



## General Assembly GA/PAL/1216

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### **UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR ON ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIAN PEOPLE CONSIDERS ECONOMIC COST OF CONTINUED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, IN CAIRO, 6-7 FEBRUARY** **Local, Regional, International Efforts towards Mitigating Cost also Examined**

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will convene the [United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People](#), in Cairo, Egypt, at the Sofitel Cairo El Gezira, on 6 and 7 February. The theme of the Seminar is “The economic cost of continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory: local, regional and international efforts towards mitigating it”.

The purpose of the Seminar is to review the impact of Israeli policies and practices on the socio-economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza. The Seminar, among other issues, will look at the cost of the Israeli occupation incurred by the Palestinians in various sectors of the economy, and examine the ways of sustaining the recent economic achievements following the implementation of the Palestinian State-building programme.

The opening session, on 6 February, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will be addressed by Ahmed Fathalla, First Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representing the host country; Maxwell Gaylard, Deputy United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, representing United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and Ali Al-Jarbawi, Minister for Planning and Administrative Development of the Palestinian Authority, representing Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Minister Al-Jarbawi will also deliver a keynote address, following the opening session.

Plenary I, on the Israeli occupation as the paramount obstacle to socio-economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, will run from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on 6 February. The sub-themes of the session will be: “The impact of Israeli policies and practices on the socio-economic situation in the West Bank: restrictions on movement and access; displacement, dispossession and demolitions in East Jerusalem and Area C; the economic impact of settler violence”; “The impact of the occupation on recent economic achievements in the West Bank”; “The socio-economic impact of the blockade of the Gaza Strip”; and “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. Expected speakers include: Mr. Gaylard; Alex Pollock, Director of Microfinance Programme at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Jerusalem; Ramesh Rajasingham, Head of Office at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jerusalem; Hanan Taha, the CEO of PalTrade, the National Trade Development Organization (NTDO), Ramallah and Gaza; and Mahmoud Elkhafif, the Coordinator of Assistance to the Palestinian People at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Geneva.

Plenary II, entitled “Quantifying the cost of the occupation”, will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on 7 February. The sub-themes of the session will be: “The West Bank: costs incurred due to import and export restrictions, and obstacles to the movement of goods and labour”; “The impact of the separation wall”; “The costs of the settlement project”; “Costs of the blockade on the Gaza Strip”; and “Loss of revenues due to Israeli control over and exploitation of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. Expected speakers include: Jad Isaac, General Director of Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem; Shir Hever, Economic Researcher at the Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem; Tarik Alami, Chief of Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Beirut; and Iman Jabbour, Research Director at Gisha — Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, Tel Aviv.

Plenary III, concerning the possibilities to offset the cost of the occupation while preparing for independence, sovereignty and sustainable development, will take place from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on 7 February. The sub-themes of the session will be: “The role of the international donor community”; “Palestinian claims against the occupying Power — Learning from the United Nations experience in war economic reparation (the case of compensation for losses resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait)”; “Balancing gradual elimination of reliance on external aid with the need for continued international humanitarian and development assistance: The role of non-traditional donors”; and “Ensuring socio-economic viability of the State of Palestine: supporting education, youth employment and social integration; the role of the private sector and women entrepreneurs; the role of civil society organizations”. Expected speakers include: Mojtaba Kazazi, Executive Head of the United Nations Compensation Commission, Geneva; Nu'man Kanafani, Fellow at the Department of Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, and Research Director at the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS); Maha Abu Shushe, President of Peugeot Automobiles Office in Ramallah and Chairperson of the Palestinian Shippers Council; and Mohammad Shtayyeh, President of the Palestinian Economic Center for Development and Reconstruction, West Bank.

The closing session, on 7 February, from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., will be addressed by a representative of the host country, and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

All sessions of the Seminar will be open to the media. The official languages will be Arabic and English.

Updated versions of the programme, as well as information on previous Meetings, will be available on the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights, United Nations Secretariat, at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/calendar.htm>.

The Summary of the Chairman on the outcomes of the Seminar will be available at the above link shortly after the Seminar finalizes its work. The full report on the Seminar proceedings will be issued, in due course, as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

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