II normally worked in cooperation with governments, and only on rare occasions should track II attempt to build coalitions to counter Government behaviours. The Government of Prime Minister Netanyahu, which in his view did not represent the Israeli consensus and depended on "the right-wing of the right-wing" for political survival", was one of these cases.
84. Mr. Hirschfeld identified seven activities to be pursued by the Israeli peace camp. First, it was in Israel's interest to have an economically vibrant Arab sector within Israel. Even under the current right-wing Government, funding for this sector had dramatically increased showing that progress was possible. He added that there was enough common ground on social and economic issues for Jews and Arabs to work together. Second, work was ongoing on building an organizational structure to launch an NGO, called "This is Our Way" with the ultimate aim to have 200,000-300,000 Jews and Arabs working on the ground with the moderate majority of Israelis to promote the two-State solution.
85. Third, the economic development of the West Bank, including in particular Area C and Gaza, should be pursued, he said. Mr. Hirschfeld urged the Palestinians to consider the offers made by Mr. Netanyahu to see if there was any substance to them instead of simply rejecting them as "economic peace". Fourth, efforts were needed to convince the Israeli Knesset to vote to commit to the two-State solution, which would be a major step forward. It was also important to obtain international and regional support. To achieve this, it was necessary to revive the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. Sixth, the traditional and religious elements of both societies must be engaged in a dialogue to build broad legitimacy for the two-State solution. The seventh and the most difficult challenge related to the settlers. He estimated that at the moment, 20-30 per cent of the settlers would be willing to move out of their homes in the cause of peace, 40 per cent were undecided, and the remaining 30 per cent would "never move". In order to reach a two-State solution, the peace camp needed to create a momentum for peace to persuade the majority of settlers that they needed to come to grips with the new reality.
86. Mr. Hirschfeld also mentioned what in his view could not be achieved. No Israeli Government would commit to remove 140,000 settlers or 20,000 families from their homes, he said. Sanctions against Israel would not work, in his opinion. He then described both Israelis and Palestinians as simultaneously "arrogant and afraid" of each other, which was the major reason for the deadlock. He argued that "Palestinians held the key to the Arab world for Israel". However, they should not obstruct everything, he warned, or they may end in an alliance with the "worst groups in the Middle East". Were this to occur, then Israel would work with Turkey and the Arabs States, and the Palestinians would lose that key.
87. **Mr. Eckhard Volkmann**, Deputy Director of the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (IPTI), shared his organization's research regarding civil society as an actor in the peace process. IPTI had studied large data sets of various peace processes and performed a comparative analysis on them to establish what worked and what did not. A ten-year long research project compared the effectiveness of contributions made by civil society organizations and of broadening participation in political negotiations. The results, he said, were backed by statistics.
88. The most effective actions by civil society in his opinion included: protection against violence; monitoring human rights; monitoring implementation of agreements; advocacy calling for political will; processes of socialization and the promotion of inter-group social cohesion; the facilitation of dialogue; and in some cases, particularly in poorer fragile States, service delivery. The situation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was characterized by a stalemate, a lack of political will, and the non-implementation of prior agreements. These elements fomented violence. Having a clear strategy by the international community on how to engage with civil society, was important, he said. However, working with NGOs should not be used as a substitute for a lack of an Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process.
89. Mr. Volkmann noted that negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian context had been shepherded exclusively by the Great Powers, leaving track II, and track III (people-to-people) dimensions neglected. IPTI could provide expertise on process design and provide selection criteria as to whom to bring to the table. Turning to the Colombia example, he said that an inclusive process bringing in the military and women had clearly contributed to the success of the process. Another area where civil society could contribute was advocacy and the promotion of the political will, creating linkages with international NGOs and lobbying in the international arena to promote the political process. The combination of protection activities and advocacy by NGOs was highly effective.
90. Turning to what his organization could contribute, he proposed a systematic analysis of the current phase of peace process in light of the French initiative in order to establish which actions by civil society would make the most impact.
- #### IV. Closing session
91. In his closing remarks, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Ambassador Fodé Seck**, emphasized that the Committee delegation was very satisfied with the conduct of the Conference. The experts heard and the ensuing discussions highlighted the progress and limitations of peace initiatives between Israel and the State of Palestine. A speaker had highlighted the benefits of including civil society to build a favourable environment for peace. The Committee was dedicated to strengthening its cooperation with civil society to facilitate their contribution to the peace process. Furthermore, the presentation by Mr. de Soto had enriched understanding of other peace processes, to which the United Nations had positively contributed, thus confirming that the United Nations can play an important role in supporting Israel and Palestine on the path to peace. In conclusion, he called on the international community to redouble its efforts so that the Israeli and Palestinian peoples could live in peace.
92. **Mr. Miroslav Jenča**, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said that the Conference had shown that peace was possible and that the two-State solution remained the only possible way forward. Peace could only be achieved by promoting a conducive environment for dialogue, by encouraging both sides to refrain from actions that undermined trust and by taking concrete steps that created the positive conditions for a return to negotiations. He said the parties must resolve all the core issues including borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees and water in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Most people in Israel and Palestine still supported the two-State solutions but the past failures had led to a loss of hope. He emphasized that the situation was not sustainable and the longer it lasted, the more remote the prospects for peace became.
93. Mr. Jenča said that the United Nations stood ready to support any initiative to prevent the deterioration on the ground and reinvigorate the peace process. He recalled that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had recently visited Israel and Palestine, and held consultations with leaders including President Abbas, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Rivlin. He also travelled to Gaza to witness the reconstruction process.
94. Mr. Jenča informed that the Quartet report would soon be released and should reflect the international consensus that the two-State solution was the only way forward albeit under grave threat. The Quartet, it was hoped, would formulate recommendations that would encourage the parties to take positive steps to create the conditions for a return to negotiations. Settlements must cease; terrorism and incitement must stop; and greater efforts must be made to reunify the West Bank and Gaza under a legitimate Palestinian leadership. He concluded that the United Nations would continue its support to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which provided an important platform for discussion as the participants had been witnessing over the previous two days.
95. **Ambassador Riyad Mansour**, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, expressed gratitude to all the participants, to the Committee and to the Division for Palestinian Rights. The Conference was being convened in Geneva at that precise moment because, he said, there was no more time left: if no efforts were made to restore hope, the situation on the ground threatened to deteriorate further. The French Government and the Quartet, which was trying to rehabilitate itself, recognized that the revival of interest in the Arab Peace Initiative was also a sign of such awareness. Even the Swiss Government had become involved, he observed, when it called for a meeting on 3 June 2016 in which many European countries, including the coordinator for the French initiative, participated to discuss Palestinian reconciliation. The Palestinians, he said, must also put their house in order. All this heightened activity was spurred by heightened concerns at the increasing explosion of anger witnessed since October 2015 in Jerusalem and Hebron.
96. The situation could wait no longer, he warned, with the Gaza blockade "beyond shameful" and the growing isolation of East Jerusalem from the Palestinian hinterland. If efforts were not made rapidly to restore the trust of Palestinians, the situation could deteriorate over Jerusalem and the Holy Places, he predicted. For the Palestinians, he

said, the situation was unbearable after 50 years of occupation, and the Palestinian leadership could not control the popular anger; the incidents that had taken place in Jerusalem and Hebron had not been planned by the leadership nor by any party; they were spontaneous and unplanned. Palestinians were tired of negotiations and of the empty promises of the international community. Palestinian trust could only be earned by taking practical steps, the most important being stopping the settlements. The Quartet must understand this; if its members did not recommend practical steps to stop settlements in their report, he argued, they risked becoming irrelevant.

97. In conclusion, Ambassador Mansour asserted that the Palestinians had brought to the Conference their best people, who had been part of the negotiations, as well as Palestinian citizens of Israel who were also an important part of the discussion. There were many negotiating models and much experience to guide the process, as presented by experts. If the Annapolis negotiating model were to be followed, it would fail, he predicted. The Madrid multilateral model worked better in the region, particularly given the success on the Iran file. It was possible that, in spite of the political difficulties in Israel and the right-wing Government, there was a possibility of “ripeness” for peace in the air, and it was the collective duty of the international community to explore this possibility. If the French initiative gained momentum, if the Quartet came forward with meaningful recommendations, these elements could lead to a Security Council resolution on settlements and on parameters, putting the peace process back on track.

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## Annex I

### Summary of the Chair

1. The United Nations **International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace** was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva, on 29 and 30 June 2016, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). Experienced peace negotiators, Member States, United Nations entities and civil society discussed lessons learned from past initiatives related to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, assessed recent initiatives promoted by key actors, and considered new ideas for a lasting solution to the conflict.
2. The Conference was attended by 86 Member States, two Observer States, six intergovernmental organizations, eight United Nations system entities, and 32 local and international civil society organizations. Eleven expert speakers addressed the Conference, which was open to the public; 27 Member States made statements during the opening session; and a large number of participants made remarks or raised issues during the interactive discussions.
3. At the opening session, in a message to the Conference delivered by **Mr. Michael Møller**, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, **Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Ban Ki-moon**, who had just completed his 11th visit to Israel and Palestine, asked the leadership of both sides to take prompt action to preserve the two-State solution. He reminded them that the [Arab Peace Initiative](#) provided a vision of a comprehensive peace. Both Israelis and Palestinians were entitled to live in security. Israel's settlement enterprise was illegal and constituted a threat to the two-State solution. Violence and incitement were also major obstacles. He urged donors to fulfil their pledges for the reconstruction of Gaza. Reuniting the West Bank and Gaza under a single government based on PLO principles was of critical importance.
4. The **Representative of the State of Palestine, Mr. Nabeel Shaath**, Member of the Fatah Central Committee said, “I know peace is possible”, observing that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was currently in Gaza, witnessing the tragedy. He argued that without a pivotal role of the United Nations and the international community, peace would not be possible. He reminded the audience that one State was occupying the land of the other State, clearly demonstrating that the Israeli Government was not committed to peace based on the two-State solution. He added that apartheid in South Africa might have continued until today if it were not for the international boycott. Twenty-three years had elapsed since the Oslo agreements, with no independent Palestinian State, nor an end to the occupation. He referred to the Iran agreement as an example to be followed, with the international community acting together to support peace. Finally, he assured that Palestinians had not given up on the peace process.
5. The **Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** expressed the view that the almost 60-year-old Israeli occupation was one of the root causes of the instability and violent extremism in the region. He expressed support for the recent international efforts, such as the forthcoming Quartet report, the French Initiative and the renewed interest in the Arab Peace Initiative Settlements and indiscriminate attacks against civilians should cease immediately: both Israelis and Palestinians had a right to live in security. Despite the reduction in violence in recent months, there continued to be a real danger of its escalation; as long as East Jerusalem remained occupied, the status quo of the Holy Sites was challenged, and Gaza was blockaded. He called for Palestinian reconciliation and for the international community to make a strong push to end the occupation.
6. In the first plenary session, participants discussed the lessons learned from the Madrid Peace Conference, and from the Oslo agreements in light of the situation today. Despite initial achievements such as the mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, participants agreed that the breakdown of the process had produced a situation of despair. Whereas in the early 1990s, the United States, the only superpower, used its leverage to bring the parties to the negotiating table, in today's world the peace process should be multilaterally driven, it was postulated. The lesson drawn from the multilateral track negotiations of the 1990s was that they could only support, but not substitute for, bilateral diplomacy. Some raised the subject of sanctions against Israel, whereas a participant questioned whether sanctions were compatible with confidence building. The question of whether some interim agreements could have been renegotiated to improve living conditions for the Palestinians generated a lively debate. While Madrid and Oslo represented a historical breakthrough, they left the end game unclear. The Geneva Initiative sought to fill this gap by formulating a model peace agreement. A majority of Israelis and Palestinians supported the two-State solution, but neither believed it was achievable, which was becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the Israelis and Palestinians saw that the world was serious about the two-State solution, they would also become serious. Do not give up on us”, a participant from the region pleaded.
7. In the second plenary session, participants explored the emerging approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, emphasizing the importance of the French initiative in restarting negotiations, the need for “carrots and sticks” for Israel, the importance of Palestinian unity, the centrality of the Arab Peace Initiative, and the possible enlargement of the Quartet to include additional actors. It was acknowledged that as the two-State solution became the agreed paradigm, its implementation became increasingly problematic. This analysis had led to the launch of the French Initiative, which was praised as an attempt to resume negotiations. The Quartet, it was argued, had failed to bring together the “power of the US, the money of the EU and the legitimacy of the United Nations.”, its decision-making weakened by rules of unanimity and by domestic US politics. The Quartet failed to monitor the Roadmap implementation or to hold Israel accountable for settlements. Some of Quartet actions, such as the conditions imposed on aid following the Hamas electoral victory, exacerbated Palestinian divisions and ran counter to democratic principles. Expanding the Quartet to include key regional and European players could be helpful, but was likely to be resisted by the current members. It was hoped that the forthcoming report would offer some constructive criticism, identify obstacles to peace, and possibly provide a basis for a Security Council resolution to push the peace process forward.
8. It was recalled that a 2001 Saudi initiative later became the [Arab Peace Initiative](#) (API), which was endorsed by the OIC and was updated in 2013 to allow for land swaps. Some Israelis were willing to support the Initiative, although it was never accepted by the Government. The API provided an end game in such a way that it would not threaten Israel's future and security, with necessary regional legitimacy and backing for decisions to be made by both sides. There was a call for the API to be endorsed by the Security Council and in the context of the French initiative, and for individual countries to pledge to implement it.
9. In the final plenary session, experts and participants discussed ideas for the future. International mediators should not “jump into empty pools”, said a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General: the conditions for mediation are not ripe until the parties have reached a conclusion that the costs of conflict outweigh the costs of an agreement. Poorly timed mediation efforts can do more harm than good, as can having multiple competing mediators. It was also clear that the parties should also bring about change internally. As the Israeli Government was unlikely to transform itself, younger generations of Israelis were those who could effect change. Arab Israelis should be more involved because peace would not be possible without taking them into account. A participant proposed rebuilding the organizational structure of the peace camp in Israel, promoting the economic development of the West Bank and Gaza, having the Knesset endorse the two-State solution, following the Road Map, gaining the support of traditional and religious elements in both societies for peace process, and entering a dialogue on the two-State solution with settlers to isolate the extremists and sway those who were undecided. Israelis acknowledged that the Palestinians held “the key to the Arab world” and Palestinians warned against current attempts to break the Arab unified position regarding Palestine.
10. Civil society could help move forward the peace process through protection against violence, monitoring of human rights, monitoring of the implementation of an agreement between Israel and Palestine, advocacy, the promotion of inter-group social cohesion and the facilitation of dialogue. Challenges for civil society engagement in such a context were the political stalemate, the lack of political will, non-implementation of former agreements, and the context of increased violence. A clear strategy by the international community on civil society involvement in peace processes was also lacking. Inclusive processes that prioritized key groups such as women stood a better chance of success, as the Colombia example demonstrated.
11. In closing remarks, the **Chairman of the CEIRPP, Ambassador Fodé Seck**, underlined the role of civil society in building an environment conducive to peace. He called for the international community to redouble efforts so that finally Israelis and Palestinians could live in peace.
12. **United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Miroslav Jenča**, stated that despite setbacks over the years, most people on both sides still supported the idea of two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side. Understandably, the failure to reach a lasting and sustainable peace has led to frustration and a



loss of hope for Palestinians and Israelis alike. He assured that the United Nations stood ready to support any measure or initiative that aims to avoid a further deterioration of the situation on the ground and to reinvigorate the peace process. He expressed hope that the forthcoming Quartet report would encourage the parties to start taking positive steps to demonstrate their commitment to, and create the conditions for, an eventual return to negotiations for a lasting sustainable peace.

13. The **Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, Ambassador Riyad Mansour**, stressed that the Palestinian people were tired of the empty promises of the international community and of the occupation; the French Initiative and the revival of Arab Peace Initiative provided some hope. However, he warned that there was no more time left. Regretting that the Quartet report had been delayed, he said that if it did not recommend practical steps to end the occupation, then the Quartet would fail to be relevant; if it did, it would provide an important contribution and would complement the French initiative.

<sup>1</sup> See the Question of Palestine website, [www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/calendar.htm](http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/calendar.htm)

## Annex II

### List of participants

#### Speakers

Mr. Gadi Baltiansky	Director-General Geneva Initiative – Israel Tel Aviv
H.E. Mr. Denis Bauchard	Former Ambassador of France to Jordan Advisor for the Middle East, French Institute for International Relations Paris
Mr. Alvaro De Soto	International mediator Member, Global Leadership Foundation Senior Fellow, Ralph Bunche Institute Former UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process New York
Ms. Galia Golan	Professor of Government and Chair of the Program on Diplomacy and Conflict Studies, School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya
Mr. Yair Hirschfeld	Director-General, Economic Cooperation Foundation Senior lecturer, University of Haifa Tel Aviv
H.E. Mr. Michael Molloy	Former Ambassador of Canada Founding member, Multilateral Refugee Working Group (Madrid Process) Former Coordinator, Middle East Peace Process, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canada Ottawa
Mr. Ayman Odeh	Member of the Knesset - Head of Joint List (Alliance for Peace and Equality) Tel Aviv
H.E. Mr. Nabil Shaath	Former Palestinian Chief Negotiator Member, Fatah Central Committee Ramallah
H.E. Mr. Mohammad Shtayyeh	President, Palestinian Economic Council for Research and Development, Senior Advisor to President Mahmoud Abbas Ramallah
Mr. Nathan Stock	Israel-Palestine Field Office Director The Carter Center Jerusalem
Mr. Eckhard Volkmann	Deputy Director Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative Geneva

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

H.E. Mr. Fodé Seck	Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations Chairman of the Committee
H.E. Ms. Maria Rubiales de Chamorro	Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations Vice-Chairman of the Committee
H.E. Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani	Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Wilfried I. Envula	Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Riyad Mansour	Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

### Representative of the Secretary-General

Mr. Michael Møller	Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva
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Armenia	Ms. Hasnik Tolmajyan, Minister Plenipotentiary, Alternate Permanent Representative Mr. Mher Margaryan, Minister Plenipotentiary Permanent Mission to UNOG
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Ukraine	Mr. Denys Demchenko, First Secretary



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State of Palestine	H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Khraishi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative Mr. Khuloussi Bsaïso, Counsellor Mr. Ibrahim Musa, Counsellor Mr. Riad Awaja, First Secretary Ms. Dima Asfour, First Secretary Ms. Nada Asfour, First Secretary Permanent Observer Mission to UNOG

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Gulf Cooperation Council	H.E. Mr. Adel Almahri, Ambassador Permanent Observer Mission to UNOG
Inter-Parliamentary Union	Mr. Mokhtar Omar Mr. Kevin Meister
League of Arab States	H.E. Mr. Sameh Aboulenein, Ambassador, Head of the Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva Mr. Youcef Titilouant, First Secretary Mr. Ali Charouite, Expert Permanent Observer Mission to UNOG
Organization of Islamic Cooperation	H.E. Mr. Samir Bakr Diab, Assistant Secretary General for Palestine and al-Quds Affairs Jeddah, Saudi Arabia H.E. Mrs. Aissata Kane, Acting Permanent Observer Permanent Observer Mission to UNOG
Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean	H.E. Mr. Gerhard J.W. Putnam-Cramer, Ambassador Permanent Observer Mission to UNOG

**Other entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers  
in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining  
permanent offices at Headquarters**

International Committee of the Red Cross	Mr. Robert Mardini, Regional Director for the Near and Middle East
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**United Nations organs, agencies and bodies**

United Nations Office at Geneva	Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General
International Telecommunications Union	Mr. Yushi Torigoe, Deputy to the Director, Telecommunication Development Bureau, Chief, Administration and Operations Coordination Department, Telecommunication Development Bureau Geneva
Food and Agriculture Organization	Mr. Yannick Coumarin, Consultant, Humanitarian Affairs Mr. Kayhan Motla, Inter-agency Intern Geneva

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Mr. Adam Abdelmoula, Director, Treaty Mechanisms Division Mr. Kiyohiko Hasegawa, Human Rights Officer Geneva
United Nations Department of Political Affairs	Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs New York
United Nations Environment Programme	Mr. Muralee Thummarukudy, Senior Programme Officer, Disaster Risk Reduction Geneva
United Nations World Tourism Organization	Ms. Rosa Alba Ruffo, International Consultant, Liaison Office Geneva
World Health Organization	Dr. Iman Ahmed, Technical Officer, Surge and Crisis Support team Geneva

**Civil society organizations**

Africa Culture International	Mr. Dianko Lamine, President, Chief Executive Officer Geneva
African Commission of Health and Human Rights	Ms. Ana Leurinda, Executive Secretary Geneva
Agency for Human Rights	Mr. Fahed M. Hussein Iran
Alternative Tourism Center	Ms. Carol Scheller
Alternative Tourist Group	Beit Sahour, Palestine
American Association of Jurists	Mr. Gajardo Alexandre, Representative Geneva
Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum	Mr. Mmadi Mohamed Youssouf Geneva
Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXII	Ms. Caterina Rossi, Intern Ms. Giorgia Pavan, Intern Geneva
Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights	Ms. Rania Almadi Geneva
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	Mr. Richard Alam, UN Advocacy Officer Geneva
Centre for Socio-Economic Development	Mr. Raymond Saner, Director Geneva
CMDC and IPS	Ms. Roswitha Grass, Board Member Geneva
CSLI Lazarus Union	Mr. Frederic Waehren, NGO Representative Ms. Christine Waehren, Ensign CSLI Basel
Defence for Children v	Ms. Camille Castielle, Advocacy and Communications Intern Ms. Yukyung Oh Geneva
Geneva International Centre for Justice	Mr. Naji Haray, Executive Director Mr. Troy Jonatan Björkman, Intern Geneva
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Global Education Project/Mothers Legacy Project	Ms. Afton Beutler, International Vice President and Director Ms. Leann, Lyons Ms. Rachel Elise Mitchell Portland, Oregon
International Catholic Migration Commission	Ms. Chiara De Luca, Communications Assistant Ms. Anna Pascale, Policy Associate Geneva
International League Against Racism and Antisemitism	Ms. Deborah Wolkowicz-Breillet Permanent Representative to the United Nations Paris
International Lawyers Organization	Mr. Curtis F. Doebller, United Nations Representative Ms. Anne Beatrice de Gressot Geneva
International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	Ms. Julies Gorzkowski, Intern Ms. Asessia Vedano, Intern Geneva
International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations	Mr. Jan Lönn, Secretary-General Geneva
IUS PRIMI VIRI International Association	Mr. Osman El Hajjé, Vice Chairman Rome
Lawyers without Borders	Mr. Steven John Oates, Geneva Representative Geneva
The Palestinian Bar Association	Mr. Hussein Shabaneh, Chairman Mr. Hatem Mohammad Deeb Shahin, Vice Chairman Albireh, Palestine
Right Livelihood Award Foundation	Mr. Sharan Srinivas, Director of Research and Advocacy Geneva
Sawed Association for Development	Ms. Nuha A.S. Dahman, Executive Director

	Gaza
Scales for Justice	Ms. Daniela Donges, President Geneva
Spanish Women in International Security	Ms. Renate Capella Soler, International Relations Analyst, Member Spain
United National Organization for Human Rights	Mr. Hesham Mohamed Abdelhamid Basiouny Mr. Abdelnaim Ahmed Abdelnaim Abhemed Cairo
World Jewish Congress	Ms. Lauren Rose, UN Geneva Representative Ms. Arielle Godin Weinstein, JDCorps Coordinator Mr. Joshua Dean, Intern Mr. Oscar Ferreira, JDCorps Member Ms. Aurélie Casahoursat, JDCorps Member Ms. Soizic Pierson, JDCorps Member Geneva
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